

MINNESOTA WORKPLACE SAFETY REPORT

Most-recent data shows Minnesota's workplaces safer

By Brian Zaidman, Senior Research Analyst; Policy Development, Research and Statistics

Minnesota's workplaces became even safer for workers during 2007 than they had been for much of the preceding decade. The latest occupational injury and illness figures show that during 2007, there were an estimated 94,200 recordable injury and illness cases; about 26,100 cases involved one or more days away from work. The comparable figures for 2006 were 107,100 total cases and 27,700 days-away-from-work cases. There were 72 work-related fatalities in 2007, a decrease from 78 fatalities in 2006 and 87 fatalities in 2005.

Next month, the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) will release its annual *Minnesota Workplace Safety Report*, detailing injury and illness rates and workplace fatalities for 2007. The report is based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* and *Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries* (CFOI). The report will be available on the DLI Web site at www.dli.mn.gov/RS/WorkplaceSafety.asp. The following are the major highlights from the new report.



Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses

- Minnesota's total rate of workplace injuries and illnesses was 4.6 cases per 100 full-time-equivalent (FTE) workers in 2007, dropping from a rate of 5.1 cases in 2006 and 2005. This represents a 23 percent decrease from the 2002 rate of 6.0 cases per 100 FTE workers.
- The rate of cases with days away from work (with the most severe injuries) was 1.3 per 100 FTE workers in 2007, unchanged from 2006 and 2005.
- Minnesota's industry sectors with the highest total injury and illness rates per 100 FTE workers were: construction (7.6); agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (7.3); and transportation and warehousing (6.6).

Additional statistics about the characteristics of the injured workers, the characteristics of their injuries and the amount of time away from work are available for cases with days away from work.

- The percentage of injured workers age 55 and older increased from 9 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2007.
- Sprains and strains accounted for 43 percent of the cases with days away from work. The second-highest category was soreness and pain, with 10 percent of the cases.
- The back and upper extremities were the most commonly injured body parts, accounting for nearly half the cases.





- Overexertion, often while lifting people or objects, falls and getting struck by objects were the most common injury events.
- The injured worker's own motion or bodily position was the most frequent source of injury category, followed by floors and ground surfaces.
- The median number of days away from work remained at five days, with 30 percent of the cases involving only one or two days away from work and 24 percent of the cases involving more than 20 days away from work. This was a slight shift from 2006, which had 33 percent of the cases away one or two days and 21 percent away more than 20 days.

Fatal occupational injuries

The CFOI covers all fatal work injuries in the private and public sectors, regardless of program coverage; thus, it includes federal workers and self-employed workers. However, fatal illnesses (such as asbestosis) are excluded.

- In 2007, 72 Minnesotans were fatally injured on the job. For 2003 through 2007, Minnesota had an average of 78 fatal work injuries a year, consisting of approximately 59 wage-and-salary workers and 19 self-employed people.
- Among industry sectors, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting recorded the highest number of worker fatalities, with 17. Construction had the second-highest number of fatalities, with 16 cases.
- The most frequent causes of Minnesota's fatal work injuries for 2007 were: highway transportation accidents (33 percent); and contact with objects and equipment (22 percent).

Minnesota OSHA activities

During federal-fiscal-year 2008 (October 2007 through September 2008), MNOSHA:

- conducted 2,483 compliance inspections affecting the workplaces of 131,700 workers;
- found violations resulting in the assessment of \$3.2 million in penalties;
- conducted 1,135 worksite consultations, affecting the workplaces of 166,900 workers and helping employers avoid \$3.3 million in penalties; and
- conducted 885 worksite training visits, plus many other safety and health presentations and seminars.

