

## Texas Senate Passes Asbestos Causation Bill

In April 2009, the Texas Senate approved Senate Bill 1123 to change the standards in asbestos – related mesothelioma lawsuits that required plaintiffs to prove the dose they claimed contributed to their disease. This legislation would lower the standard for proving that the asbestos exposure was significant enough to cause cancer.

Concerns over how much the bill might negatively impact businesses and whether trial lawyers deserve big contingency fees when they win asbestos cases were debated. Senator Dan Patrick, R-

Houston was quoted as saying, “Trial lawyers chase big pots of money. This is a big pot of money.”

Under the bill, businesses may be forced to settle regardless of liability because they couldn't afford to defend a lawsuit and threat of unlimited damages. Therefore, it may become necessary for defendants to protect themselves from mesothelioma claims that they are not responsible for due to this bill changing the causation standard upheld by the 2007 Texas Supreme Court

decision (Borg-Warner v. Flores) which required plaintiffs to prove exposure to defendant's product, as well as proving that the dose was sufficient to be a substantial cause of mesothelioma.

Senator Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock who sponsored the legislation, said that the bill would not “ruin the business climate in Texas, but prevent these people from dying by the time their case is finally resolved.”

Although the bill was passed by the Senate, it did not make it through the House.

## Earth Day—40th Anniversary

### Protect and Improve the Environment

On April 22, the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, millions of people will participate in activities that encourage them to **explore** new, creative ways to do their part for the environment. Waterway and litter cleanups, recycling collections, and educational opportunities are just a few of the events that will help protect and improve the environment.

**Share** with others how you take care of the environment. You can post your story on the Take Care of Texas Web site at <[www.takecareoftexas.org/share-your-story/](http://www.takecareoftexas.org/share-your-story/)>. An

online **pledge** calculator will enable you to find out how much water, energy, and money you can save this year.

If you would like to **encourage** others to do their part for Earth Day—and every day—try posting the Take Care of Texas Countdown to Earth Day widget on your Web site, Facebook page, or blog. For simple posting instructions, visit <[www.takecareoftexas.org/tcot-widgets/](http://www.takecareoftexas.org/tcot-widgets/)>.

Looking for more ways to take action in your community? Visit <[www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)>

### Use Fewer Toxic Cleaning Products

You can reduce pollutants in the air and water and help improve the air quality in your house by using fewer toxic cleaning products. Eliminate the need for aerosols by using baking soda as a deodorizer. Dissolve 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart of water for an all-purpose cleaner, and use vinegar to dissolve mineral deposits and remove soap scum and mildew. Try a plunger first to open clogs. If that doesn't work, pour 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain, add 1/2 cup of white vinegar, and cover the drain.

## Portable Heaters

If you work in a cold area, you are undoubtedly grateful for the way portable heaters can help ease the chill.

Unfortunately, that comfort can come at a high price. During an average year, portable heaters cause 2,400 fires, 80 deaths and 240 injuries. This may make you think twice before turning on that portable heater.

Following these rules can help keep you and your coworkers safe.

1. **Don't run extension cords** under carpets, rugs or mats. Be alert to spot signs of electrical overload.
2. **Never touch** an electric heater when wet!
3. **Follow the manufacturer's guidelines** for minimum clearance distance from combustible materials such as wood, carpet and

plastic which can dry out in the heat, making them more likely to ignite.

4. **Reduce potential fire hazards** by not putting gloves or clothing on top of the heater to dry.
5. **Small heaters shouldn't be kept** under work tables or desks. It's easy for papers, etc. to cause a fire by falling behind or under the heater.



## Caliche Employee Spotlight

This month we are recognizing and saying goodbye to a long time member of our Caliche team. Chris Ewing is retiring after 21 years with Caliche, Ltd. (Environmental Technologies, Inc.).

Chris joined our Admin staff on March 13, 1989. Since that time, Chris has been one of our key go to people for just about every office task imaginable, from answering phones and

filing, drafting reports and proposals, managing marketing campaigns including this newsletter, to asbestos fiber counting. Chris has even occasionally taken on the role of technician going into the field to monitor asbestos abatement and perform onsite data entry.

Although Chris is retiring from Caliche, she is not planning a life of leisure, instead looking forward to a new career as a full-time grandma.

Caliche's goal through this quarterly publication is to provide valuable information that will be of interest, and helpful to you in your workplace. Your feedback is important to us! Do you have topics you would like us to include? Did you find this information useful? Please let us know by contacting us at [calicheltd@calicheltd.com](mailto:calicheltd@calicheltd.com) or 281-356-6038. For more information about Caliche, Ltd. visit us at [www.calicheltd.com](http://www.calicheltd.com).