



Product and Service Selection



Before the first sale, selecting new products and services involves research, design, analysis, testing and planning – a process that can require multiple evaluations. Through this initial process, safety hazards presented by new products and services are identified and engineered out, guarded against or warned about. However, the litigious climate once common only to high-hazard products has found its way into a wide range of industries and product types. Recalls, class action lawsuits, and social media influence can negatively impact your industry, and can delay or disrupt bringing a product or service to market.

As you explore new options for products and services, consider the following to help you identify potential exposures.

Why Does the Selection Process Matter?

The focus of conducting an initial product or service selection analysis is to promote awareness within your company of conditions that could result in an injury to a customer, damage to property, a formal recall, a product liability claim or adverse publicity about your company.

What Are the Potential Consequences of a Product or Service?

Consider the possible consequences if a product breaks during normal use, stops working, is subjected to extreme or abusive use, or is misused by an inexperienced or untrained individual. In addition, consider the possible consequences if the service is performed improperly or not correctly completed. Were these situations accounted for in the original design or plan? What is the worst-case loss scenario?

Research similar products or services to identify hazards, injuries, lawsuits and recalls. If nothing similar exists, research the industry it will serve and investigate hazardous conditions in which the product or service will be used.

How Can You Evaluate Products and Services?

Use a consistent risk assessment process on similar products and services your company offers. Gather small groups of employees from every department to evaluate products and services, and ask pertinent questions about their functionality. What isn't safe? What can break? What can go wrong? What aspect of the product or service is cause for concern? Then, consolidate and review all of the results.

In addition, consideration should be given to:

- End users
- Intrinsic hazards
- Hazards encountered during servicing
- Potential misuse hazards
- Packaging material hazards (suffocation or choking)
- Types of locations where used
- Environments in use (extreme temperatures, wet, dusty or explosive)
- Industries and applications
- Industry regulations and standards
- Foreign sales regulations and standards
- Ability of your production and quality assurance departments to provide adequate support
- Ability of raw materials suppliers, component parts suppliers, and subcontracted service providers to support the new product or service
- Marketing materials portrayal of personal protective equipment use
- Clearly written and correctly translated instructions and safety messages
- Company recall capability
- Product end-of-life procedures such as disposal and recycling
- Product and service safety evaluation
- Provisions to monitor issues in social media
- Discussions with your broker, agent or CNA Risk Control professional to gain an insurance perspective

Resources

[American National Standard Institute, ANSI](#)

[Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC](#)

[UL Solutions](#)

For more information, visit cna.com/riskcontrol.

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