Injury/Illness Stats & Facts



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019, the rate of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses among private industry employees was 2.8 cases per 100 full-time equivalent workers. Private industry workers incurred 2.8 million injuries or illnesses in 2019, unchanged from 2018.

A total of 5,250 workers died from a work-related injury in the U.S. in 2018, up 2 percent from the 2017 total of 5,147. The fatal injury rate was unchanged in 2018 at 3.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers.

More state-specific 2019 workplace injury statistics are available from the BLS: State Occupational Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities.

Age and Sex of Workers Who Missed Time from Work Due to Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

According to the latest BLS data available in 2019, slightly over half of workers who missed time from work due to workplace illnesses and injuries were men. The greatest disparity between men and women was in the private sector (60% men compared to 40% women), with the least disparity between state government employees (53% men compared to 47% women).

The BLS's 2019 workplace injury statistics indicate that older workers were more likely to miss significant time from work than younger workers. Among workers ages 55 to 64, the median number of days missed due to an injury or illness was 14 days, compared to just five days for workers between the ages of 16 and 24.

Most-Common Causes of Non-Fatal Workplace Injuries – 2019 BLS Data

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2019 data break down the most-common causes of non-fatal workplace injuries into five categories. The proportion of injuries falling into each of these categories has remained fairly steady over the past five years. According to the BLS's statistics, the most-common causes of workplace injuries (from most-common to least common) are:

- Overexertion and bodily reaction (approximately 33 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)

- Falls, slips, and trips (approximately 27 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Contact with objects or equipment (approximately 24 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Violence and other injuries caused by persons or animals (approximately eight incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Transportation accidents (approximately seven incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)

Most-Common Non-Fatal Workplace Injuries – 2019 BLS Data

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2019 data also break down the most-common workplace injuries into five categories. In order from most common to least, these five categories are:

- Sprains, strains, and tears (approximately 35 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Soreness or pain (approximately 18 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Cuts, lacerations, and punctures (approximately nine incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Cruises and contusions (approximately nine incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Fractures (approximately eight incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)

However, while sprains, strains, and tears are the most-common type of non-fatal workplace injury leading to missed time from work, these injuries are roughly in the middle in terms of the number of days they cause workers to miss. From most to least, the injuries that cause employees and independent contractors to miss the most time from work are:

- Multiple injuries with fractures (median of 48 days)
- Fractures (median of 32 days)
- Amputations (median of 31 days)
- Carpal tunnel syndrome (median of 30 days)
- Tendonitis (median of 14 days)
- Sprains, strains, and tears (median of 11 days)
- Multiple traumatic injuries (median of nine days)
- Soreness or pain (median of eight days)
- Multiple injuries with sprains (median of seven days)
- Bruises and contusions (median of five days)
- Heat (thermal) burns (median of five days)
- Cuts, lacerations, and punctures (median of four days)
- Chemical burns (median of three days)

The Number of Fatal Workplace Injuries is on the Rise

The BLS's workplace injury statistics published in 2019 indicate that while the number of non-fatal workplace accidents has been falling, the number of fatal workplace accidents is on the rise. Over the past five years, the number of fatal accidents has increased each year, with just one exception. In 2018, the BLS reported the most fatal accidents of any of the previous five years. According to the BLS, the six most-common causes of fatal workplace accidents are:

- Transportation accidents (2,080 fatalities in the most-recent year)

- Violence and other injuries caused by persons or animals (828 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Falls, slips, and trips (792 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Contact with objects and equipment (786 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Exposure to harmful substances or environments (621 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Fires and explosions (115 fatalities in the most-recent year)

The occupations with the most fatal workplace accidents are very different from those with the most non-fatal injuries and illnesses (see above). According to BLS, the occupations with the highest number of fatalities based on the most-recent data available in 2019 are:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (23.4 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Transportation and warehousing (14.0 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Construction (9.5 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Wholesale trade (5.3 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Professional and business services (3.3 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)

While California and Texas had the highest number of workplace deaths (422 and 488, respectively), these states had relatively low incident rates for job-related fatalities (2.3 and 3.8 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers, respectively. The states with the highest incident rates for job-related fatalities were:

- Wyoming (11.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Alaska (9.9 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- North Dakota (9.6 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- West Virginia (7.9 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- South Dakota (6.9 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Mississippi (6.7 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)

“Fast Facts” on Workplace Injuries from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC’s workplace injury statistics are largely consistent with those published by the BLS. On its Fast Facts page, the CDC highlights the following figures (based on the most-recent data available in 2019):

- 26% of all non-fatal work injuries resulting in days missed from work resulted from slips, trips, and falls.
- 24% of all workplace fatalities resulted motor vehicle accidents.
- Approximately 9% of workplace fatalities resulted from homicides.
- More than 229,000 workers were forced to miss time from their jobs due to injuries from contact with objects and equipment.
- Workers under the age of 25 had a higher rate of occupational injuries requiring emergency medical treatment than older workers (although, as noted above, older workers were more likely to miss more days from work).

2019 Fatal Workplace Accident Statistics from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

OSHA's "Fatal Four" – The Most-Common Causes of Construction Site Deaths

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), similar to the BLS. As a result, OSHA and the BLS publish many of the same workplace accident and injury statistics. However, OSHA publishes its own data as well, including its well-known "Fatal Four."

The "Fatal Four" are the four most-common causes of worker deaths on construction sites in America. According to OSHA, as of 2019, "one in five worker deaths last year were in construction." OSHA goes on to state that, "[the] "Fatal Four" were responsible for more than half (58.6%) the construction worker deaths. Eliminating the Fatal Four would save 591 workers' lives in America every year." These are the "Fatal Four":

- Falls (accountable for 33.5% of construction worker deaths)
- Struck by object (accountable for 11.1% of construction worker deaths)
- Electrocutions (accountable for 8.5% of construction worker deaths)
- Caught in/between (accountable for 5.5% of construction worker deaths)

The Most-Common Safety Violations Cited by OSHA (Data Reported in 2019)

On its "Fatal Four" website, OSHA also lists the 10 most-frequently cited safety violations on construction sites. These safety violations are to blame for a significant number of fatal and non-fatal workplace injuries every year:

- Inadequate fall protection
- Inadequate hazard communication standards
- Unsafe scaffolding
- Inadequate respiratory protection
- Failure to control hazardous energy (lockout/tagout violations)
- Unsafe ladders
- Powered industrial truck safety violations
- Inadequate fall protection training
- Unsafe machinery and inadequate machine guarding
- Inadequate eye and face protection