

Worker Safety and Health

June 2009

June is National Safety Month. In recognition, here is a look at BLS data on work-related fatalities and nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses.



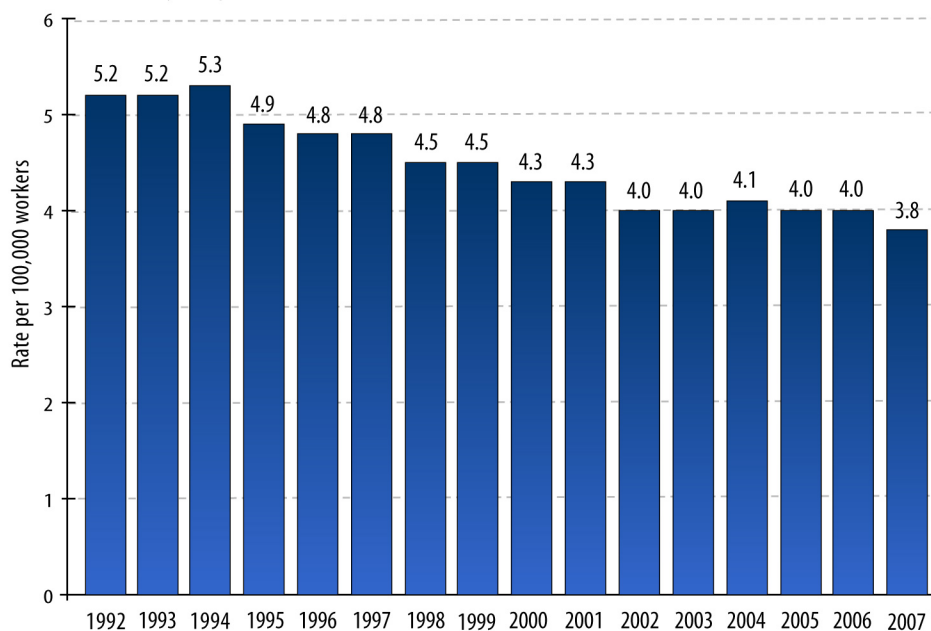
WORK-RELATED FATALITIES

A Declining Rate of Fatal Work Injuries

The BLS Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries has produced comprehensive counts and rates of fatal work injuries since 1992. The census shows that the rate of fatal work injuries declined between 1992 and 2007, with much of the decline occurring during the first 10 years of the period. (The latest data available are for 2007; preliminary fatality data for 2008 will be released in August 2009.) A total of 5,657 workers were fatally injured on the job in 2007.

A Declining Rate of Fatal Work Injuries

Rate of fatal work injuries per 100,000 workers, 1992-2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: *Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*

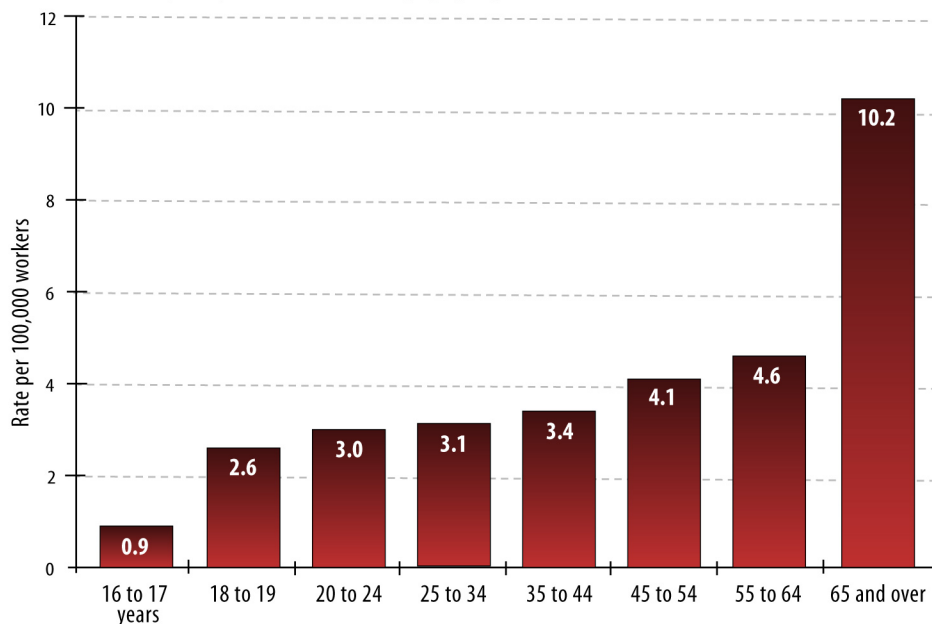
Differing Rates of Fatal Work Injuries by Age

