



# The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

## Sleep and safety

*Know the connection*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has called lack of sleep “an epidemic,” linking it to motor vehicle crashes, industrial disasters and other occupational errors. Many other studies have found employees who sleep fewer than six hours per day are nearly 30 percent more likely to be overweight and have health problems like hypertension, diabetes, depression and cancer.

These people also take a tremendous cognitive hit on a daily basis, finding it difficult to concentrate at work or complete tasks, resulting in lower productivity. Sleep disturbances cause fatigue-related productivity losses estimated at \$1,967 per employee annually, according to a study published in the journal *Sleep*.

For employees who drive on the job, operate machinery or perform other safety-sensitive tasks, sleep deprivation can be particularly dangerous. The National Sleep Foundation's 2012 *Sleep in America* poll, which focused on transportation workers, found that about one-fourth of train operators and pilots admitted that sleepiness affected their job performance at least once a week, as did about one in six nontransportation workers.

The Virgin Pulse Institute study found **four key themes keeping employees awake at night: worry/stress, mental activity, physical discomfort and environmental disruptors**. many factors within these categories kept participants awake, including:

- Temperature too high or too low (85.2%)
- Their partner (71.9%)
- Unwanted noise (68.6%)
- Light (52.8%)
- Mattress (40%)
- Young children (35.9%)
- Medical condition that disturbs sleep (10.2%)



Sleep deprivation was found to have impacts across **four key areas: physical well-being, cognitive abilities and productivity, mood; and stress management**. Lack of sleep leaves employees less focused on the job and unable to perform at their peak and leaves them experiencing a decreased feeling of overall well-being, according to the Institute study.

For the complete study, go to <http://connect.virginpulse.com/asleep-on-the-job-report-from-virgin-pulse.pdf>.

### news & notes

#### SLEEP STUDY

The Virgin Pulse Institute conducted a sleep study in November 2013 with approximately 1,140 employees from three U.S.-based companies.

Researchers found that:

- 76 percent of employees felt tired most days of the week;
- 40 percent of employees doze off during the day once per month;
- 30 percent of employees were unhappy or very unhappy with the quality or quantity of their sleep; *and*
- 15 percent doze off during the day at least once per week to once per day.

Dr. Jennifer Turgiss, a co-author of the study and director of the Virgin Pulse Institute, said:

“Showing up to work sleep deprived can be the equivalent of showing up to work intoxicated. Employees who don't sleep well have poorer concentration, poorer decision-making abilities, are significantly less able to cope with stressful situations and are more likely to make unhealthy choices.”



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# Ergonomics in the office

## *Protect yourself from musculoskeletal disorders*

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 1.8 million workers in the United States report work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) each year. OSHA states that ergonomics is the solution to preventing these work-related MSD injuries and illnesses. Take these ergonomic steps:

- **Position your monitor directly in front of you** so that you do not have to twist your head, neck, or body to view the screen.
- **Maintain a comfortable viewing distance** between your eyes and the monitor.
- **Place source documents just below eye level**, angled slightly upward and at the same distance from your eyes as the monitor.
- **Take appropriate steps to reduce glare** on the screen.
- **Adjust your chair** so that you can sit with your back comfortably straight and your head level.
- **Allow your feet to rest flat on the floor** or on a stable footrest.
- **Keep your shoulders and upper arms perpendicular to the floor** and relaxed.
- **Keep your upper arms and elbows close to your body.**
- **Keep your forearms, wrists and hands straight**, not bent up, down, or sideways.
- **Give your eyes a break** from time to time by refocusing on something at a distance.
- **Stand up and stretch** or walk around for a few minutes every hour.

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### Got News?

**Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at [tcreel@arkhospitals.org](mailto:tcreel@arkhospitals.org).**

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. [www.bxsi.com](http://www.bxsi.com). In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.

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