
Case and Demographics

November 9, 2011
Local and state government both had much higher rates than in private industry. Local government had a rate of 181 injuries and illnesses per 10,000 full-time workers and state government had a rate of 175. Private industry had a rate of 108.

In 2010, the number of injuries and illnesses with days away from work in private industry declined 3.3 percent. Injuries and illnesses for goods-producing industries declined by 7.6 percent, while the number in service-providing industries was statistically unchanged.

In 2010, the rate of injuries and illnesses overall did not change significantly from 2009. Slips and trips declined by 5.6 percent, while transportation accidents declined by 4.3 percent. Assaults by persons increased by 17.6 percent, and total assaults increased by 8 percent. Struck against object increased by 9.9 percent.

Ten occupations had 20,000 or more cases in private industry, state government, and local government. Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers had the highest number of cases. Police and sheriff’s patrol officers and nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants had the highest rates of injuries and illnesses.

Eleven occupations had both large numbers of employees and a rate of injury or illness of 350 per 10,000 workers or higher. Transit and intercity bus drivers had the highest rate, followed by police and sheriff’s patrol officers, nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants, and refuse and recyclable material collectors.

Eight occupations had 18,000 or more cases in private industry in 2010. Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers had the largest number of cases, as they have for several years. Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants followed with very high numbers of cases.

These occupations are frequently employed in both the private and public sectors. Psychiatric aides had very high rates of injuries and illnesses in state government, and high rates in private sector. The source for most of these cases was health care patients.

Teacher assistants in local government had a relatively high rate of cases, 183 per 10,000 full-time employees, compared with a rate of 110 for private industry. Special education teachers in the private sector had a high rate compared to local government, 89 compared with 30. Local government has higher rates for all of the transportation occupations shown, except light or delivery truck drivers, where the difference is not statistically significant.


Chart 8
Injury and illness cases in state government were split relatively evenly between men and women, but men had a much higher rate. In local government, men had 60 percent of cases, and had a rate that was nearly double that of women.

In 2010, there were 122,970 injuries and illnesses among Hispanic or Latino workers, statistically unchanged from 2009. Hispanic or Latino workers made up 20.2 percent of injuries and illnesses where race or ethnicity was reported. They suffered 57.5 percent of injuries and illnesses in natural resources, 28.7 percent in leisure and hospitality, and 26.3 percent in professional and business services. Race and ethnicity was not reported in one-third of private industry cases.

Median days away from work is a key measure of severity of injuries and illnesses. Injuries and illnesses become more severe as age increases, requiring 4 days away from work for workers aged 16 to 19 years old to 16 days for those workers 65 years old and older. The rate of injuries and illnesses increased for workers 16 to 19 years old, and for those 45 to 64 years old.

Each injury or illness is described from four viewpoints.

Sprains and strains and bruises made up nearly half of all injuries and illnesses. Sprains and strains accounted for 474,000 injuries and illnesses in 2010. Tendonitis and total multiple trauma both had significant increases in the number of cases, although from a lower base.

In 2010, fractures were the most severe nature of injuries and illnesses, having a median of 28 days away from work to recover, followed by carpal tunnel syndrome with 27 days and amputations with 21 days. Sprains and strains had a relatively high rate, but a median days away of 10 days.

Injuries and illnesses to the back declined by 6 percent in 2010 to 227,730, continuing the decline in their share of injuries and illnesses from 2009. Injuries and illnesses to upper body dropped 4.7 percent to 253,450. Injuries and illnesses to the lower body decreased by 2.7 percent to 274,210.

Injuries to the shoulder took the most time away from work, requiring a median of 21 days away from work. Knee injuries took a median of 15 days, and wrist injuries took 14 days away from work to recuperate.
Four sources accounted for more than half of all nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses that resulted in days away from work: floors, walkways, and ground surfaces with 21.6 percent; worker motion or position with 13.9 percent; containers with 10.8 percent; and vehicles with 8.6 percent. Cases where the source of the injury or illness was a health care patient increased by 5 percent, to 72,750.

Injuries and illnesses from worker motion had a median of 12 days away from work, followed by injuries from containers and from floors, which each had a median of 10 days away from work to recover. Injuries and illnesses as a result of contact with floors had a very high rate.

Eighty-five percent of all injuries and illnesses were from three events: Bodily reaction and exertion, contact with objects and equipment, and falls.

In 2010, injuries and illnesses from repetitive motion had a median of 24 days away from work to recover, but had a fairly low rate of 4 per 10,000 full-time workers. Falls on the same level had a median of 8 days, the same as all injuries and illnesses, and had a higher rate of 18 per 10,000 full-time workers.
In 2010, the number of cases of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) was statistically unchanged from 2009. The rate in 2010 was 32.8, an increase of 4.8 percent from 2009.


Chart 21
In 2010, the number of musculoskeletal disorders was statistically unchanged for private industry and local government. The number of MSD cases decreased by 9.7 percent in State government. The rate increased by 4.8 percent for private industry, but was statistically unchanged for State government and local government.

These ten occupations had at least 1/10 of 1 percent of total employment, and had incidence rates of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) of 100 per 10,000 full-time workers or higher. Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants and emergency medical technicians and paramedics had the highest rates of MSDs in 2010.