While the overall rate of fatal work injuries was 3.8 per 100,000 workers in 2007, there were differences in fatality rates by age. Workers age 45 and older had above-average fatality rates while those younger than 45 had below-average rates. Differences were most notable among the youngest and oldest age groups. Fatality rates are expressed in terms of employed workers and not adjusted for hours worked.

Labor laws prohibit the youngest workers from being employed in many hazardous occupations; in addition, the youngest workers typically work part time. In contrast to younger workers, workers age 65 and over may be more likely to be employed in certain occupations with higher-than-average fatality rates. For example, farmers and ranchers have an above-average fatality rate, and in 2007 over 25 percent of farmers and ranchers were 65 and over, whereas 4 percent of all workers were 65 and over (both of these employment figures are from the Current Population Survey). Also, older workers may be less likely to survive a severe workplace injury.

Differing Rates of Fatal Work Injuries by Age

Rate of fatal work injuries per 100,000 workers, by age groups, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

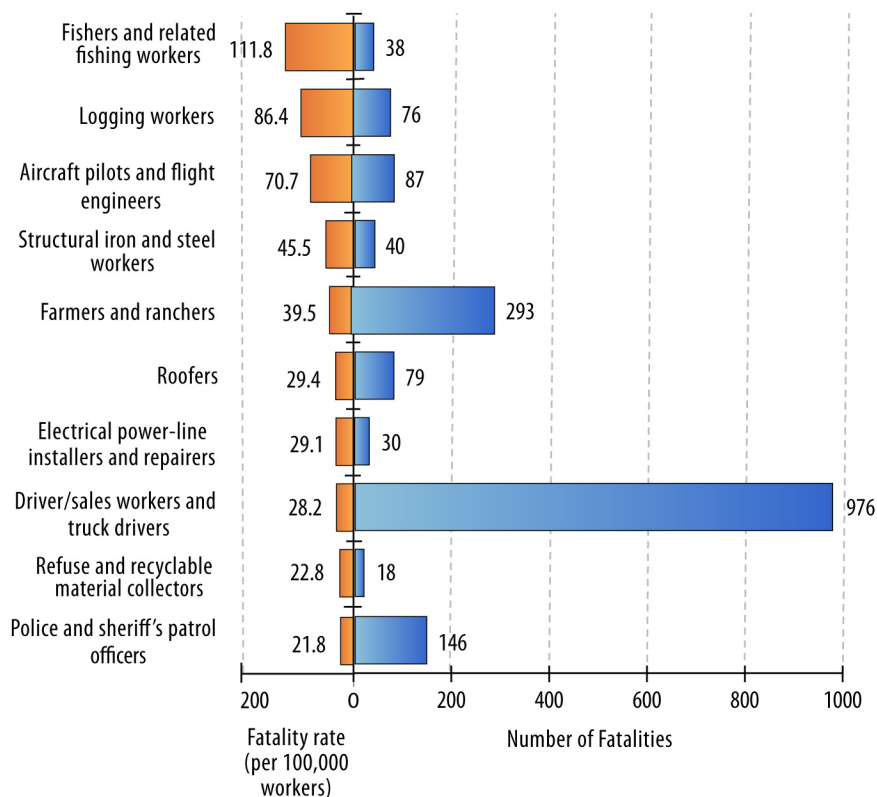
Source: *Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*

Differing Rates of Fatal Work Injuries by Occupation

Occupations that have workplace fatality rates many times higher than the overall rate include fishers, logging workers, aircraft pilots and flight engineers, structural iron and steel workers, and farmers and ranchers. Though the fatality rate of driver/sales workers and truck drivers was less than half those of fishers, loggers, or pilots in 2007, driver/sales workers and truck drivers experienced a substantially larger number of fatalities because more people were employed in that occupation. Driver/sales workers and truck drivers accounted for about 1 in 6 of all on-the-job fatal work injuries.

