Control Stress to Work Safely



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Meeting Kit

Safety Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE
Stress – everyone has it. It is a natural part of life, but too much stress can cause health problems and can affect your ability to work safely.

Stress occurs when we are faced with situations that cause fear – worries about that son or daughter serving overseas, about hanging on to a job in this time of high unemployment or even about the flu crisis.

WHAT'S THE DANGER
Physical symptoms of excessive stress can include headaches, digestive upsets, muscle tension, sweating, shaking, heart irregularities, fatigue and other discomforts.

Emotional and mental symptoms can include nervousness, depression, confusion, inability to concentrate, mood swings and anger.

Long-term stress has been linked to ailments such as heart disease, cancer and ulcers.

EXAMPLE
Certain behaviors may also be symptoms of too much stress – excessive eating, drinking, smoking or drug use. Recklessness in driving and work activities may also be a sign of stress.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Learn to manage your time better to avoid last-minute deadline pressures or work overload. Learn to delegate some responsibilities.
- Tackle first things first. Learn to complete your work in order of priority

– doing the most important task first and saving the least important for last.

- Talk things over with somebody you trust. This helps you by letting off steam, and you may come up with some solutions.
- Learn to focus on solutions rather than problems. Instead of just complaining about what is wrong, try to find ways to fix it.
- Learn some specific stress reduction skills. Many people find relief from stress by practicing techniques such as deep breathing, progressive relaxation or even meditation.
- Get regular exercise. It will help you fight stress in two ways. First, exercise is relaxing and it gets your mind off your worries. Second, being physically fit can help you to handle stressful events better.
- Eat regular balanced meals. You'll feel better and you'll improve your health. Don't overdo the caffeine because it can increase nervousness. Take it easy on sugar, as well as alcohol and other drugs.
- Get enough sleep, and take time to relax each day.
- Develop some interests outside of work. Spend some time on a recreational activity each day – even if you have only 15 minutes to spare.

FINAL WORD

What does all this have to do with safety? It is important to reduce stress so that you can concentrate on doing your job well and safely. Injuries occur when people are distracted by stress.