

SAFETY UPDATES

Brothers and Sisters,

There has been a lot of discussion around management's latest bulletin entitled "Break Time Rules". The Union has great concern with some of the content of the bulletin in how it relates to the health and safety of our members. The main issues we have are the references to what constitutes a break time and the requirements for shower time. We believe these two items to actually be in contravention of WSBC regulation 5.82 (*Personal Hygiene - Employer's responsibility*) and that the limiting of break times in the areas of the plant where there is excessive heat (ABF, Rodding hot side, potrooms, etc.) will be in violation of 7.30 (2)(a) (*Heat stress controls*) of the Regulations.

We put the question to upper management as to how a worker will be able to get proper time to wash up before each break as stated in the regulations when travel time to and from the work station is included as part of the break. In many cases this will amount to the worker essentially getting a 5 minute break from a heat exposed and/or contaminated work area. As it states in 5.82 (1)(d) the employer will allow time **BEFORE** each work break to wash up. We cannot say the worker's break has even started if they are still contaminated.

Another concern we have is in relation to heat stress. Having a worker work 3.5 hours in extreme heat only to potentially have a 5-10 minute break is unacceptable and potentially dangerous. To us this work/rest cycle is inadequate. These new break time rules were to be implemented and yet all the while the potrooms still do not have cool down areas (cool rooms) to seek relief from heat during hot conditions. WSBC has been contacted and has been asked to intervene and expedite the cool room project which has dragged on for far too long.

Management has now agreed that the break time does not start until the worker has washed up, as per the Regulation, and some areas have already added additional time for travel & wash up.

As far as shower time is concerned, nowhere in the Regulations does it state that it is 15 minutes. It only refers to "time for showering and clothing change before the end of the work shift." What it does say is that the shower time is to be provided **BEFORE** the end of the work shift. It's the employer's responsibility to ensure that workers leave the worksite in the same condition as when they arrived. Again, 15 minutes may not be sufficient in order for workers to travel to the shower room and get clean of contaminants before the end of the shift as some work sites are a considerable distance away from the change house (ABF, Potrooms, etc.). A little bit of common sense would go a long way on this issue.

One more concern is the reference to an allowance for shower time "if applicable". WSBC came in to deal with this concern in Casting four years ago and at that time WSBC gave the employer direction on this matter. WSBC stated that the regulation applies to the whole of the operation until a thorough risk assessment identifying all the hazards is identified. Seeing as the WSBC guidelines specifically identify "smelting operations", the words "if applicable" should not be mentioned in the company's bulletin. The onus falls on the employer to prove that workplace contaminants do not exist in one particular area of the "smelting operations" and WSBC should be involved in that process.

The other indignity workers have had to deal with in Reduction is the lack of washroom facilities. This, like the coolrooms, has been a concern for over a year now with lots of promises but no action. Some workers have had to resort to the unthinkable and go to the washroom wherever they can due to the long distance from any available services. This is as unacceptable as it is deplorable. WSBC has also been contacted on this issue to help get this project done. The money has been approved and everyone agrees it needs to get done but the reality is that it is not getting done.

We still have workers taking only one or two breaks per shift for fear of discipline. We need people to follow what the company has now communicated which is everyone is entitled to three break times per 12 hour shift. We can debate the length of the breaks but what people need to do is take their breaks and if supervisors are denying that, we need to be made aware with specifics and we will take those to management. If you are at the point of fatigue you must report this to your supervisor and ultimately you do have the right to refuse unsafe work under WSBC regulations if need be. We cannot have a worker at the point of exhaustion due to excessive working hours or unreasonable work/rest cycles.

These are just some of the main issues that the Union is trying to address using the avenues available to us either at the KKOHSE Plant Safety Committee level, by initiating discussions with WSBC or by grieving items that are a violation of the CLA. We understand that workers are feeling beaten down and stressed out and that is why the Union is diligently doing its best to hold the company accountable to ensure that the push for production does not culminate with a serious injury or worse yet a fatality!

Remember: No task is so urgent or important that you can't take the time to do it safely!

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