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### Workplace Germs

When the season changes from winter to spring, many people find themselves battling illness. Some health experts speculate that a lack of vitamin D during winter months may weaken immune systems, but regardless of the exact cause, doctors tend to see an uptick in respiratory illness around this time of year. At the workplace, this can spell trouble for a sick person's co-workers, unless office hygiene is kept top of mind.

The typical employee's workspace has more bacteria per square inch than an office toilet seat. Door handles, shared kitchen appliances, desks, phones and other private surfaces are also prime habitats for the viruses and bacteria that cause colds, the flu, strep throat, pneumonia and other illnesses.

Even if you keep your personal workspace tidy, it may not be clean. Unlike toilets - which tend to be cleaned and disinfected regularly - keyboards, phone receivers, desks, and even office and kitchen countertops often go overlooked. Consider this: crumbs and coffee spills are capable of supporting mini eco-systems. Without a cleaning, your desk or phone can sustain millions of bacteria that could potentially cause illness.

The good news -- Heightened awareness and hygiene efforts can go a long way in keeping your workplace clean. Keep the following points in mind and share them with your co-workers:

- Germ-busting at the workplace is a team effort. It only takes one person to infect healthy co-workers.
- Regular cleaning of personal workspaces kills bacteria and stops the spread of germs.
- Frequent cleaning of shared workspaces (door handles, coffee pots, light switches, etc) is essential in maintaining sanitary safety.
- Be considerate of others and cough or sneeze into tissues, your sleeve or crook of your arm.

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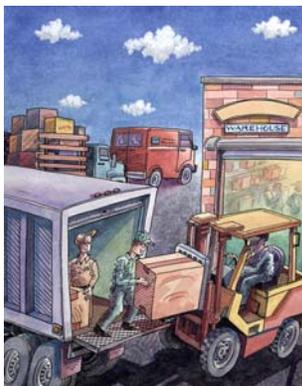
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## Manual Handling In The Workplace

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Manual handling - using bodily force to move a load by lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, or pulling - is something we all do from time to time. However, if you lift too much weight or don't use proper body mechanics, these types of tasks can put you at risk for injury.

The risks don't only come from transporting a large, heavy item. You can injure yourself even with a very light item, depending on the number of times you have to pick up or carry it, the distance you move it, the height from which you pick it up or set it down, and any twisting, bending, stretching or other

awkward postures you assume while handling it.

Manual handling injuries are indiscriminate - they can affect workers across all occupations. Manual handling is one of the most common causes of workplace injuries, and these types of injuries can occur anywhere, anytime. Heavy manual labor, awkward postures and previous or existing injuries can all increase the risk.

Injuries from improper manual handling tend to negatively affect injured workers' personal lives. These injuries can make it difficult to sleep, engage in leisure activities and can even lead to long-term health problems.

## 5 Strategies for Limiting Product Liability

Consider implementing these techniques to limit product liability:

1. Develop a quality control program and distribute it to your employees. It should outline procedures for product safety, design, testing and inspection. It should also include information regarding traceability, guidance regarding customer complaints and a product recall program.
2. Place serial or batch numbers on all products to ensure that they are traceable in case of a recall.
3. Keep records of all information about your products, including testing, product performance, component percentages and complaints.
4. Ask a legal professional to review warning labels, assembly and operation instructions, disclaimers and any other information, disclaimers and any other information distributed to consumers. If you need additional assistance, consult a product safety specialist.
5. Ask a legal professional to periodically review contracts and hold-harmless agreements for use with your customers and subcontractors. Assure that these contracts limit the liability you will assume for a quality product. Also consider obtaining certificates for liability insurance from your subcontractors.

## Need assistance?



Contact [Insurors of Texas](#) for all of your insurance and bonding needs. We have specialist in each field -- personal insurance, business insurance, bonding, and retirement planning.

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