

**STAYING ALERT DURING THE LAST HOUR OF WORK**

Many workplace injuries happen during the final hour of a shift. Fatigue, rushing to finish tasks, and reduced focus can lead to poor decisions and mistakes. After a full day of physical or mental effort, concentration naturally drops — but the hazards remain the same.

This toolbox talk focuses on why the last hour of work is high-risk and how to stay alert until the job is truly finished.

Why the Last Hour Is Dangerous

As the shift comes to an end, workers may:

- Feel physically tired.
- Lose concentration.
- Rush to complete tasks.
- Take shortcuts to finish faster.
- Think ahead to going home.
- Skip proper clean-up procedures.
- Ignore minor hazards.

Fatigue slows reaction time, reduces awareness, and increases the likelihood of errors.

High-Risk Situations at End of Shift

Certain activities become more dangerous when you are tired:

- Working at height.
- Operating machinery.
- Using power tools.
- Lifting heavy objects.
- Handling chemicals.
- Cleaning equipment.
- Driving company vehicles home.

Simple tasks can become risky when attention drops.

How to Stay Alert

To reduce risk during the last hour:

- Treat the final hour like the first hour — stay focused.
- Avoid rushing to finish.
- Complete tasks properly rather than leaving them half done.
- Take short pauses if needed to refocus.
- Stay hydrated.
- Maintain good housekeeping.
- Double-check that equipment is shut down correctly.
- Use correct PPE until you leave the work area.

Finishing safely is part of doing the job properly.

Planning the End of Shift

A safe shift includes safe shutdown:

- Secure tools and equipment.
- Isolate machinery properly.
- Remove waste and hazards.
- Store chemicals safely.
- Ensure walkways are clear.
- Communicate any unfinished or unsafe conditions to supervisors.

Do not leave hazards for the next shift.

Personal Responsibility

Going home safely depends on staying alert until the job is fully complete. Many injuries occur just before workers clock out because they believe the day is already over. Safety does not end until you leave the workplace.

Discussion Points

1. Why do you think injuries increase near the end of shifts?
2. What tasks here become more dangerous when tired?
3. What can we improve to ensure safe end-of-shift procedures?

