

REST AT EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

1739

(No. 10 September 1997)

The quality, timing, and duration of rest allowed at emergency incidents will affect employee production rates and risk of accident or injury. Managers and supervisors should follow these guidelines to ensure appropriate rest is provided.

REST BREAKS

1739.1

(No. 10 September 1997)

During periods of intense work, frequent 10- to 30-second rest breaks can significantly delay the onset of fatigue. During moderate but prolonged work, less frequent breaks of 10 minutes or more keep performance from declining. The number and length of breaks should increase after 8 hours, because fatigue builds continuously throughout a shift.

SLEEP

1739.2

(No. 10 September 1997)

Sleep is a prime factor in controlling fatigue. For firefighters to perform well on long-duration incidents, they should average one hour of sleep for every two hours of work. This 2-to-1 ratio means that in a 24-hour period, a 14-hour shift is about as long as crews can work and still get the sleep they need.

WORK/REST SCHEDULES

1739.3

(No. 10 September 1997)

Incident commanders should make an effort to establish work schedules that minimize fatigue by:

- Setting up record keeping systems to monitor crew work time.
- Striving to provide 1 hour of sleep or rest for every 2 hours worked.
- Putting only rested crews on a fire.
- Making every effort to provide crews with warm, dry, and nonsmoky sleeping areas.
- Providing shade and quiet sleeping areas for night-shift crews.

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