

SICE Guideline for Breaks during the Workday

Scope

All staff employees.

Guideline

Supervisors may approve a brief, up to 15 minute, break for each four hour period worked. This break period is to be considered time worked. These breaks are in addition to the typical 30-60 minute unpaid lunch break.

Reason for Guidelines

Occasional breaks during the workday can result in increased productivity, and provide important rest periods from computer monitors, as recommended by OSHA*. Excessive numbers of breaks produce the opposite effect. Abusive use of break periods can negatively affect co-workers and may constitute ghost employment.

Additionally, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, and record-keeping standards for the United States. Indiana University supplements the Act with policies on matters that are not covered in the FLSA, such as certain work hour rules, rest periods and lunch breaks. Further guidance can be found within the HR-06-70 Work Schedules and Hours for Non-Exempt Employees policy.

Procedures and Tips

1. Breaks should be scheduled so that the efficiency of the work unit does not suffer.
2. Supervisors and employees should work to staff the breaks so that all employees in the department or within the work group are not taking a break at the same time.
3. Supervisors have the discretion to allow or deny breaks.
4. Taking an excessive number of breaks, taking unapproved breaks, or taking breaks in excess of the agreed upon duration is subject to disciplinary action.
5. Time allowed for rest periods is not cumulative, is not intended to cover late arrival or early departure, nor can it be saved for later use.

Sanctions

Managers, supervisors, and employees who violate this guideline are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

*<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/videoDisplay/videoDisplay.html>