

NEW YORK'S PRIVATE-SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES AT AN ALL-TIME LOW IN 2001

Private-sector work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State dropped to 214,400 in 2001, a decline of 15,800 cases from the 2000 level, according to the annual *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses*. This represents an incidence rate (the number of injury and illness cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers) of 3.6, the lowest recorded since 1992, the year the survey was redesigned, and 0.3 below the 2000 rate of 3.9. (The State's private-sector workforce remained relatively stable, at approximately 7 million workers in 2000 and 2001.) The State's rate has not only declined steadily since 1992, but has also remained well below the national rate (see Table I). New York's 2001 incidence rate was the lowest rate of any state participating in the survey, as was its incidence rate for lost-workday cases (1.9). The territory of the Virgin Islands, however, reported lower rates for both total (2.3) and lost-workday (1.4) cases.

**TABLE I. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES
PRIVATE SECTOR
New York State and the United States, 1997-2001
(Cases in thousands)**

Cases/rates	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total cases					
U.S.	6,145.6	5,922.8	5,707.2	5650.1	5,215.6
New York State	248.1	244.7	239.2	230.2	214.4
Total incidence rates					
U.S.	7.1	6.7	6.3	6.1	5.7
New York State	4.4	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.6
Lost-workday cases					
U.S.	2,866.2	2,780.7	2,742.8	2,752.1	2,559.1
New York State	129.1	124.7	125.7	125.2	110.9
Lost-workday rates					
U.S.	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.8
New York State	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.9
No lost-workday cases					
U.S.	3,279.4	3,142.1	2,964.5	2,898.0	2,656.5
New York State	119.0	120.0	113.5	105.0	103.5
No lost-workday rates					
U.S.	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.2	2.9
New York State	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.8

Approximately 52 percent (110,900) of the injury and illness cases reported resulted in time lost from work, restricted work activity, or both. The other 48 percent were not serious enough to involve time away from work, but nevertheless required medical treatment beyond basic first aid. Total lost-work-time cases occurred at a frequency of 1.9 cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers, while the national average stood at 2.8. The State's incidence rate for no-lost-work-time cases remained, for the second consecutive year, at its all-time low of 1.8 in 2001, compared with a national rate of 2.9.

New York State's total private-sector occupational injury and illness incidence rate has improved consistently from 1996 (4.9) to 2001 (3.6); moreover, 1996 marked the first time on record that the total incidence rate dipped below 5.0.

Between 2000 and 2001, every industry sector in the state experienced a drop in its injury and illness incidence rate except agriculture, where the rate rose from 4.7 to 5.7, and services, where the rate remained unchanged at 3.2.

With nearly 2,900,000 employees in 2001, the services division, which is comprised of a wide variety of industries that provide services to individuals and/or businesses, accounted for approximately 41 percent of the State's employment. This division posted a total incidence rate of 3.5 in 1999, which declined to 3.2 in 2000 and remained unchanged in 2001.

**Table II. EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES
BY MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISION
Private Sector, New York State, 1999-2001
(Employment in thousands)**

Industry	1999		2000		2001	
	Emp. ¹	Rate	Emp. ¹	Rate	Emp. ¹	Rate
Total private industry ²	6,915.2	4.1	7,073.0	3.9	7,018.1	3.6
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	50.3	5.0	53.0	4.7	54.9	5.7
Mining	4.5	5.4	4.6	5.7	4.7	5.3
Construction	309.9	5.5	327.6	5.1	328.9	4.7
Manufacturing	890.7	5.8	873.5	5.5	832.2	5.1
Transportation & public utilities	412.3	6.5	424.1	6.2	424.4	5.6
Wholesale & retail trade	1,704.4	4.3	1,738.4	4.2	1,715.3	3.9
Finance, insurance, & real estate	743.0	1.3	744.5	1.3	741.6	1.1
Services	2,787.0	3.5	2,888.2	3.2	2,892.8	3.2

1 Emp. = Employment

2 Total includes employees in SIC-unclassified industries.

Although services accounted for more private-sector injury and illness cases in New York in 2001 than any other division, manufacturing contained 7 of the State's 10 most-hazardous private-sector industries. (The most-hazardous industries are those with the highest total injury and illness incidence rates according to published data from the *2001 Annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses*.) These seven industries employed approximately 220,600 workers, and accounted for slightly over 26 percent of the State's total manufacturing workforce (see Table III). The three other most-hazardous industries were transportation by air, general merchandise stores, and food stores.

Incidence rates for the most-hazardous industries ranged from 11.0 for transportation equipment manufacturing to 7.0 for food stores. Transportation equipment manufacturing posted the highest incidence rate.

TABLE III. MOST-HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES, BY INCIDENCE RATES
Private Sector, New York State, 2001
(Employment in thousands)

Industry	SIC code ¹	Emp. ²	Incidence rate
Transportation equipment	37	29.5	11.0
Transportation by air	45	77.0	10.8
Furniture and fixtures	25	17.6	10.5
General merchandise stores	53	121.0	9.0
Food and kindred products	20	58.7	8.2
Lumber and wood products, except furniture	24	14.8	8.1
Stone, clay, glass, and concrete products	32	27.1	8.0
Fabricated metal products	34	55.2	7.8
Primary metal industries	33	17.7	7.1
Food stores	54	222.1	7.0

1 SIC code = Standard Industrial Classification code

2 Emp. = Employment

Fifty-nine percent of New York's private-sector occupational illnesses in 2001 were attributed to repeated trauma disorders. Historically, most of these conditions have been associated with the repetitive tasks found in many manufacturing industries. In 2001, manufacturing industries accounted for slightly less than 47 percent of the State's total work-related illness cases, but for 62 percent of those attributed to repeated trauma. Nationally, the comparable figures were 54 percent and 65 percent, respectively. Repetitive motion cases are also being identified and reported in non-manufacturing establishments. These industries accounted for 37 percent of the State's repeated trauma illnesses in 2001, compared with 44 percent in 2000. Approximately 31 percent of the State's private-sector illness cases occurred in the services industry division in 2001, compared with 21 percent nationally.

Technical Note

Since 1986, the New York State Department of Labor, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, has reported annually on the number and rate of workplace injuries and illnesses. This cooperative program was redesigned in 1992 and is now called the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Statistical Program. It is a survey that collects, compiles, analyzes, and publishes work-related injury and illness statistics for both the private and public sectors of New York State. The survey samples about 11,000 private-sector establishments and approximately 2,000 public-sector units drawn from state and local government agencies. The annual survey is used to estimate the number and frequency (incidence rate) of non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses. Private-sector survey data are based on logs kept by private-industry employers during the year. The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year can be influenced by a variety of factors: the level of economic activity; work conditions and work practices; the experience and training of workers; and the number of hours worked. The survey also provides detailed characteristics (such as age, sex, race, length of service, and occupation) on those workers who suffered injuries and illnesses that involved at least one day away from work, excluding the day of occurrence. (Illnesses and injuries involving time away from work are viewed as more serious than those that do not lead

to lost time.) Data on the circumstances of their injuries and illnesses (the nature of the injury/illness, the part(s) of the body affected, the event or exposure involved in the case, and the primary and secondary sources of the injury/illness) will be available later in the year. Lastly, the employment data in this report comes from the Covered Employment and Wages (ES-202) program. Please note that this data series may undergo revisions as more complete data is obtained.

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