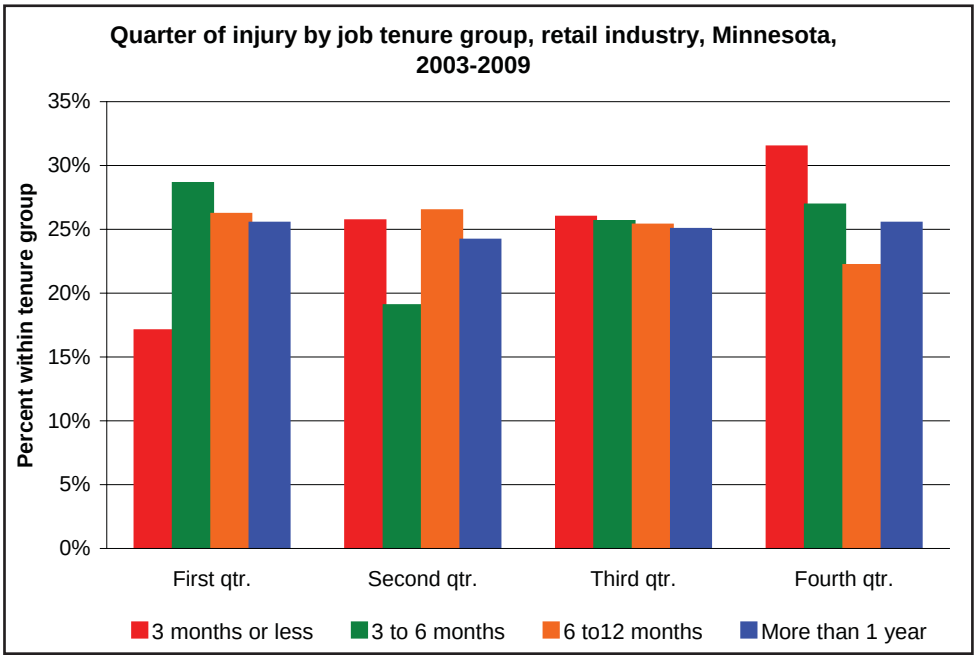
CompFact

Retail hiring makes imprint on work comp claims

Retail trade, as a whole, goes through an annual cycle of hiring to add workers for the busy holiday season. For the period from 2003 through 2009, retail employment added 84,000 new hires in the first quarter, 164,000 in the second quarter, 110,000 in the third quarter and 193,000 in the fourth quarter. This pattern of adding workers during the fourth quarter can be followed by tracking workers' compensation indemnity claims by job tenure.

The figure below shows the percentage of claims within each job tenure group that had an injury date within each quarter of the year. The claims are for the entire period from 2003 through 2009, a total of 15,637 claims. The percentages are shown within each job tenure group to highlight the variation between the quarters; in terms of the number of claims, 68 percent of claims are reported by workers with more than one year of job tenure.

The figure shows that claims among workers with up to three months of job tenure, who were hired shortly before the injury occurred, was highest in the fourth quarter (31 percent, 587 claims) and lowest during the first quarter (17 percent, 318 claims). These results are consistent with the counts of new hires. However, the impact of the workers hired during the fall months reaches further into the year. These workers didn't suddenly become amazingly safe workers, because if they were hired during the fall months and remained employed, they became workers with three to six months of job tenure during the first quarter. This tenure group reported its highest percentage of claims during the first quarter.



In contrast, the six- to 12-month job tenure group showed much less quarterly variation and workers with more than a year of job tenure showed almost no quarterly variation. These results show safety training is critical for new retail employees, especially if they are entering the workplace during the busiest season, when the time available for training may be at its minimum.