

Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Standards unit by visiting www.doli.state.mn.us/laborlaw.html, by e-mailing dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us or by calling (651) 284-5005, toll-free 1-800-342-5354.

Q How many breaks are employees allowed?

A Minnesota's Labor Standards and Wages Act states employers must provide employees with a break to use the restroom at least once every four consecutive hours. Sufficient time to eat a meal must be provided to all employees who work eight or more hours. Employers must pay employees for all breaks that are fewer than 20 minutes long. Contact DLI Labor Standards (see above) for more information.

Federal OSHA requires employers to allow employees prompt access to sanitary facilities. Any restrictions about access to toilet facilities must be reasonable and not cause extended delays. Otherwise, OSHA does not regulate the number or length of work breaks.

Ask MNOSHA

Do you have a question for Minnesota OSHA? To get an answer, call (651) 284-5050 or send an e-mail message to osha.compliance@state.mn.us. We may feature your question here.

Injury and illness survey gearing up for new year

By Brian Zaidman, Policy Development, Research and Statistics

As 2007 draws to a close, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) will start work on the next round of the Bureau of Labor Statistics annual *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* (SOII). The SOII is a mandatory survey; employers that receive a notification of participation are required by federal law to respond. Each year, approximately 5,000 Minnesota employers participate in the SOII.

Employers that are participating in the survey of 2007 injuries and illnesses will receive their survey response packets during the first few weeks of January 2008. Employers will have the option of responding on paper, through the Internet or via e-mail. Employers' timely response to the survey is greatly appreciated and helps keep the survey costs low.

Employers that have been selected to participate in the survey of 2008 injuries and illnesses will receive notification of their participation in the second half of

December 2007. Employers receiving these notification packets need to keep OSHA log data during 2008 to send the completed survey forms to DLI (paper response) or to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (electronic response). The survey response packets will be mailed in January 2009.



It is very important for each company to review the OSHA recordkeeping requirements to make sure injuries and illnesses are correctly recorded. Staff members who are responsible for keeping the OSHA log should have recordkeeping training. The

OSHA recordkeeping requirements are online at www.doli.state.mn.us/recordkeeping.html. Links to the *Recordkeeping 101* series that appeared in *Safety Lines* are also available on that Web page.

Employers with questions about the SOII may call the DLI Policy Development, Research and Statistics unit at (651) 284-5428.