



## SUBJECT: Part 3: Carry on Myth Busting

RECIPIENTS: All Council Services (including schools)

ISSUE DATE: June 2013 REF: HSB21.3

### Don't take the biscuit!

Half-baked decision takes the biscuit

Heard the one about the school which banned triangular flapjacks because a pupil got hurt when one was thrown at him? Sadly, this isn't a joke. But, far from getting into a flap about it, an Health and Safety Executives spokesman was quick to point out the real problem: 'The issue isn't what shape the flapjacks are, but the fact that pupils are throwing them at each other. That's a matter of discipline and has nothing to do with health and safety as we know it. We're happy to make clear that flapjacks of all shapes and sizes continue to have our full backing.'

Alas, this type of story is all too familiar to the Health and Safety Executives myth buster's panel. Set up just over a year ago, the panel has already reviewed more than 150 'health and safety' excuses with the aim of helping the public fight back against jobs-worth's who use safety laws as a convenient ruse to ban activities.

Among recent crackpot cases exposed as myths by the panel were:

- bars that refuse to pull pints in glasses with handles;
- toothpicks removed from the table of a restaurant;
- shredded paper banned from a school fete's lucky-dip stall;



Evidence of the panel's power emerges with another case study: after being told the experts had ruled that banning a bubbles machine from a birthday party was health and safety humbug, a venue backed down and let the bubbles blow.

You can find out more about the myths above and all the cases considered by the panel at [www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm)

Information myth busting tips can also be found in [HSB 21.1](#) & [HSB 21.2](#)



**If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:**

Your Mouchel Health & Safety Adviser (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)