

## Don't Let Your Dirty Mobile Phone Make People Sick! – For Real

**M**obile phones — they are our everything now. They have taken the place of so many items we used to use — our home phones, our computers for email and research, our social media, our news updates, our weather forecasts, our photo albums, our television and movies, our calendars, our alarm clocks, our GPS, our music, and even how we monitor our health with fitness and calorie apps. It seems we can't help ourselves! We look at our smart phones any time we have a free moment to see if we are missing anything, whether it be an email, missed text, or a social media update.



from doing their jobs effectively.

Update the employee handbook with new rules mandating that employees leave their phones in their

lockers or in their bags while working. If staff members don't have their phones on them, there's no temptation to check the phone during a down moment.

But then...here we go...there is always a dire reason: "I am a caregiver for a parent," "I have small children," "Someone I love is in the hospital," "I am awaiting a call from a doctor," are all examples of the "why" people need to have their phones with them at all times.

### **Obviously, you don't want to be the bad guy...**

...in this situation. Instead, allow workers in such circumstances to keep a phone in a pocket with a promise not to abuse this privilege — and only as long as the "dire" need lasts. I also recommend the vibrate versus ringer mode. In addition, when employees must take or make calls, they must leave the kitchen or workplace and consider it as break time taken. This way, workers with a compelling need won't aggravate fellow employees who don't need their phones on them for a "dire" situation.

Tell all your employees to ask their contacts to call their building work number should someone need to reach them for an unexpected or urgent circumstance.

### **Make it mandatory...**

...in any circumstance and train



your staff that ANY time they touch a phone, they must wash their hands. This is 100 percent not negotiable. They simply MUST wash their hands any time after they touch their phone.

Train your staff to clean and sanitize their mobile phones.

### **The best way to clean and sanitize...**

...your phone and not ruin it is to make a solution mixed half and half of water and 70 percent isopropyl alcohol. Seventy percent isopropyl alcohol is less harsh and abrasive on your screen as opposed to 99 percent or 91 percent isopropyl alcohol. Then use a soft cloth to wipe the dirt off so you are cleaning your phone and sanitizing it at the same time.

Alternatively, you can invest in a ultraviolet phone sanitizer. Costing about \$50, this device uses ultraviolet light to sanitize your phone. This piece of equipment can also sanitize other things that you touch a lot — like your credit cards, driver's license, or even your toothbrush. It kills bacteria cells by damaging their DNA with the UV light.

For the sake of convenience, you could also use anti-bacterial sanitizing wipes, but they are not your best option because they can be abrasive to your phone.

### **How often should we clean our phones?**

If you can, every day, but at least once a week would be better than nothing.

Things have definitely changed with the introduction and increased use of smart phones. We need to continually adjust accordingly to our current habits and practices to keep food safe in the workplace and prevent food-borne illness and outbreaks.

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