Differing Rates of Fatal Work Injuries by Occupation

Fatality rate per 100,000 workers and number of fatalities, selected occupations with high fatality rates, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

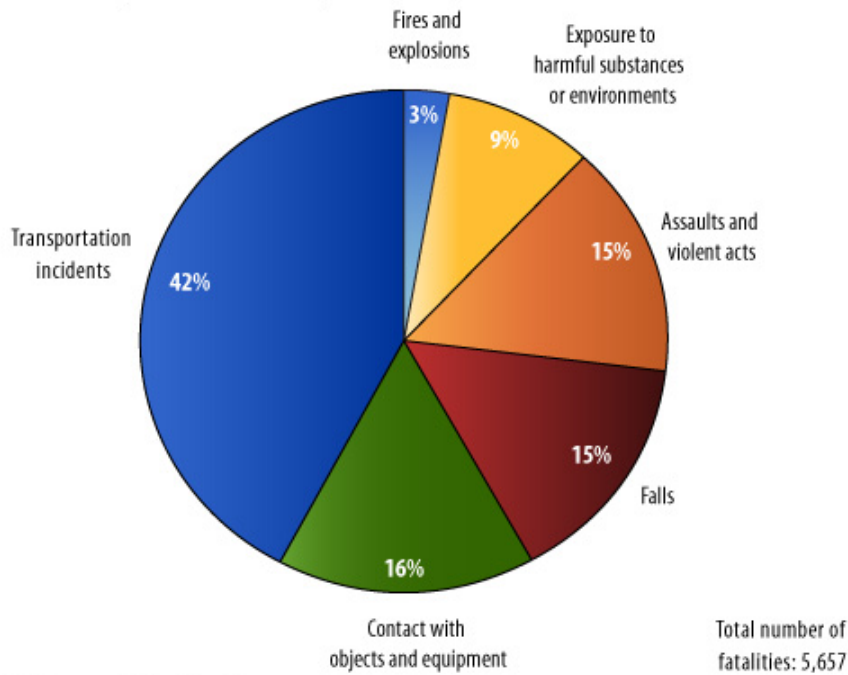
Source: *Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*

Transportation Incidents and On-the-job Fatalities

Transportation incidents are the most common type of event leading to worker fatalities; they accounted for 42 percent of fatal work injuries in 2007. Highway incidents alone, part of the transportation incidents category, accounted for nearly one-fourth of all work-related fatalities. Coming into contact with an object or equipment, assaults and violent acts, and falls each accounted for about the same proportion of workplace deaths in 2007 - 15 to 16 percent each.

Transportation Incidents and Other Fatal Events

Percent distribution by manner in which workplace fatalities occurred, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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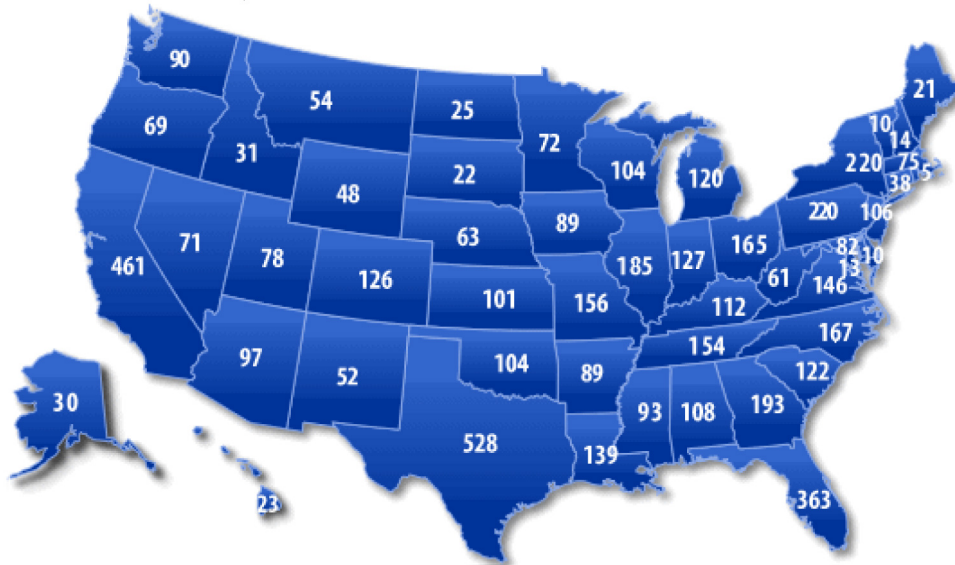
Source: *Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*

Geographic Variation in Worker Fatalities

The number of fatal worker injuries by state ranged from 5 in Rhode Island to 528 in Texas during 2007. The number of worker fatalities in a state depends on many factors, including the number of people employed and the types of industries and occupations present.

