Breaks for Nursing Mothers

The Affordable Care Act has required employers since last March to provide reasonable break time and a private place for an employee to express breast milk for a nursing child up to one year after the child's birth. This requirement applies to employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (and not exempt from section 7 overtime pay requirements). In early 2011, the Department of Labor solicited public feedback to help develop guidelines for the law, which did not specify what a "reasonable" break was or specifically describe the private space, and they are now processing the 1800 comments they received.

US Dept of labor (Break Time for Nursing Mothers) - www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/
amednews.com - www.ama-assn.org/amednews/m/2011/05/16/bca0516.htm

Ups & Downs of Revising a Standard

A Department of Labor-enforced noise standard was first issued in the late 1960s, became an OSHA standard in 1971, and has been surrounded by controversy ever since. Last year OSHA proposed a renewed focus on administrative and engineering controls as the primary means of reducing noise exposure (rather than hearing conservation methods such as ear plugs that employers have been allowed to rely on). The agency began soliciting public comments in 2010, then withdrew the proposed interpretations of the current standard in January 2011, citing pressure from Congress, and is now gathering information "while [they] study other approaches to abating workplace noise hazards."

OSHA (news release) -

Current Info on a Nanoscale Chemical

In April NIOSH released Current Intelligence Bulletin (CIB) 63: Occupational Exposure to Titanium Dioxide. The CIB reviews current data on the potential adverse health effects of TiO2 exposure (the insoluble powder is used in paint, cosmetics, food and other commercial products). It also provides recommended exposure limits (RELs) for fine and ultrafine TiO2 and describes monitoring and control strategies. Because this chemical is produced and used in both fine and ultrafine sizes, NIOSH for the first time released two separate guidelines for a chemical.

(NIOSH Update) - www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-04-18-11.html

IOWA WORKLIFE FORUM

♦ an online forum of ideas and strategies to address employee health and wellness♦

Tuesday, June 28, 8-9am
"Strategies for Workplace Stress"

Learn about the research related to this pervasive problem—3 of 4 American workers describe their work as stressful—as well as the current information and resources from the Work, Stress, and Health 2011 Conference.

Presenter: Sandra L. Ramey, PhD, RN
University of Iowa College of Public Health

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To connect: www.public-health.uiowa.edu/HWCE/current-initiatives/IowaWorklifeForum.html
(or contact matthew-lozier@uiowa.edu, 319/467-4505)

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).