

The NSDUH Report

September 24, 2009

Cigarette Use among Adults Employed Full Time, by Occupational Category

In Brief

- An estimated 33.6 million full-time employees aged 18 to 64 (28.4 percent of persons in that category) smoked cigarettes in the past month based on combined 2006 to 2008 data
- In 22 major occupational categories, the highest rates of past month cigarette use among full-time workers aged 18 to 64 were found in the food preparation and serving-related occupations (44.7 percent) and the construction and extraction occupations (42.9 percent); the occupational categories with the lowest rates were the education, training, and library occupations (12.3 percent) and the life, physical, and social science occupations (15.4 percent)
- Among full-time employees, the rate of past month cigarette use was higher among those aged 18 to 25 (40.1 percent) than among those in older age groups; among those aged 18 to 25, rates were especially high in the construction and extraction occupations (51.6 percent); the installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (50.3 percent); and the food preparation and serving-related occupations (50.2 percent)

In the United States, smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and contributes to the chronic illnesses of millions of individuals. To address this public health crisis, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (H.R. 1256), which granted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authority over tobacco products, was enacted in June 2009. One of the stated purposes of the act is to “promote cessation to reduce disease risk and the social costs associated with tobacco-related diseases.” The workplace often is seen as a prime location for smoking cessation programs. Up-to-date information on cigarette use among occupational groups may assist in the development and refinement of cessation efforts in the workplace.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks respondents about cigarette use in the past month. NSDUH also asks questions about current employment status (i.e., employed full time, employed part time, unemployed, or “other”¹) and the type of occupation in which respondents work. NSDUH defines full-time employed persons as those who usually work 35 or more hours per week and who worked in the past week or had a job despite not working in the past week. Occupations were coded using the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification system released by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,² which categorizes all occupations into 23 major groups (including a group for military-specific occupations that are excluded from NSDUH). This issue of *The NSDUH Report* uses data from the combined 2006 to 2008 surveys to present estimates of past month cigarette use among full-time workers aged 18 to 64 by occupational category.

Table 1. Past Month Cigarette Use among Persons Aged 18 to 64, by Employment Status: 2006 to 2008

Employment Status	Number (in 1,000s)	Percent
Total	54,521	29.3
Current Employment, Full Time	33,609	28.4
Current Employment, Part Time	6,827	26.9
Current Employment, Unemployed	3,449	45.4
Current Employment, Other*	10,635	30.4

* Includes retired persons, disabled persons, homemakers, students, or other persons not in the labor force.

Source: 2006 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

Cigarette Use, by Employment Status

An estimated 33.6 million full-time employees aged 18 to 64 (28.4 percent of persons in that category) smoked cigarettes in the past month (Table 1). Although the prevalence of past month cigarette use among adults aged 18 to 64 was higher among the unemployed (45.4 percent) than among persons who were employed part or full time or who had an employment status of “Other” (26.9, 28.4, and 30.4 percent, respectively), because full-time workers constitute about two thirds of the population aged 18 to 64 (or 118 million persons), the majority of smokers are employed full time. Specifically, among those aged 18 to 64, 61.6 percent of past month cigarette users were employed full time.

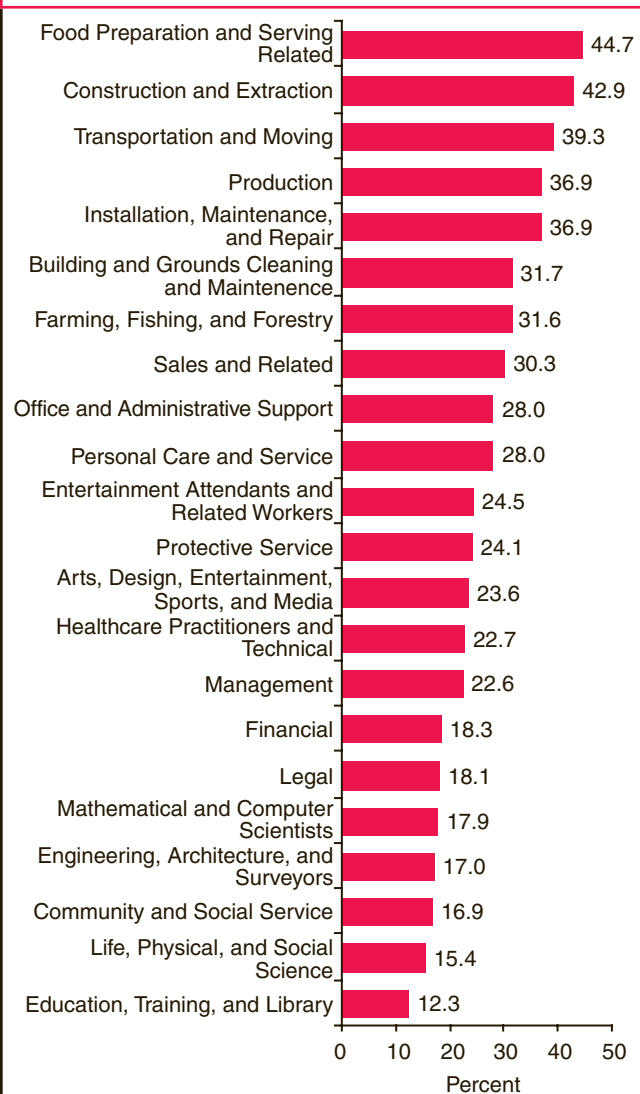
Cigarette Use, by Occupational Category

In 22 major occupational categories, the highest rates of past month cigarette use among full-time workers aged 18 to 64 were found in the food preparation and serving-related occupations (44.7 percent) and the construction and extraction occupations (42.9 percent) (Figure 1). The occupational categories with the lowest rates were the education, training, and library occupations (12.3 percent) and the life, physical, and social science occupations (15.4 percent).

