

NEW YORK'S PRIVATE SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES AT AN ALL-TIME LOW IN 1998

Private sector work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State declined by 3,400 cases from 1997, despite a modest growth in the state's private sector workforce (6.7 million workers in 1998 compared with 6.6 million in 1997). Private industry workplaces reported 244,700 non-fatal, work-related injury and illness cases in the 1998 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 4.3 -- the lowest recorded level since 1992 (the year the survey was redesigned to capture, in greater detail, the circumstances surrounding reported occupational injuries and illnesses). Since that year, the state's rate has been declining and has continued to remain well below the national average (see Table I). The rate of 4.3 for all reported cases was also the lowest in the nation in 1998. Furthermore, at 2.2 per 100 full-time workers, New York's private sector incidence rate for lost-workday cases was tied with that of New Jersey for the lowest in the nation in 1998.

I. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES PRIVATE SECTOR New York State and the United States, 1992-1998 (Cases in thousands)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<u>Total Cases</u>							
U.S.	6,799.4	6,737.4	6,766.9	6,575.4	6,238.9	6,145.6	5,922.8
New York State	322.4	317.6	294.7	270.9	268.0	248.1	244.7
<u>Total Incidence Rates</u>							
U.S.	8.9	8.5	8.4	8.1	7.4	7.1	6.7
New York State	6.2	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.9	4.4	4.3
<u>Lost-Workday Cases</u>							
U.S.	2,953.4	2,967.4	3,061.0	2,972.1	2,832.5	2,866.2	2,780.7
New York State	147.0	156.0	148.9	137.0	130.9	129.1	124.7
<u>Lost-Workday Rates</u>							
U.S.	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1
New York State	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.2
<u>No-Lost-Workday Cases</u>							
U.S.	3,846.0	3,770.0	3,705.9	3,603.2	3,406.4	3,279.4	3,142.1
New York State	175.5	161.6	145.8	133.9	137.1	119.0	120.0
<u>No-Lost-Workday Rates:</u>							
U.S.	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.5
New York State	3.4	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.1

Approximately 51 percent (124,700) of the injury and illness cases reported resulted in time lost from work, restricted work activity, or both. The other 49 percent, while not serious enough to incur time away from work, nevertheless required medical treatment beyond basic first aid. Total lost-work-time cases occurred at a frequency of 2.2 cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers, compared with a national average of 3.1. The incidence rate for no-lost-work-time cases was 2.1, compared with 3.5 nationally.

Some major industry divisions continued to exhibit variations in the frequency of non-fatal occupational incidents. The transportation and public utilities division, for example, recorded a total cases rate of 7.4 in 1998, up from 6.3 in 1997, and down from 8.6 in 1996. A

similar pattern was exhibited by the construction industry. On the other hand, the industry divisions agriculture, forestry, and fishing; manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; and finance, insurance, and real estate all posted rates that were lower than their 1997 rates. The services industry division, which includes establishments primarily engaged in providing a wide variety of services to individuals and businesses, consistently posted declining rates during the 1995-1997 period. Although the annual average employment in this industry division was significantly higher in 1998 than in 1997 (2.6 million as against 2.5 million workers), the total cases rate at 3.9 was the same as the 1997 rate. This industry division employed 39 percent of the state's private sector workforce in 1998 and accounted for the largest percentage of total private sector cases that year -- just over 34 percent of all incidents. Other significant contributors to the state's total private sector occupational injury and illness incidents were wholesale and retail trade (23 percent) and manufacturing (20 percent). These two industry divisions employed 25 percent and 14 percent, respectively, of the state's private sector workforce. Nationally, however, manufacturing, which employed just under 18 percent of the private sector workforce, accounted for 31 percent of occupational injuries and illnesses. Wholesale and retail trade accounted for 26 percent and services for 23 percent nationwide. Table II provides the employment and incidence rates by major industry divisions over the period, 1993-1998, for New York State.

II. EMPLOYMENT AND INCIDENCE RATES, BY MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISION
Private Sector, New York State, 1993-1998
 (Employment in thousands)

INDUSTRY	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	EMP	RATE										
Total Private Industry	6269.0	6.0	6339.2	5.5	6253.6	6.2	6408.8	5.1	6560.2	4.4	6703.0	4.3
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	39.8	7.1	40.6	6.3	39.2	9.0	42.0	9.9	45.2	6.5	47.2	4.8
Mining	5.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	4.9	INA	4.8	5.1	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.9
Construction	241.5	9.7	248.6	8.3	243.9	10.5	249.8	7.7	262.9	6.3	281.8	6.5
Manufacturing	976.9	7.9	954.5	7.7	1011.4	8.7	938.3	7.1	918.6	6.0	910.9	5.4
Transportation, and public utilities	390.3	9.2	392.3	8.7	390.1	8.8	393.5	8.6	401.1	6.3	404.9	7.4
Wholesale and retail trade	1555.5	5.8	1578.4	5.7	1564.1	5.6	1607.7	4.4	1634.8	4.5	1655.3	4.1
Finance, insurance, and real estate	726.6	2.1	733.8	1.9	730.3	1.8	720.7	1.9	720.0	1.7	733.7	1.3
Services	2313.2	5.4	2347.2	4.6	2252.9	5.9	2432.0	4.7	2548.5	3.9	2640.3	3.9

EMP: Employment

Although the services industry division accounted for the bulk of private sector injury and illness cases in New York in 1998, 7 of the state's 10 most hazardous private sector industries (those with the highest total injury and illness incidence rates) were found in the manufacturing division. These seven industries (items 3 through 8 in the table below) employed a total of 239,400 workers, accounting for slightly above 26 percent of the state's total manufacturing

workforce. The average incidence rate for these seven manufacturing industries was 8.1. The three other most hazardous industries were found in the transportation and public utilities (items 1 and 8 below) and services divisions (item 10 below).

III. MOST HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES
Private Sector, New York State, 1998
 (Employment in thousands)

INDUSTRY	SIC CODE	EMP	INCIDENCE RATE
1. Transportation by air	45	77.4	17.1
2. Transportation equipment	37	40.8	13.4
3. Primary metal industries	33	19.7	9.8
4. Food and kindred products	20	58.6	9.0
5. Lumber and wood products	24	14.5	8.8
6. Paper and allied products	26	31.8	8.6
7. Fabricated metal products	34	57.0	8.6
8. Furniture and fixtures	25	17.0	7.8
9. Trucking and warehousing	42	65.3	7.8
10. Health services	80	752.5	7.7

SIC: Standard Industrial Classification Code
 EMP: Employment

Almost 55 percent of New York's private sector occupational illnesses in 1998 were attributed to disorders associated with repeated trauma. Historically, most of these conditions have been associated with repetitive tasks in many manufacturing industries, which in 1998 accounted for just over 47 percent of the state's work-related illness cases, compared with 60 percent nationwide. However, more repetitive cases are now being identified and reported in non-manufacturing situations, particularly in those occupations involving the use of computers. Thus, approximately 26 percent of the state's private sector illness cases occurred in the services industry division, up from 23 percent in 1997. This compares with 18 percent nationally in this industry division.

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 10,000 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 rates) of non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses. The 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 changes in the level of economic activity, working conditions and work practices, worker experience and training, and the number of hours worked. The survey also

provides details on the characteristics of the workers whose injuries and illnesses 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.) This information includes the occupation of the workers and their age, sex, race, and length of service. There are also 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 or illness).

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