Geographic Variation in Worker Fatalities

Number of worker fatalities by state in 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

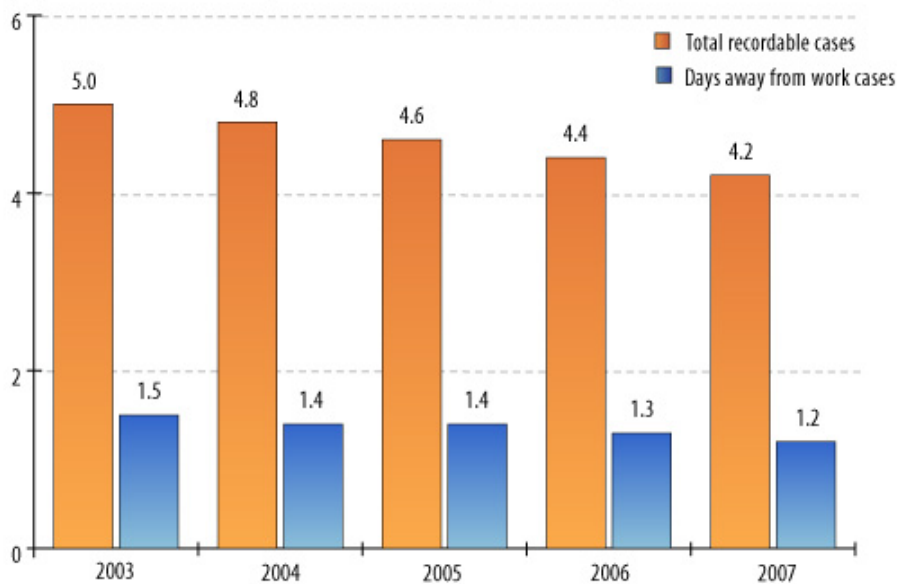
NONFATAL WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

Declining Rates of Nonfatal Worker Injuries and Illnesses

The vast majority of workplace injuries and illnesses do not result in fatalities. Four million total recordable cases of nonfatal injuries and illnesses were reported in 2007 in private industry. This resulted in a rate of 4.2 nonfatal injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers. About 3 out of 10 of these cases required a day or more away from work. Total injury and illness incidence rates, as well as rates for cases serious enough to warrant days away from work, declined between 2003 and 2007. (The latest data available are for 2007; data for 2008 will be released in fall 2009.)

Declining Rates of Nonfatal Worker Injuries and Illnesses

Nonfatal injury and illness incidence rates per 100 full-time workers, private industry, 2003-2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

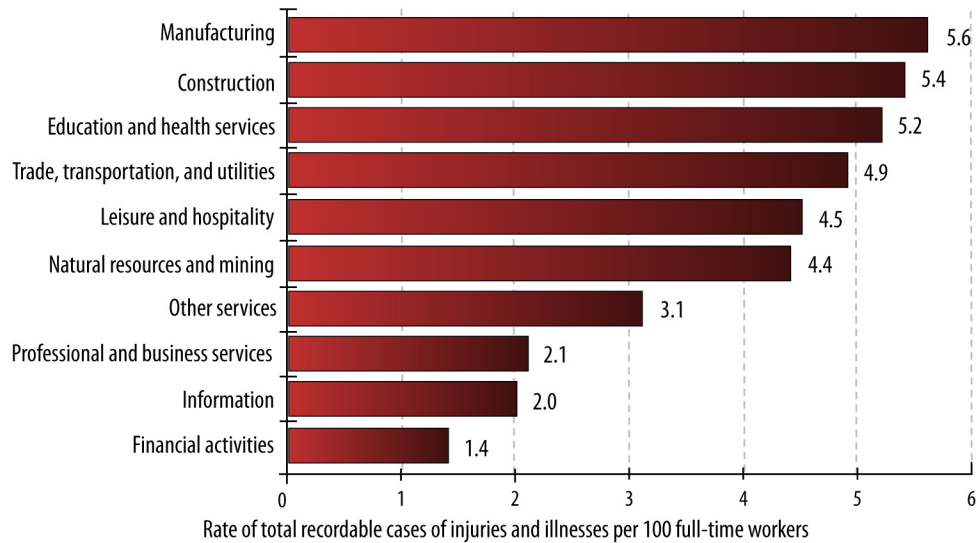
Source: Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

