



## General liability claims

Historically, Foodborne claims in the Sonic Insurance Program have been a frequency issue, rather than a severity issue. More often, these foodborne claims make a significant impact on tomorrow's sales and the reputation of the brand due in part to social media.

In 2020 we have had some standout claims reported that could have been prevented and could potentially have higher costs. Looking at some of the recent general liability claims in the Sonic Insurance Program, we have seen foreign objects in food, food allergy issues and maraschino cherry pits causing tooth damage. Many of these foodborne claims are easily preventable. Observe the following practices in your restaurant to reduce the chance of having a foodborne claim at your location. These actions can help prevent accidental contamination and foreign objects in the food we are serving our guests.

- Keep all food items covered unless they are currently being used.
  - This includes condiments and sandwich toppings as well as items stored in walk-ins. Additionally, ice bins should be kept closed when not in use.
- Ensure there is adequate signage regarding food allergies and cross-contamination for foods prepared with nuts.



- Frequently check equipment to ensure there are no broken, cracked or missing pieces.
  - Screws, broken pieces of plastic and other equipment parts have been found in food that was served to guests.



There have been a handful of claims caused by damaged or broken patio furniture. If your location has patio furniture that is in need of replacement or repair, it would be best to remove it from the area to prevent usage. Adding signage saying “Do Not Use” may not be an effective deterrent to keep someone from using the damaged property.

As a reminder, all video surveillance equipment should always be in proper working order, as video surveillance footage may be useful when investigating reported claims.

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## Workers' compensation

The Sonic Insurance Program’s number one goal is to ensure the safety and health of all Sonic employees. When injuries are reported, more often than not, they were preventable. Major injury causes include slips, trips, falls and improper lifting techniques. Please use the following guidelines to assist in creating a safer work environment and ensure proper training of all employees at your location.

### **Slips, Trips, and Falls**

Many slips, trips, and falls are preventable. While they can be due to a variety of reasons – grease buildup on floors, puddles in front of ice machines, uneven surfaces or electrical cords running across walkways – many of these accidents could have been prevented through the implementation of proper housekeeping strategies. Keeping floors clean and free of grease and water is a simple solution to slippery floors. Regularly clean floors or consider installing floor mats in areas that are frequently wet. Instruct employees to walk slowly and carefully throughout the restaurant and while delivering food to customers. Oftentimes, boxes, electrical cords and other tripping hazards are left in odd locations throughout the restaurant, presenting additional slip, trip and fall hazards. All trash should be placed in proper receptacles and electrical cords should never run across walkways for employees to trip over.

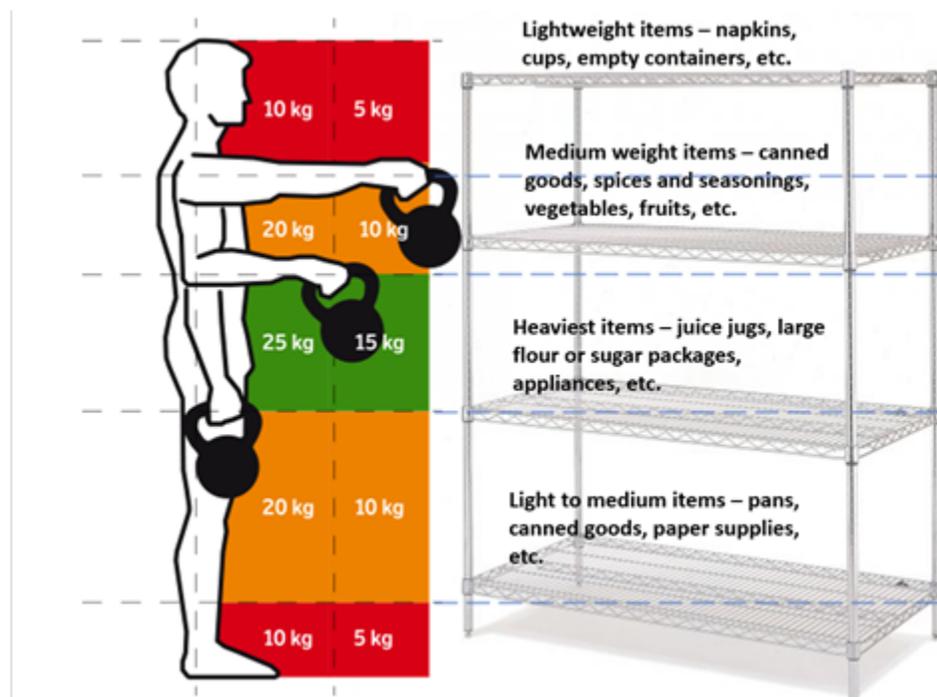


If your employees wear skates, ensure they are certified and are trained to recognize hazards that may cause injury on otherwise flat, smooth surfaces. For example, rocks, uneven cracks and even Sonic mints may be a hazard to skaters. Skaters should observe the No Safe Zones and adhere to safe skating practices.

Additionally, consider highlighting curbs and other changes in elevation to draw attention to these trip and fall hazards. It is very easy to unknowingly step off a curb and end up with an injured ankle as a result. Curbs and other uneven surfaces can be highlighted using a contrasting paint, for example, yellow or white. Where sidewalks are buckled, consider having them shaved off to create a smooth surface.

### Safe Lifting Techniques

Many back injuries are caused by improper lifting techniques. There are many strategies that can reduce the chance of a back injury or sprain/strain to other parts of the body. When lifting, get a good grip on the item and hold it close to your body to ensure the best body mechanics. It is important to keep your back straight, bend at the knees and face forward as you lift. Never lift with your back but instead, focus on using your leg muscles to do the work. If an item is too heavy or difficult to lift on your own, ask a coworker to assist you while applying the same strategies. Never lift and twist – if you must turn to place items on a shelf or inside a walk-in, rotate your entire body in the turn instead of twisting the torso. Refer to the diagram below when storing items on shelves within your restaurant. The heaviest items should be stored within the torso area (power zone) to make it easier when moving them.



For additional loss prevention information visit the Sonic web portal

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**If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact  
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