Butcher Safety Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. Butchers are exposed to various types of hazards in the course of their work, which can lead to health problems of varying severity.
2. Salmonella has contributed to deaths linked to butchers.
3. Butchers are exposed to physical hazards such as noise, cold, vibration, physical injuries; and ergonomic hazards such as overexertion, manual and repetitive work like meat hanging and cutting, awkward positions, and lifting of heavy objects.
4. Workers in slaughter facilities may be exposed to hazardous chemicals such as ammonia, which is used in meat packing, chlorine which may be added to water for disinfecting meat and hydrogen peroxide which is sometimes used as a disinfectant. These exposures may lead to irritations of the throat, eyes, nose, and skin; burns from accidental splashes; and respiratory symptoms

STATS

- The meat industry reported 23,500 nonfatal worker incidents in 2018, and most involved injuries. That averages out to about 64 cases a day nationwide.
- 151 meat and poultry workers died from injuries sustained at work. The injury rate for meat workers is higher than the rest of the manufacturing industry.
- An analysis of occupational injuries in the meatpacking industry was performed. The average injury rate was 27.6 injuries per 100 workers per year. The average annual incidence rate for lost work time injuries was 13.5 injuries/100 workers. The work-related death rate was almost 3 deaths per 100,000 workers. 86% of the nonfatal injuries were to males. About 45% of the male injuries were the result of being struck by or against objects, versus 28 % for females. 55% percent of the injuries occurred to workers 20 to 34 years of age. The incidence of injuries by occupation was: meat cutter, 49 %; butcher, 2 %; meat packer and wrapper, 4 %; material handler, 7 %; and laborer, 9 %.
- 67% of the injuries consisted of strains, sprains, lacerations, contusions, and abrasions. Approximately 22.5 %of the injuries involved the fingers, 15.5 % the back, 11.7 % the arms, and 8.6 % the hand.

- 800 workers suffered serious injuries – an average of more than two per week – and 4,500 had to take off more than three days to recover from accidents.
- In the same period, Four workers died (all in 2017) and 78 suffered the amputation of fingers, parts of fingers or limbs as a result of workplace incidents.