

Hours of Work (Article III): Meal Breaks

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New: Section 8: Meal Breaks

[As all this text is new, we didn't use underlines]

Employees who work more than six (6) hours in a day must be given a one-half (1/2) hour unpaid meal period. *[This sentence comes from management's policy document].*

Management will assign a Break RN to take the patient assignment of RNs in each unit on each shift so that the RNs can be relieved of their duties and take their breaks required above and as required by M.G.L. Chapter 149, Section 100 (as it may be amended). Specifically:

In the ED: A relief RN for at least three hours during the day shift and another during the evening and night shifts.

In the ICU: A relief RN for at least three hours during the day shift and another during the night shift

In the psych unit: A relief RN for at least three hours during the day shift and another during the night shift

In each med surg and telemetry unit: A relief RN for at least three hours during the day shift and another during the night shift

In each outpatient department: A relief RN for at least two hours during the day shift.

If any of the above department is staffing with fewer than four (4) RNs on a given shift then the Relief RN may be assigned to that unit for less time, provided that they are assigned for not less than 40 minutes per RN from whom they have to provide a break and take a transfer.

The following is reference material. It is not part of our proposal.

Mass. General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 100:

“No person shall be required to work for more than six hours during a calendar day without an interval of at least thirty minutes for a meal. Any employer, superintendent, overseer or agent who violates this section shall be punished by a fine of not less than three hundred nor more than six hundred dollars.”

[Following is from the Massachusetts Attorney General’s web site]:



“Massachusetts law states that employees must receive a 30-minute break after six hours of working. An employee must be free to leave the workplace during the break. An employee can voluntarily give up the meal break, but must be paid for all hours worked. Compensation for the 30-minute meal break must be paid if the employee has voluntarily agreed to waive his or her meal break by (1) working through his or her meal break, or (2) remaining on the premises at the request of the employer during the meal break. The break period may be unpaid. Certain exemptions from this requirement can be found in M.G.L. c. 149, s. 101” [Comment from MNA: There are no exceptions related to hospital workers].
