

COMMON SENSE?

If you live on a farm, it might be common sense not to walk directly behind a horse.

If you live in the city, it might be common sense not to walk into a certain neighborhood.

If you work in a metal shop, it might be common sense not to put your hand into a sheer while your foot is in the peddle saddle.

"Things do not change, we change." "The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are, first, hard work; second, perseverance; and third, common sense."

~Thomas Edison

Common-Sense in Life

Common sense is a persons acquired practical judgment that develops through life experiences. Observing another person's level of common sense can be a head scratcher, but on the job, you can make a huge impact on how another person acquires their common sense. You can share your life experiences and actively mentor workers who don't have your level of job-related experience. Your interaction can make or break a new and inexperienced worker, and you can have a lasting positive impact on that person's outcome in life. For me it was Singing Bob, the manager first mentored me. Singing Bob taught me something at every encounter. He was genuinely interested in seeing me catch on to the workings of the job. Singing Bob had a big impact on who I am today.

Common-Sense in a Person

In my opinion, a commonsense person is one who can manage everyday challenges in a safe manner without excessive complexity. For every problem, there is a simple and calm solution. To describe someone as commonsensical is to say they are knowledgeable, reliable, straightforward, and honest. This happens through a mix of learned skills that are reflective of an individual's acquired common sense over a lifetime of experiences and learnings.

Common Sense and Safety at Work

Effective and frequent learning is the driving force to heighten the level of common sense among employees in the work environment. Four key elements to maximizing an employee's common sense are:

- Providing adequate job-specific training that is easy to understand
- Share experiences about lessons you have learned and incidents that could have been prevented
- Take the time to teach somebody the right way the first time

Always consider the three key leading measures that should be intrinsic with performance expectations:

- Do we have a good plan that changes as the scope changes?
- Are we identifying the hazards as we go?
- Does everybody understand their obligation to STOP when something isn't right?

Common Sense and Knowledge

Common sense is the basic level of practical knowledge and judgment that we all need to help us function in a safe way. We acquire this practical knowledge and judgment through training, through the experiences of others, and through our own life experiences. For example, while growing up, we learn not to put our hand onto a hot stove, either by having a negative experience and experiencing the pain ourselves, or by being told by someone else that it will burn.

It is often presumed that we all possess the same level of common sense. This is where the issue comes into play in the workplace. Have you ever said, *"that guy should have used more common sense than that."* A person's life experiences are unique to them individually, and their level of common sense is a reflection of their life experiences. What if that worker never used a miter saw before today, or he has never worked around metal cutting operations before now, or she never worked around a forklift before now. We must always be on the lookout for ways we can pass on our knowledge and experiences in a respectful way that makes the recipient look for opportunities to reciprocate those learnings down the road.

Some of the best methods we can use to collectively foster the growth of common sense among others are:

- Share experiences related to the job, talk about what can go wrong, and talk about what makes things go right.
- Take time to complete the safety training provided by the Company and retrain as needed or as required.
- Talk to your supervisor if you don't understand the safety expectations of the company.
- Stop what you are doing if something doesn't feel right, and don't be afraid to get a second opinion.
- Listen to your gut. Your intuition will often provide subtle promptings just before a misstep is made.

If not for our experiences and learnings, we would have no Common Sense