

## **“COMMON SENSE” – the health and safety policy your company has you have when you don’t have any**

We smile when we see signs saying - Our HSE policy is “use common sense”. Then we grimace! Are these organisations brave or ignorant?

Unquestionably, individuals are responsible for their own health and safety in the first instance. But they don’t hold that responsibility alone.

Businesses which adopt a “*use your common sense*” policy are making the fundamental mistake of assuming everyone has an equal measure of common sense.

The policy works until someone leaves their common sense at the gate and there is a serious accident. An accident is an expensive lesson. It is a risk that businesses and their it’s an office based organisation whose most critical risk is RSI and paper cuts then “common sense” may be appropriate. But even this organisation would have the risk of fire, electrical appliances and possibly traffic risk as workers come to and from the office each day.

The alternative view of a “common sense” approach it indicates an organisation which does not have control of its critical risks. They are relying on luck, or simply too lazy, to proactively manage their risks.

The next level up from the “common sense” followers are those who rely on signage. Feels great to have a sign – its doing something and can steer people away from a hazard if they stop to read them. But how many signs are meaningless. “Report to the office”... with no indication of where the office is (if there is one!). Another favourite is “Everyone on site must follow the HSWA Act 2015” – its actually not optional. Further very few people coming on site have any idea what HSWA is let alone says. Bottom line is, posting a few signs does not make for safety.

In both cases they need to take some quality advice and stop taking risks and wasting money on HSE controls (signs) which do not effectively manage the risk.