Industry Variation in Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses

Injury and illness rates vary substantially by industry. Manufacturing and construction are both goods-producing industries, but education and health services (which includes hospitals and nursing homes) is a service-providing industry.

Industry Variation in Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses

Incidence rates per 100 full-time workers, nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses by industry, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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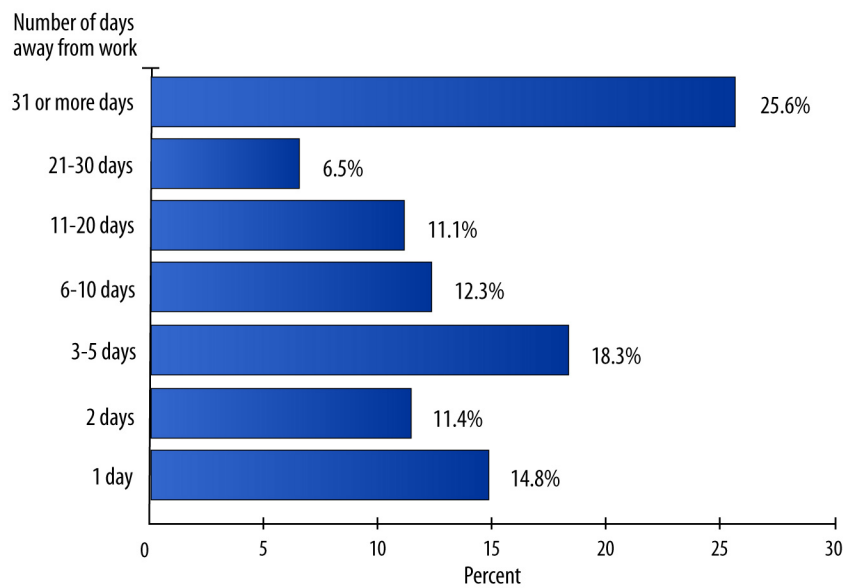
Source: Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

Severity of Nonfatal Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

A key measure of the severity of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses is the number of days away from work. In 2007, workers required a median of 7 days away from work to recuperate from their injuries and illnesses. A quarter of days-away-from-work cases required 31 or more days away.

Severity of Nonfatal Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

Percent distribution of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses by days away from work, private industry, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

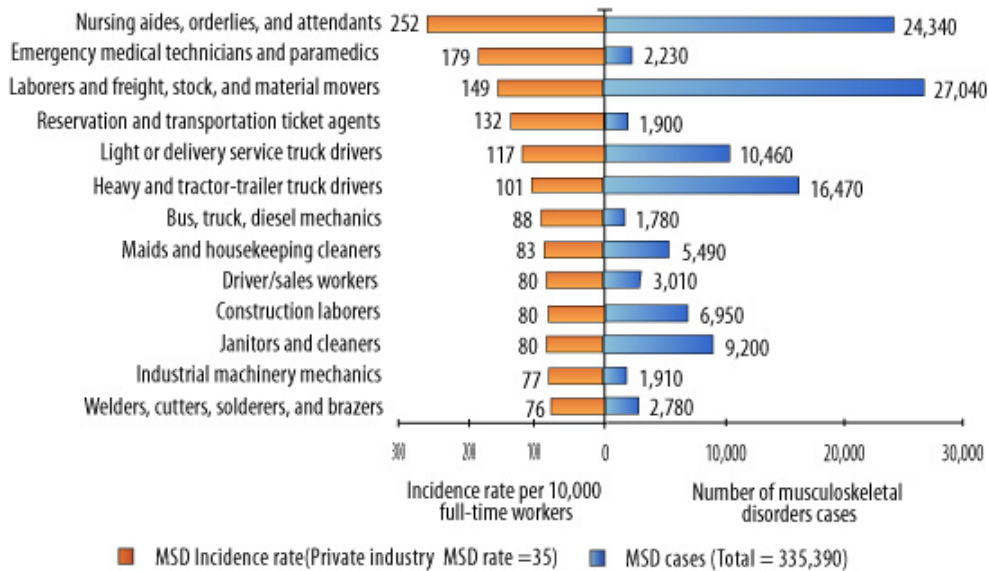
Note: Chart reflects only cases with days away from work.

