

Deffebach in Business Insurance on Employer Liability in Disaster Cleanup

November 15, 2017 Matthew Deffebach

PRACTICES Labor and Employment

Business Insurance quoted Haynes Boone Partner [Matthew Deffebach](#) on employers' potential liabilities stemming from dangerous conditions for workers handling cleanup after natural disasters.

Citing recent hurricanes that hit Texas, Louisiana and Florida, *Business Insurance* reported about safety hazards such as water contaminated with toxins and bacteria, chemicals from factories and gas stations, runoff from wastewater treatment plants and dead animals.

Business Insurance [reported](#) that for employers involved in recovery efforts, general advice is to have a safety plan in place that focuses on what to do in the aftermath of a storm, have an emergency response team that is specifically trained to respond, have the right gear for this type of work and make sure that workers know how to use the gear properly.

Employers whose workers are directly involved with the recovery effort have the most at stake in terms of liability, said Deffebach, a Houston-based partner and head of the Labor and Employment Practice Group at Haynes Boone. This is "because it's expected as part of the course and scope of the employee's duties to go into an area that could potentially have a mixture of storm sewer and sewage systems flooding into the water," he said.

"Most private-sector employees are not going to necessarily be working in contaminated waters unless they have a facility that flooded, or part of their private-sector job duties consist of remediation," he said.

Excerpted from *Business Insurance*. To read the full article, click [here](#).