



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

### Time to review workplace mental health strategies *(transcripts from Vic. Chamber of Commerce and Vic GOV.)*

As most of our readers know AESI Inspections and GMH Maintenance are industry leaders in Commercial building fire safety and compliancy of Essential Safety Measures across Victoria.

According to the recent articles by the Vic Government and the Vic Chamber of Commerce it now seems that the new buzz issue 'Mental Safety in the Commercial Workplace' is rapidly emerging as the new serious issue confronting small Business owners and workplace employees alike. This virtually confirms my thinking when I compare these finding with feedback from my site inspector safety re reports from 2021 and early 2022

SOME KEY FACTS – COVID 19 is definitely the main culprit and has seen many Australian workers lose loved ones, connections to friends and family, and the comforts of their daily social rhythms. The pandemic has also imposed many other unique set of stresses for them, including the risks of losing their job and rapid adjustments to working from home.

Likewise, for the business owners, the management of mental health in the workplace is a complex area and has become another major factor in achieving the successful management of a small commercial business. While wanting to be supportive and do the right thing these industry leaders are now being asked to manage additional legal risks including mental safety and health. Added to this we have practical difficulties that come with managing employees who are genuinely not well, and who may not attend work or not respond to reasonable senior requests and directions. Little wonder many commercial business owners and managers have also felt overwhelmed and hopeless as they continue to endure these unexpected workplace conditions and try to adapt to the new environment we find ourselves in.

### Research shows a mentally healthy workplace has long-term Business benefits

- Can benefit your bottom line through increased productivity and savings from less absenteeism and presenteeism
- Can attract and keep top talent
- Have more committed and engaged workers
- Have fewer injury claims.

Embedding wellbeing into your operations doesn't have to be time intensive or costly. In fact, the benefits outweigh the cost. Research shows that every \$1 spent to improve mental health at work can achieve returns of up to \$4. Faced with another year of COVID 19 and other significant global business events, one aspect of your business you can control is workplace wellbeing and safety. Where does it fit into your thinking and planning for 2022 and beyond?

For further information and proactive strategies please contact: The Victorian Chamber of Commerce (Unmind program) ph (03) 8662 5333 and/or The Victorian Government (Headway program) ph.13 22 15

**David Hassett MD AESI**

## WARNING!! RENTAL FIRES CAN BE COSTLY FOR BOTH LANDLORD AND TENANTS

This winter landlords should take time to check their retail/commercial lease, particularly in terms of which party (tenant or landlord) bears the responsibility to take care of fire safety installation, and any fire resultant building replacement or repair work. In a recent court case, even though the lease stated that fire safety is the responsibility of the tenant the Court decided that the works required to make the property fire safe were carried out by the Landlord and were of a structural nature and therefore the Landlord was deemed responsible for the alterations and other damage to the building.

### Facing fire damage of your commercial building – 5 KEY RECOVERY ACTIONS:

1. Ask your insurer for advice on actions you should take. (including legal obligations)
2. Do not throw away damaged items without first consulting your insurance company.
3. Make a list of items that have been damaged and take photographs if possible.
4. Keep receipts for any emergency service or repair work.
5. Check with your insurance company to see if your policy covers emergency accommodation. Remember Insurance is the most important single aspect of recovering from fire loss.



## IMPORTANT WINTER CHECK ON ELECTRIC WIRES

Massive damage from just one spark and scrambled wiring can cause massive damage. Commercial electrical fires are very real and prevalent and can cause an unthinkable amount of property damage before the fire department has a chance to arrive. Every single wire is at risk to spark and cause an electrical fire, having a devastating impact on your building in just a few minutes. By having regular fire safety inspections and checking over your fire safety equipment, you can help reduce the chances that a commercial electrical fire will happen to your business.

### KEY CHECKPOINTS:

- **Corroded Wiring:** Old wiring is one of the biggest sources of commercial and residential electrical fires. If any wire is exposed on the exterior of the building, corrosive natural sources will rapidly deteriorate the wire even further. Replace immediately!
- **Fuses and Circuits:** If you have a lot of blown fuses or tripped circuits, it's a sign that you might have a bigger problem. Overloaded outlets can lead to overheating and an eventual commercial electrical fire. Check Immediately!
- **Hot Spots:** A hot spot is any spot on your electrical panel that has loose connections, corroded wires, overloaded circuits, short circuits, imbalanced electrical loading, or faulty breakers or switches. These problems cause heat on the electrical panel and can eventually lead to fire. Check Immediately!

## YOU MAY HAVE SIGNED BUT IT'S WORTH CHECKING

*Signing a commercial lease is no trifling matter; it's a legally-binding agreement with serious financial strings attached.*

A commercial lease is an agreement between the owner of a commercial property and someone who wants exclusive use of it for a set period. It normally applies to an office, warehouse or factory.

The success or failure of a business can hang on the terms of a lease, so knowing what to look for before signing one is just as important as finding the right commercial property to rent in the first place.

Each Australian state and territory has its own legislation governing leases, but the list of things would-be lessees need to know is pretty universal.

Read the lease closely and understand the terms

### Landlord Leasing Checklist:

- Has the landlord provided all the documents which are legally required?
- When is the lease until and is there an option to renew?
- What's the actual process for paying the rent?
- Who is responsible for rates, taxes, insurance and other outgoings, such as contents insurance and utility bills?
- Will rental payments be tax deductible?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the premises, fixtures, fittings and equipment?
- Who will pay for creating the lease?
- When and how can the rent be reviewed and varied?
- Does the agreement allow the lease to be terminated early?
- What is and isn't permitted on the premises?
- Can the premises be assigned or sub-let?
- Are there permits, registrations or other licences which could affect lease negotiations

## AESI ... EXPERTS IN FIRE SAFETY & ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES

Making your property fire safe is paramount to saving lives and protecting your valuable investment.

AESI expertise will steer you in the right direction with all aspects of fire safety and building compliance namely: Current Building compliance and safety audits; Essential Safety Measures inspections & maintenance; Asbestos identification and compliance; Evacuation Plans & Training, Repairs and Maintenance, and OH&S Audit and Report.

## AUSTRALIAN ESSENTIAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

For confidential advice and assistance contact AESI.

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