

When Working From Home Turns Deadly

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Cathleen Renner had a desk job that resulted in an inactive lifestyle (I think most of us can relate). After 25 years with AT&T, however, the obese Renner died of a blood clot right there at her desk after a 10-hour work shift at her home office. Even more unusual, [a New Jersey appellate court ruled that Renner's husband was entitled to workers compensation benefits](#). How?

AT&T contended that Renner's work was no more a threat to her health than her day-to-day lifestyle, the ruling states. The company also said many factors besides her work contributed to her death. A lawyer for AT&T did not return a message seeking comment. Dr. Leon Waller, who testified on behalf of the 47-year-old Renner, acknowledged the mother of three had other risk factors like obesity and the use of birth control pills, the ruling states. But Waller found that Renner's clot developed while she was working.

The court found that although Renner led a sedentary life both inside and outside of work, evidence showed that her work inactivity was greater than her non-work

inactivity.

This is a first of its kind for workers comp cases. But **will it have an effect on on future workers comp cases of the same nature?** "[I could see another judge with those same factual circumstances deciding otherwise,](#)" said Gerald Rotella, chairman of the workers' compensation committee for the New Jersey State Bar Association.

Working from home has become popular in today's workforce; it boosts employee morale, cuts down transportation costs and in some instances, increases employee productivity as a result of diminished distractions. But what happens when an employee takes on too much without the supervision of a manager? Though a lethal outcome is rare, other health risks could easily surface.

How do you keep an eye on those working from home?



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