NEW YORK'S PRIVATE SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES AT AN ALL-TIME LOW IN 1999

Private sector work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State declined by 5,500 cases from 1998, despite a modest growth in the state's private sector workforce (6.9 million workers in 1999 compared with 6.8 million in 1998). Private industry workplaces reported 239,200 non-fatal, work-related injury and illness cases in the 1999 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 4.1 -- the lowest recorded level since 1992, the year the survey was redesigned. Since that year, the state's rate has been declining and has continued to remain well below the national rate (see Table I). The 1999 rate of 4.1 for all reported cases was also the lowest of any state in the nation. Furthermore, at 2.1 per 100 full-time workers, New York's private sector incidence rate for lost-workday cases was tied with that of Louisiana for the lowest in the nation in 1999.

I. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES
PRIVATE SECTOR
New York State and the United States, 1995-1999
(cases in thousands)

Cases/rates	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total cases					
U.S.	6,575.4	6,238.9	6,145.6	5,922.8	5,707.2
New York State	270.9	268.0	248.1	244.7	239.2
Total incidence rates					
U.S.	8.1	7.4	7.1	6.7	6.3
New York State	5.1	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.1
Lost-workday cases					
U.S.	2,972.1	2,832.5	2,866.2	2,780.7	2,742.8
New York State	137.0	130.9	129.1	124.7	125.7
Lost-workday rates					
U.S.	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.0
New York State	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1
No lost-workday cases					
U.S.	3,603.2	3,406.4	3,279.4	3,142.1	2,964.5
New York State	133.9	137.1	119.0	120.0	113.5
No lost-workday rates					
U.S.	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.3
New York State	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.1	1.9

Approximately 53 percent (125,700) of the injury and illness cases reported resulted in time lost from work, restricted work activity, or both. The other 47 percent were not serious enough to incur time away from work, but nevertheless required medical treatment beyond basic first aid.

Total lost-work-time cases occurred at a frequency of 2.1 cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers, compared to a national average of 3.0. The incidence rate for no lost-work-time cases dropped to 1.9 from a 1997 and 1998 low of 2.1, compared with the national low of 3.3 in 1999.

New York State's total private sector incidence rate has fallen consistently from 1996 (5.1) to 1999 (4.1). The finance, insurance and real estate industry sector in the state exhibited a similar pattern of declining rates. These rates fell from the 1996 level of 1.9 to 1.7, 1.3, and 1.3 in the three following years. During this period, the finance, insurance and real estate division also experienced employment growth, from approximately 720,000 in 1996 and 1997 to more than 742,000 by 1999. The services industry division, which includes establishments that provide a wide variety of services to individuals and business, also had declining total incidence rates, with rates of 4.7, 3.9, 3.9 and 3.5 from 1996 to 1999. This industry division has had consistently declining incidence rates since 1996, along with yearly employment growth. With more than 2,786,000 employees in 1999, services accounted for just over 40 percent of the state's employment.

Incidence rates also dropped in construction and transportation and public utilities that from 1998 to 1999. The incidence rate for the finance, insurance and real estate industry was unchanged from 1998 to 1999, while the rates for five other divisions, agriculture; forestry and fishing; mining; manufacturing; and wholesale trade, rose. Transportation and public utilities and manufacturing, at 6.5 and 5.8, respectively, recorded the highest total case incidence rates of any industry sectors in the state. These rates are, however, lower than the corresponding national rates of 7.3 for transportation and public utilities and 9.2 for manufacturing.

II. EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES BY MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISION
Private Sector, New York State, 1997-1999
(employment in thousands)

Industry	1997		1998		1999	
	Emp.	Rate	Emp.	Rate	Emp.	Rate
Total private industry	6560.2	4.4	6703.0	4.3	6920.3	4.1
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	45.2	6.5	47.2	4.8	50.2	5.0
Mining	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.9	4.5	5.4
Construction	262.9	6.3	281.8	6.5	308.8	5.5
Manufacturing	918.6	6.0	910.9	5.4	888.8	5.8
Transportation & public utilities	401.1	6.3	404.9	7.4	411.9	6.5
Wholesale & retail trade	1634.8	4.5	1655.3	4.1	1701.9	4.3
Finance, insurance, & real estate	720.0	1.7	733.7	1.3	742.8	1.3
Services	2548.5	3.9	2640.3	3.9	2786.1	3.5

Emp. - Employment

Although the services industry division accounted for more of private sector injury and illness cases in New York in 1999 than any other sector, 7 of the state's 10 most hazardous private sector industries (those with the highest total injury and illness incidence rates, according to published data) were in the manufacturing division. These seven industries (see Table III) employed a total of 225,800 workers, accounting for slightly above 25 percent of the state's total manufacturing

workforce. The incidence rates for these industries ranged from a high of 13.3 for the primary metals industry, to 7.0 for stone, clay, and glass products. The three other most hazardous industries were found in the transportation and public utilities (items 2, 3, and 10 below) and in the heavy construction division (item 7 below).

III. MOST HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES
Private Sector, New York State, 1999
(employment in thousands)

Industry	SIC code	Emp.	Incidence rate
1. Primary metals industries	33	19.2	13.3
2. Transportation by air	45	78.0	12.7
3. Water transportation	42	68.4	11.8
4. Fabricated metal products	34	56.7	11.7
5. Furniture and fixtures	25	17.8	10.6
6. Food and kindred products	20	57.4	8.8
7. Heavy construction	16	26.6	8.6
8. Lumber and wood products	24	15.2	7.4
9. Rubber and plastics products	30	34.1	7.3
10. Local and interurban passenger transit	41	61.6	7.0
11. Stone, clay, and glass products	32	25.4	7.0

SIC Standard Industrial Classification Code
Emp. Employment

Sixty-one percent of New York's private sector occupational illnesses in 1999 were attributed to repeated trauma disorders. Historically, most of these conditions have been associated with repetitive tasks in many manufacturing industries, which in 1999 accounted for just over 48 percent of the state's work-related illness cases, compared to 60 percent, nationwide. More repetitive cases are now being identified and reported in nonmanufacturing situations. These industries accounted for 40 percent of the state’s repeated trauma illnesses in 1999, compared to 34 percent in 1998. Approximately 26 percent of the state's private sector illness cases occurred in the services industry division in 1999 and 1998. This compares to 18 percent nationwide 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, experience and training of the workers, 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 also are 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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