

5 tips for health & safety

Internationally renowned health, safety, environmental and quality expert Phil Chambers gives his top five tips for health and safety applied to small businesses

Mainly because of a fear of no-win/no-fee cases, health and safety is often applied excessively and now has a bad name. However, we ignore it at our peril. So here are five tips for a sensible approach applicable to a small business.



See more from the Business Boffin at www.strategicsafety.co.uk

5 tips to follow

1. Don't get distracted by trivea. Look at what poses the biggest risk. Don't think that a few posters are an effective control measure.
2. Be more concerned if you have higher risk activities. If your business is involved in activities such as construction or agriculture, which have a history of a high accident rate, plan your activities so that you have the highest risks controlled. For example, you must have work at height properly controlled, and no, this doesn't mean that you can't use ladders; it just means that their use must be sensibly arranged.
3. Consider your whole activities. Safety doesn't stop as you leave your premises. In my case, the biggest risk comes from travel and so I plan my journeys to allow reasonable breaks and to avoid too many visits on the same day; if visits overrun, then there is the tendency to become less patient with traffic conditions.
4. Consider what your neighbours are doing. It might not be your own activities which pose the predominant risks. If you are on a shared site, beware of vehicles or activities such as welding or paint spraying which have potential health and safety impacts. And then plan for what would happen if something went wrong with such activities. For example, a fire in your neighbours operation may not cause loss of life but the loss of the building or access to key information may damage your business.
5. Plan for non-standard activities. Quite often key operations can be controlled really well but then everything goes wrong when something out of the ordinary happens. Don't assume that because people claim to be the "experts" for a certain activity, they are competent. For example, ensure that people who repair a leaking roof are competent and have defined safe working practices.