

- [Hank Investigates](#)
- [The Hiller Instinct](#)
- [Healthcast](#)
- [The Dish](#)
- [Archived Reports](#)

Monday, November 21, 2005

Hank Investigates: The big swig

Shocking, undercover video. Pictures those we caught on camera hoped no one would ever see. Investigative reporter Hank Phillippi Ryan found Big Dig workers out boozing on their lunch breaks and then returning to the job. Hank Investigates: The Big Swig.

It's a weekday lunchtime in Boston and in local bars, it's beers all around. This guy and this one and this one and more all having a liquid lunch.

We know they're on a noon break from their jobs. Who do they work for? You. And where they head next may put them and you in danger.

7News joined the lunch crowd with a hidden camera and let the camera roll.

Watch the man on the right in a baseball cap, the one with the beer. During his lunch hour we saw him drink three of them.

After a hour, we watched him walk out of the bar using the back door and within minutes he put on his orange union sweatshirt and yellow hard hat and was back on the job at Congress and New Chardon Street.

If you think, not good, but maybe just a one time thing.... here's a different lunch hour, same bar. Look at the guy on the end. Today "baseball hat man" is wearing overalls. It's the same person. This day we watched him down three beers in just an hour. Then wind up at the Big Dig's Cross and Fulton site.

Watch him. He looks a little shaky on his feet.

And what's next on his agenda? In his hard hat and orange t-shirt, he and a pal are back at work.

Who's the guy he's working with? You've seen him, he's the one sitting by baseball hat man at the bar, also with a beer, and later, he's the one who drove the two back to work.

We showed Big Dig officials they and their contractors have a problem.

Hank

"They drank beer after beer after beer. Is that possibly acceptable?"

Mariellen Burns/Central Artery Tunnel Project

"Absolutely not. Unacceptable."

In fact, the Dig's "Project Labor Agreement" signed by the Dig, contractors and unions specifically prohibits alcohol use.

Mariellen Burns/Central Artery Tunnel Project

"It's just not allowed. It's breaking every rule. Construction and alcohol just don't mix."

But back to the bar. Turns out baseball hat man has several drinking buddies. His luncheon friend on the left not only has three beers but a whiskey chaser. And no one has a bite of food. One last swig and he's outta there.

His destination Milk and Surface streets. He's got the key to the electrical box, and winds up hard hatted, behind the fence, and on the job.

Mariellen Burns/Central Artery Tunnel Project

"They're endangering themselves, they're endangering their coworkers, and they're endangering the public and we just wont have it on the project."

These two also drank on their lunch break. Here's another round. We saw them served three each in an hour. Again, no food was served.

An hour later they leave the bar, but they did not go to a Big Dig site. They work for the T. These lunchtime drinkers hop in an MBTA truck, at least they're not driving. We followed them to a Green Line stop.

They both put on safety vests and go right to work. One hauling, the other, look at his mask, ready to weld.

Hank

"Each of the people here had three beers and nothing to eat."

We showed the tape to Dan Grabauskas, the General Manager of the T.

Hank

"Do you need to see it again?"

Daniel Grabauskas/MBTA General Manager

"I don't."

Hank

"What do you think?"

Daniel Grabauskas/MBTA General Manager

"Well, it defies common sense to drink and be on a work site."

Grabauskas provided us the specific T rule alcohol consumption is prohibited 4 hours before reporting to work.

Daniel Grabauskas/MBTA General Manager

"It's dangerous. And we need to be held to a higher standard. We have people's lives in our hands and we shouldn't be having a beer in that same hand moments before you go to a worksite."

The Big Dig and the T didn't waste any time once we showed them the videotape. The MBTA fired the two workers who were drinking. They also fired their foreman for what the T calls, "failure to supervise employees." As for the Big Dig, they've banned these workers from doing any kind of work on their job sites.

(Copyright (c) 2005 Sunbeam Television Corp. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.)

Comments for this page are closed.

Showing 0 comments

Sort by  [Subscribe by email](#)  [Subscribe by RSS](#)