Take a Safe Break

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WHAT’S AT STAKE

Break time is your chance to break away from the routine and relax before heading back to work. But you can’t take a break from safety.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Accidents do happen during lunch periods and coffee breaks. Many people have died during rest breaks.

EXAMPLE

One worker climbed inside a piece of machinery for a nap. Someone else started the machine and he was killed.

Falls can occur during breaks. Workers tend to hurry when leaving or returning to the jobsite. Traffic accidents are also known to occur when workers rush to make it back on time after lunch break.

Drinking beer during lunch break was found to have contributed to one worker’s fatal fall later that day.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Watch for wet, slippery floors in lunch areas and washrooms.

Remember that parking lots can be especially hazardous at lunch time, with both drivers and pedestrians hurrying.

Report to your supervisor if breaks are used for drinking alcohol and using drugs ? activities which create a hazard for others.

Wash up before eating, drinking or smoking, to help prevent the spread of infections. If your job requires use of hazardous substances, wash up correctly to avoid contamination.

Use breaks for activities which enhance safety and health. Eat nutritious food and take the time to rest.

Do stretching exercises to increase flexibility and prevent some injuries such as back problems and repetitive strain injuries. Here are some ideas for break-time exercises:

- Flex your hands and fingers. This can help to relieve discomfort. It may also reduce the risk of injuries caused by repetitive tasks.
- Shrug your shoulders. This will help relieve the tension in your neck, shoulders and back.
- Tilt your head gently back and forth and from side to side to loosen the neck muscles.
- Gently rotate your body with your hands behind or over your head.
- To increase range of motion of your body and arms, lock your hands behind your back and lift your arms gently.
- Swing your arms in circles, gently, to relieve muscle tension.

FINAL WORD

Your break time is your time, but it is important that you keep safety in mind at all times. By choosing safe and healthful activities for your rest periods, you help yourself work more

safely. It is important to remain alert to hazards even while we are taking it easy.