When the weather turns nicer and thoughts turn to summer vacations and time spent with friends and family, it can be hard to keep health and safety at the top of your employees’ priority lists. However we know that in the industries which IHSA serves, a moment of distraction can end in a disastrous injury. But even if an injury is minor, it may put a damper on an upcoming long weekend or, for an employer, mean higher costs on a job.

Summer conditions can often create an environment we call summer letdown, when our thoughts may wander from the tasks at hand. A great way for owners and managers to keep their employees paying attention to their work is to show them you are really focusing on their well-being. The simplest way of doing this is to create a safe and healthy workplace and make sure it stays that way, even with everyone dreaming of family vacations and fishing trips.

In order to avoid injuries as a result of summer letdown, companies can focus on a few measures that might help their employees maintain their attention on the job.
Make sure workers take regular breaks.
Encourage them to use this time to move away from their work area. A break gives people a chance to reset themselves and go back to their tasks better able to concentrate.

Remove distractions.
If the task at hand requires concentration and attention, make sure workers aren’t distracted by phone calls or texts from friends and family. These can be checked during breaks, so make sure to give everyone an adequate break when they can do errands or return personal calls.

Try to give workers a variety of tasks.
Repeating the same actions, both physically and mentally, is exhausting and stressful. Changing tasks regularly may help keep everyone on track.

Make sure everyone knows the rules.
Orientation and training for new workers is critical because new workers have a greater chance of injury. “New worker” doesn’t mean only a young worker. It can mean a worker who is new to a particular job or jobsite. Don’t forget that workers who aren’t new still need to know the hazards of the workplace. Workplace-specific training may involve education on specific methods, machinery, tools, or applications related to a person’s work. It is often required for situations such as trenching, working in confined spaces, working at heights, or traffic control, where dangerous circumstances can occur.

Make sure supervisors are aware of summer letdown.
It’s up to the supervisors to keep employees on track and concentrating on their tasks. Remind your supervisors to keep a watchful eye on the worksite and make sure the workers aren’t distracted.

Have people watch out for one another.
Supervisors aren’t the only people who can be on the lookout for summer letdown. All workers can be aware of their fellow employees and remind one another to take breaks or refocus on their tasks.

Refresh workers through training.
A regular safety meeting or a training course may help new employees understand safe work practices. Even a seasoned employee can benefit from a refresher course now and again. This may help reinvigorate workers and re-engage them in safe work practices. Beyond a regular safety meeting, IHSA can provide training either at one of our facilities or at yours. We can even drive onto a worksite in our mobile classroom.

These reminders may sound simple, but they can mean all the difference when workers are facing summer letdown.