

## Common Sense

“It’s Common Sense!”

Ever said this? Ever heard somebody else say it? Ever see it on an accident investigation form? Ever *want* to write it there?

When does common sense become common? Webster’s dictionary defines common as “belonging to or shared by all members of a group.”

That’s what we’re after, isn’t it? We want everybody who works for us to have all the same information. We want them to know how to operate and maintain equipment properly. We want them to stay busy. We don’t want them to steal. We want them to show up on time.

So how does the work we do become common? When we hire a brand new worker, does he share the same information known to people who are already working for us? No, he doesn’t. We’ve got to tell him. We might have to tell him more than once. We might have to tell him every day for awhile until he gets it. With the right supervision, this new guy will acquire the information that our old guys have, and it will become “common” to him.

This doesn’t happen by osmosis. It doesn’t happen by accident. Well, actually, sometimes it does. That’s what we want to avoid.

What are the pieces of important information in our operation that every worker must know? How do we get this information to our people so that it becomes “common”? Does everybody get the same “common sense”? Is it written down?

Many of us grew up in an age where we were always working with tools. We changed our own oil. We drove a tractor. We understood the purpose and limitations of machines—and the dangers. Fewer people grow up this way in America today, so some potential workers don’t have the same “common sense” that the previous generation enjoyed.

It’s our job as managers and supervisors to give it to them. We need to make it *common*, and we need to make it make *sense*.

This e-mail was produced by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. For more information, visit us on the Web at [www.ISRI.org](http://www.ISRI.org)  
For comments or suggestions about *For Your Safety*, e-mail [joebateman@isri.org](mailto:joebateman@isri.org)

November 17, 2009