

Germ Squirm: Taking the Fear Out of Your Workplace

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I don't consider myself a germ freak. Some people might look at my Sherpa, whom I pay to tote around 55-gallon drums of Purell hand sanitizer for me, and disagree. But I just don't like it when a cashier licks her fingers before counting out my change. It seems wrong—like she's indirectly spitting into my hand. And in light of H1N1 and a contract worker's lifestyle that offers zero compensation for missed work, I make no apologies. I don't want to get sick.

With those neurotic musings in mind, I offer you these unabashed suggestions how you, too, can maintain a boy-in-a-plastic-bubble-cleanliness-like-workplace.

(1) **Wipes and Gel:** Whether your leanings are toward the paper or liquid, hand sanitizers have a format for you. They kill 99.9% of most common germs, a success ratio that suits me just fine. I always carry a few paper wipes, they enable me to wipe down public computer keyboards, a common occurrence when I'm visiting clients. However, I also carry a small, plastic bottle of hand gel, it goes with me to the office, gym, and every place else (and has been a savior in many gas station restrooms). I appreciate the jumbo-sized refills available in the gel format, the cost savings are significant over hand wipes. And not to mention, everything dispensed eventually just disappears. Whatever your preference, selections continue to evolve for both, with pleasing scent- and moisturizer-infused varieties available. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/p-430-purell-sanitizing-wipes.aspx>)

(2) **Hand Sanitizer Dispensers:** Convenient and accessible hand sanitizer dispensers encourage employees to maintain diligent hygiene practices. Place these strategically throughout the workplace, especially in kitchens, bathrooms, and copy rooms. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/c-35-sanitizers.aspx>)

(3) **Touchless Hand Sanitizer Dispensers and Touch-Free Soap Dispensers:** I much prefer the touchless hand sanitizer variety over the push version, they reassure me that I'm receiving only hand sanitizer, not the germs from someone else's fingers. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/p-57-purell-tfx-1200-ml-touch-free-dispensing-system.aspx> and <http://www.u-need-it.com/p-277-gojo-tfx-1200-ml-touch-free-dispenser.aspx>)

(4) **Smokers' Station Wall Urn:** Sure, smoking is eliminated in most public buildings and workplaces, but what about that group of smokers who congregate outside the loading dock door? While their smoke remains outside, discarded butts can be tracked inside, an unpleasant and unhygienic occurrence. The Smokers' Station Wall Urn solves that dirty problem. Made of weather-resistant, galvanized steel and containing two disposal openings with stainless steel-extinguishing screens and steel inner liners, they ensure butts are neatly and aesthetically discarded. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/p-460-smokers-station-wall-urn.aspx>)

(5) **First Aid Kit:** Maintaining a well-stocked first aid kit in your workplace is essential for the safety and health of everyone. In some respects, ensuring that there are bandages and dressings to attend to wounds and scrapes is equally important to both the injured and non-injured, as they prevent bodily fluids from spreading. The Red Cross provides a detailed **checklist** (Link: <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/lifeline/fakit.html>) of what your kit should include. Additionally, you can find an overview of OSHA first aid standards **here**. (Link: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/medicalfirstaid/standards.html>)

(6) **Toilet Seat Covers:** Toilet seat covers are an ingenious invention. Besides establishing a safe barrier for full-seated rest breaks, they save toilet paper, eliminating paper waste that comes from excessive toilet paper seat covering rituals (guilty as charged). (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/c-64-toilet-seat-covers.aspx>)

(7) **Tissue Dispensers:** Not just for aesthetics, tissue dispensers protect tissue paper from absorbing airborne contaminants, ensuring a germ-free wipe or blow. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/c-74-paper-towel-dispensers.aspx>)

(8) **Classic Center Pull Towel Dispensers:** Touch only the towel you need with these crank- and lever-free dispensers, a germ-free system for paper towel distribution. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/p-84-classic-center-pull-towel-dispenser.aspx>)

(9) **Mopped Messes:** An accessible wet mop and appropriate cleaning solutions ensure quick and easy clean-up of spills. Keep these nearby in break rooms and bathrooms. (Link: <http://www.u-need-it.com/c-5-mops.aspx>)

U-Need-It.com stocks all of the above and many more hygiene solutions. I highly recommend them. Especially if you can't afford a Sherpa.

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