

TAKING TIME FOR PERSONAL MATTERS AT WORK

by Rabbi Yisroel Belsky ztl

QUESTION 71: TAKING TIME FOR PERSONAL MATTERS AT WORK

If a person expects to be involved in something that might take up lots of time at work, such as buying and selling a house, what is the correct procedure for making sure that a person doesn't exceed what is permitted? Even if it's a less time-consuming activity, such as buying a car or computer, is it necessary to inform one's boss?

RABBI BELSKY

Everyone is allowed to spend a little time on personal things. People have a tendency to do more than what they really ought to be doing, and border on doing what they shouldn't be doing. If it's going to take an hour a day buying and selling a house, it's time taken away from your employer. The best thing to do is to ask if it is possible to use that hour and to make it up by staying later. Five, ten, or fifteen minutes a day - I suppose that would be considered 'within reason'. As a rule of thumb - a person should try to make up for lost time for anything that takes more than fifteen minutes.

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION 72: BILLING HOURS WORKED

I'm an attorney. I have to record my hours for each case I work on. Although I try to be strict with my billing, I'm far from exact. For example, I'm not equally productive on all days. Also, when I have less work to do, I might spend more time on a case than I would otherwise - with the result that the client will be billed for more hours. Another difficulty is that when I am in the middle of working on a case I may be interrupted by a phone call or distracted by some other matter. I don't usually work on one case nonstop. I might be interrupted by phone calls or speak about other matters

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