

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

DATE: May 2015

TO: All Management and Supervisory Employees

FROM: Nicole McKay, Employee & Labor Relations Manager

SUBJECT: Employee Relations Bulletin 19
Rest Breaks

It is clear that providing rest breaks is beneficial to both workers and the County. Full-time workers are allowed one fifteen minute rest break prior to and after their mid-shift meal break. Part-time workers are allowed one fifteen minute rest break during any four hour work shift. For most workers, this equates to a lunch break and two rest breaks — one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The fifteen minute rest breaks are paid, the mid-shift meal break is not.

Unusual circumstances may occasionally occur that do not allow workers to be released for rest breaks. Rest breaks cannot be accumulated or “banked” for the purpose of taking longer breaks or leaving work early. If rest breaks are not taken, they are lost. Meal breaks must be no less than 1/2 hour, and cannot be skipped to reduce the work day.

We are also often asked how long an employee may work without being required to take a meal break. Employees are required to take a meal break of no less than 30 minutes if they work five hours or more.