2014 Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses: Cases with days away from work

Case and Demographics

November 2015
The incidence rate of nonfatal injuries and illnesses for all ownerships decreased 2.1 percent from 2013 to 2014. All other top line rates and numbers of injuries and illnesses by ownership remained unchanged from 2013.

The total number of private industry injury and illnesses (916,440 cases) was essentially unchanged from 2013. Similarly, the number of injuries and illnesses for both goods-producing and service-providing sectors were essentially unchanged from 2013.


Chart 2
Eleven occupations had 20,000 or more cases across all ownerships. Heavy & tractor-trailer truck drivers along with laborers and freight, stock, & material movers combined accounted for 10 percent of total cases. Police and sheriff's patrol officers had the highest rate of injury and illness among these occupations.
These occupations are among the ones that had at least 0.1 percent of full-time equivalent employment throughout the United States in 2014. Among them, police and sheriff’s patrol officers had the highest rate at 486 cases per 10,000 full-time employees. Nursing assistants had an incidence rate at least three times greater than the rate for all workers.

These occupations are frequently employed in both the private and public sectors. Psychiatric aides had very high rates among these selected state government and private industry workers. The predominant source of injury or illness for psychiatric aides was health care patients.
Distribution and incidence rates of injuries and illnesses with days away from work by gender and ownership, 2014

Male workers had a higher number of injuries and illnesses than female workers (where gender reported) in each of the three ownership categories. Male workers employed by state or local government had higher rates of injury or illness than male workers in the private sector.

There were a total of 124,280 injuries and illnesses among Hispanic or Latino workers in 2014. Hispanic or Latino workers comprised 21 percent of cases where race or ethnicity was reported. Over half of the injuries and illnesses in the natural resources and mining sector occurred to Hispanic or Latino workers.

Median days away from work is a key measure of severity of injuries and illnesses. Half of the cases involved more days and half involved fewer days than a specified median. The median increased as the age of the worker increased. Workers 65 and older required nearly twice the recuperation time than all workers in 2014. The incidence rate for older workers was 94 cases per 10,000 full-time workers, compared to a rate of 96 for workers in age group 25 to 34 years.

Injury and illness topology

A nursing aide strains her back from overexertion while lifting a patient.


Chart 9
Sprains, strains and tears made up over one-third of all injuries and illnesses in 2014. They remained essentially unchanged from 2013 at 420,870 cases.

In 2014, fractures and carpal tunnel syndrome were the most severe, of the selected natures, resulting in a median of 32 days away from work. Among the fracture cases, approximately one-third occurred to hands and feet. Workers experienced sprains, strains and tears at a rate of 39 cases per 10,000 full-time workers, and required a median of 10 days away from work.

Upper extremities were the most frequently injured part of the body with 346,170 cases. There were 268,860 injuries to lower extremities and 200,250 injuries to the back.
Injuries to the shoulder required the most time away from work to recuperate with a median of 26 days. Knee injuries required a median of 17 days to recuperate.


Chart 13
Persons, plants, animals, and minerals were the source of injury or illness for 329,190 cases in 2014. More than half of these (174,640) involved bodily motion or position of the injured or ill worker while another 18 percent (58,090) involved health care patients.

Workers who sustained injuries and illnesses involving trucks required twice the recuperation time than for all workers at 18 median days away from work.


Chart 15
Overexertion and bodily reaction along with falls, slips and trips accounted for approximately 60 percent of all injuries and illnesses with days away from work. The number of cases resulting from falls, slips and trips increased by 6.9 percent from 2013.
Cases of repetitive motion involving microtasks had a high median of 23 days away from work but a relatively low rate of 3 cases per 10,000 full-time workers. Overexertion and bodily reaction had the highest rate and a median days away from work of 13 days, four more than the median for all events or exposures.
Ice, sleet, snow contributed to 26 percent of total falls on the same level.

Secondary source not specified was a contributing factor in half of the total falls on the same level cases.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) accounted for 32 percent of all cases in 2014. The incidence rate for MSDs in 2014 decreased from 2013 in private industry and local government. The incidence rate for MSDs for local government workers was higher than the MSD rate for all workers.

Incidence rate and number of injuries and illnesses due to musculoskeletal disorders by selected occupations, all ownerships, 2014

These ten occupations accounted for at least 0.1 percent of total employment. Nursing assistants had the highest rate of MSDs among these occupations with 200 cases per 10,000 full-time workers as well as the highest number of MSD cases in 2014.