The number of injuries and illnesses resulting in time away from work was about the same in 1999 as in 1998, following steady declines from the levels prevailing early in the decade.

The incidence rate for lost workday cases has declined steadily from 4.1 cases per 100 full-time workers in 1990 to 3.0 cases per 100 full-time workers in 1999. Rates for the two types of lost workday cases moved in opposite directions during that period.

December 2000
Two-thirds of the injured or ill workers were men, well above their 59 percent share of the nation’s hours worked.

A majority of injured or ill workers were 20 to 44 years old. Workers younger than 35 had a higher, while workers 35 and older had a lower incidence of injuries or illnesses than each of their hours worked shares suggest.

Operators, fabricators, and laborers accounted for 4 out of every 10 injuries and illnesses, well above their employment share of 16.1%.

Truck drivers suffered the most injuries and illnesses involving days away from work, followed by laborers, nonconstruction and by nursing aides, orderlies.

In 1992 laborers, nonconstruction suffered more injuries than any other occupations; however from 1993 to 1999 truck drivers suffered the most injuries involving lost worktime.

Most workers had at least 1 year of service with their employer when they were injured or became ill.

Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses by Length of Service, 1999

Length of Service
(1,702,470 injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work)

- Length of Service
  - Not reported: 11.8%
  - Less than 3 months: 13.5%
  - 3 to 11 months: 18.1%
  - 1 to 5 years: 32.3%
  - More than 5 years: 24.3%
  - Not reported: 11.8%

Injury and Illness Topology

Nature of disabling condition

Part of body affected

Event or exposure

Source directly producing disability

Each injury or illness is described from four viewpoints.

The Nature of the Disabling Condition, Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work, 1999

Nature of Injury or Illness

(1,702,470 injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work)

- Sprains, strains: 43.5% (739,742 cases)
- Other: 16.3%
- Cuts, lacerations, punctures: 9.0%
- Bruises, contusions: 9.2%
- Fractures: 6.7%
- Soreness, pain: 6.4%
- Multiple injuries: 3.5%
- Carpal tunnel syndrome: 1.6%
- Heat burns: 1.6%
- Chemical burns: 0.7%
- Amputations: 0.6%
- Tendonitis: 1.0%

Sprains and strains accounted for almost 740,000 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses.

The Part of Body Affected, Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work, 1999

Percent

- Back: 24.9%
- Upper extremities: 23.3%
- Lower extremities: 20.6%
- Trunk, except back: 12.2%
- Multiple body parts: 8.7%
- Head: 6.3%
- Other: 4.0%

The back was involved almost one-fourth of all occupational injuries and illnesses.

Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses by Source of Injury or Illness, 1999

(1,702,470 injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work)

Four sources accounted for over half of all nonfatal injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work: floor, ground surfaces 16.0%; worker motion or position 15.7%; containers 14.4%; and parts and materials 11.3%.

Bodily reaction and exertion and contact with objects and equipment accounted for over 70% on nonfatal injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work.

The incidence rate for all events and exposures improved by 38% between 1992 and 1999. The chart shows four events improved more than the average and seven events improved less than the average.

The median days away from work due to nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses increased as the age of the worker increased.

Occupations with the Highest Median Days Away from Work, 1999

- Public transportation attendants: 10 days
- Heating, air conditioning, refrigeration mechanics: 10 days
- Truck drivers: 8 days
- Industrial machinery repairers: 8 days
- Assemblers: 7 days
- Carpenters: 7 days
- Electricians: 7 days
- Bus, truck, and stationary engine mechanics: 7 days
- Guards and police, exc. public service: 7 days
- All occupations: 6 days

Of the occupations with at least 1/2% of the total days away from work cases, public transportation attendants and heating and air conditioning mechanics had a median of 10 days compared to a median of 6 days for all occupations.

Carpal tunnel syndrome had a median of 27 days away from work, followed by fractures with 20 days and amputations with 18 days.

Rhythmic motion, with a median of 17 days, resulted in the longest absences from work among the leading events and exposures. Falls to a lower level and transportation accidents also had medians well above the national median.

Sprains, strains, tears accounted for 77% of the musculoskeletal disorders that resulted in days away from work in 1999.

The percentage of total cases involving lost worktime that result from musculoskeletal disorders has remained constant since 1992.