



A series of bulletins intended to keep members informed and safe

**Number 7**  
**September 23, 2008**

**Subject:** Working from home

More and more TWU members are working from home, whether on a regular basis or occasionally. Your health and your safety in the home work environment are just as important as it is on company premises.

Most members in an office or call centre environment work with others. Working at home generally means working alone. While working alone is itself not a hazard, if something unexpected happens you may not have someone nearby to come to your aid.

#### **Tips for working alone at home**

- If possible, keep a landline handy, even if you have a “soft phone” on your computer or an IP phone from the company. Using a PC-based phone via keyboard may be more difficult or time-consuming to use if you’re in distress. Dialing 911 on a landline will mean emergency personnel know where you are. Dialing 911 on a cell phone or soft phone may mean having to stay on the line to provide additional information, including your address.
- Keep in contact with a co-worker on a scheduled basis, even if it’s just to “check-in”. Make sure they have contact information, possibly a neighbour, in case of an emergency.

#### **Breaks are important**

Don’t over work – take a break for your well being. In an office environment there are regular breaks with co-workers that give you a natural break in your day. Working from home may tempt members into skipping breaks or to work during breaks. It’s important to take physical and mental breaks to keep yourself alert and healthy. Extended periods of sitting or repeated motions can lead to various musculoskeletal injuries.

#### **Follow up with safety inspections**

A safety inspection of your home work environment should be formally completed at least once per year. These inspections are required by law and are an integral part of the health and safety program. If any issues are identified make sure you follow up with corrective action to ensure your safe work environment remains safe and hazard-free. Don’t wait for a site inspection to take place before correcting a problem. If you spot a potential hazard, like a frayed cord, fix the problem immediately.

#### **Report concerns**

If you have any concerns about a safety or health issue, at home or at work, contact your manager, your Health & Safety Committee representative, or the TWU office in your area. Don’t take chances with your well-being.

Visit the TWU Health & Safety webpage at [www.twu-canada.ca/safety/english.shtml](http://www.twu-canada.ca/safety/english.shtml).

**TWU National Health & Safety Committee**