Cigarette Use, by Occupational Category and Demographic Characteristics

Among full-time workers aged 18 to 64, males were more likely than females to have smoked cigarettes in the past month (30.4 vs. 25.7 percent). The prevalence of past month smoking among those employed full time was significantly higher among females than males in the community and social services occupations (20.7 vs. 11.5 percent), the healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (25.0 vs. 15.0 percent), and the sales and related occupations (33.8 vs. 27.6 percent) (Table 2). Conversely, the prevalence of past

Figure 1. Past Month Cigarette Use among Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 64, by Occupational Categories*: 2006 to 2008



* Occupations were coded using the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification system released by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: 2006 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

month smoking was significantly higher among males than females employed full time in the mathematical and computer scientist occupations (19.4 vs. 13.5 percent); the office and administrative support occupations (30.8 vs. 26.9 percent); the installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (37.4 vs. 24.8 percent); and the production occupations (39.4 vs. 29.7 percent).

The prevalence of past month cigarette use among full-time workers decreased with age, with 40.1 percent of those aged 18 to 25, 33.9 percent of those aged 26 to 34, 26.7 percent of those aged 35 to 49, and 20.7 percent of those aged 50 to 64 indicating past month use. Among those aged

Table 2. Past Month Cigarette Use among Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 64, by Demographic Characteristics and Occupational Categories*: 2006 to 2008

Occupational Category	Male	Female	Aged 18 to 25	Aged 26 to 34	Aged 35 to 49	Aged 50 to 64
Total	30.4	25.7	40.1	33.9	26.7	20.7
Food Preparation and Serving Related	46.9	42.7	50.2	48.6	40.6	35.0
Construction and Extraction	43.0	**	51.6	47.0	42.5	29.3
Transportation and Moving	39.8	35.8	46.6	47.0	35.3	35.1
Production	39.4	29.7	46.5	43.5	36.1	29.5
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	37.4	24.8	50.3	44.0	34.4	28.9
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	33.8	28.4	39.6	33.2	30.3	28.9
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	32.8	**	30.9	**	42.3	**
Sales and Related	27.6	33.8	38.6	36.9	27.4	23.6
Office and Administrative Support	30.8	26.9	36.6	30.8	28.8	20.5
Personal Care and Service	30.1	27.6	40.1	30.2	28.1	16.0
Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers	**	25.5	39.2	**	**	**
Protective Service	23.2	28.1	32.8	26.0	18.8	25.6
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	23.9	23.2	35.3	27.5	22.8	14.3
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	15.0	25.0	35.0	27.5	21.5	15.9
Management	22.0	23.6	36.1	31.9	21.6	16.3
Financial	16.0	20.6	25.1	23.1	15.4	16.1
Legal	18.2	18.0	35.9	28.5	19.0	8.7
Mathematical and Computer Scientists	19.4	13.5	25.3	21.7	15.1	15.3
Engineering, Architecture, and Surveyors	16.1	24.2	23.6	25.3	17.6	10.1
Community and Social Services	11.5	20.7	26.7	23.8	18.2	8.2
Life, Physical, and Social Science	17.9	11.8	24.5	18.3	8.9	**
Education, Training, and Library	13.4	11.9	20.9	19.4	9.0	9.1

* Occupations were coded using the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification system released by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

** Data are suppressed due to low precision.

Source: 2006 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

18 to 25, past month smoking was reported by half of those persons in the construction and extraction occupations (51.6 percent); the installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (50.3 percent); and the food preparation and serving-related occupations (50.2 percent).

Discussion

The prevalence of past month smoking among full-time workers aged 18 to 64 varied considerably by occupation, with the highest rates found among those in the food preparation and serving-related occupations and the construction and extraction occupations and the lowest rates found among those in the education, training, and library occupations and the life, physical, and social science occupations. Because most smokers aged 18 to 64 are employed full time, the workplace represents an ideal location for programs to educate them

about the health risks of smoking and programs to promote smoking cessation. These data identify occupational groups—and demographic subgroups within occupations—with high rates of smoking and may help policymakers and intervention specialists to develop, refine, and target cessation efforts.

End Notes

- 1 "Other" includes retired persons, disabled persons, homemakers, students, or other persons not in the labor force.
- 2 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *2000 Standard Occupational Classification*. Retrieved August 5, 2009, from <http://www.bls.gov/SOC/>

Suggested Citation

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Findings from the SAMHSA 2006 to 2008 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs)

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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2006 to 2008 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 73,887 persons aged 18 to 64 who were employed full time. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NSDUH Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on the most recent NSDUH is available in the following publication:

Office of Applied Studies. (2009). *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 09-4434, NSDUH Series H-36). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Also available online: <http://oas.samhsa.gov>.



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