Musculoskeletal Disorders

Nursing aides and emergency medical technicians have some of the highest reported rates of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) requiring days away from work. These disorders are often referred to as “ergonomic injuries” and are injuries or illnesses affecting the connective tissues of the body such as muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs - examples are sprains and strains from lifting, hernias, and carpal tunnel syndrome. The overall private industry rate for MSDs was 35 per 10,000 full-time workers.

Musculoskeletal Disorders

Incidence rates per 10,000 full-time workers and number of injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work due to musculoskeletal disorders, selected occupations, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

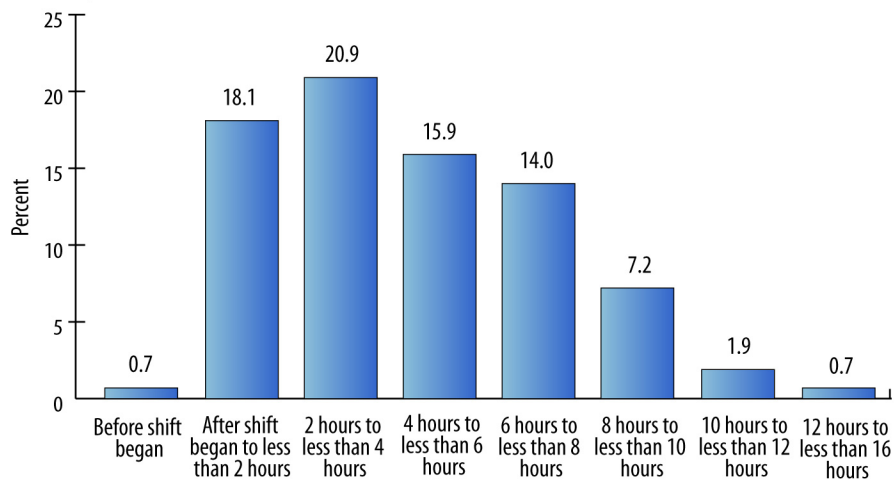
Source: *Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*

When are Injuries and Illnesses Most Likely to Occur?

More than 20 percent of nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses involving days away from work occur when a worker has been on the job at least 2, but fewer than 4, hours. The next most common period is when a person has been working for fewer than 2 hours.

When are Injuries and Illnesses Most Likely to Occur?

Percent of all injuries and illnesses with days away from work, by hours on the job before event occurred, private industry, 2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

Note: In about 21 percent of the cases of nonfatal injuries and illnesses with days away from work, the number of hours on the job before the event occurred was not reported.

More information from BLS related to worker safety and health

[Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities \(IIF\) program](#)

- » [Future Scheduled Releases](#)
- » [History of BLS Safety and Health Statistics Programs](#)
- » [Occupational Injuries/Illnesses and Fatal Injuries Profiles](#) (National and State statistics)
- » [IIF Databases, Calculators, and Tools](#)

IIF News Releases:

- » Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (preliminary data) ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))
- » Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses: Industry counts and frequency rates ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))
- » Nonfatal injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

Compensation and Working Conditions (CWC) Online articles:

- » [Safety and health](#)

Monthly Labor Review (MLR) articles:

- » [Workplace injuries and illnesses](#)
- » [Occupational safety and health](#)

The Editor's Desk (TED) articles:

- » [Occupational safety and health](#)

[Information for Respondents to the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses \(SOII\)](#)

General Information

For more information, please call (202) 691-5200.

Media Contact

The news media can contact the BLS Press Officer at (202) 691-5902.

Note: Data in text, charts and tables are the latest available at the time of publication. Internet links may lead to more recent data.