

# TIP SHEET

A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the trucking industry



## Don't Let a Cough or Sneeze Spread Disease

Most times, a cough or sneeze is not a big deal. They are just harmless ways that your body protects its ability to breathe freely. When dust, dirt, germs, and other particles accidentally enter your airway, your body responds. You may feel an itch in your eyes, nose, or lungs, and then, suddenly, you take a quick, deep breath, shut your eyes, tighten your rib muscles, and let out a huge, loud blast of air. But there are times when this natural reaction that usually brings relief can become a health hazard. A cough or sneeze during flu season or a pandemic like the COVID-19 outbreak can spread germs that cause severe illness and death. Several days or much longer may pass before a sick employee shows any symptoms of illness.



*Never cough or sneeze into the air or into your bare hands.*

During this time, they may unknowingly spread germs if they cough or sneeze into their hands, near workers, and on objects that other people touch. An average sneeze or cough can spray thousands of germs from your lungs at speeds up to 100 mph and over distances of several feet. Slowing down the spread of germs and disease requires covering your cough and sneeze.

### How to cover coughs and sneezes:

- When you feel a cough or sneeze coming, face away from people, food, equipment, and any objects that people touch.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your upper sleeve.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### TIPS TO LIVE BY

#### Management:

- Train employees about cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Post signs asking employees and visitors to follow cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Provide employees tissue paper, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Provide no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal.
- Make sure your workplace is always kept in sanitary conditions.

#### Drivers:

- Carry a multi-day supply of tissue paper, soap, and hand sanitizer in your truck.
- Always cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Never touch your face, mouth, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Maintain 6-foot distancing from other people.
- Do not shake hands with other people.



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[KeepTruckingSafe.org](http://KeepTruckingSafe.org)

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