

Heart Health at Work: Support the Plan and Know the Warning Signs

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Why this matters

Work schedules can make it hard to take planned breaks or seek help. Leaders can improve those arrangements. Everyone should also know how to respond when symptoms may signal a heart emergency, without trying to diagnose a coworker.

Objective: Check practical support and the emergency-help route for possible heart-attack symptoms.

Key hazards or failure points

Ignored symptoms; waiting for certainty; an inaccessible phone; no relief arrangement; self-driving for emergency care; pressure to share private medical information.

Practical controls

- Make agreed breaks, meal opportunities and task relief workable. Use a private route for concerns or work restrictions. Personal exercise and treatment decisions belong with the worker's healthcare team.
- Know that chest or upper-body discomfort, shortness of breath, cold sweat or lightheadedness can be warning signs. Symptoms vary. Call 911 promptly for a possible heart attack rather than waiting to prove the cause.
- Arrange emergency access and someone to meet responders. Do not have the person drive themselves. If the person becomes unresponsive and is not breathing normally, follow the CPR/AED emergency response.

Verify It in the Field

Check today's relief arrangement with the person responsible for staffing. Ask which work demand could prevent an agreed break and what change will make coverage possible. Do not ask for diagnoses.

Ask workers how they would request a private conversation or task review. Confirm the contact and backup can respond today; a wellness poster alone does not provide relief.

Have someone explain the emergency call method, exact location and responder access. Check communications normally without a test 911 call. Record operational arrangements and gaps, not medical measurements or personal histories.

Stop and reassess

Stop activity and call 911 for possible heart-attack symptoms; do not wait for severe pain or certainty. Follow dispatcher instructions. If the person becomes unresponsive with abnormal or absent breathing, begin the indicated CPR/AED response. Keep yourself clear of uncontrolled hazards.

Ask the crew

1. What could prevent planned relief today?
2. Who can arrange a private work review?
3. How will emergency responders reach this location?

Today's check: make relief and emergency access usable.

Sources: CDC heart-disease prevention; AHA heart-attack warning signs and 2025 Adult BLS.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.