NEW YORK'S PRIVATE SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES REACH AN ALL-TIME LOW IN 2003

Private sector work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State fell to 172,100 in 2003, a decline of 17,900 cases from the 2002 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 3.1, the lowest rate recorded since 1992, the year the survey was redesigned, and 0.4 below its 2002 rate of 3.5. (New York's private sector workforce roughly remained unchanged from 2002 to 2003 at approximately 7 million.) In addition to having declined steadily since 1992, the State's incidence rate has also remained well below the national level. (See **Table I.**) New York's total incidence rate was the lowest of any state participating in the Survey in 2003. Only the Virgin Islands, at 2.8, posted a lower total occupational injury and illness incidence rate. New York's 2003 incidence rate for cases with days away from work, job transfer/restriction, or both (DART) [1] was 1.8. The "other recordable case rate"[2] was 1.3. Due to changes by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to its recordkeeping requirements, the data for 2003 are strictly comparable to 2002 data only. (See **Technical Note** for a discussion of recordkeeping changes and of factors that can influence rate changes from one year to the next.)

TABLE I. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES
PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT
New York State and the United States, 1999-2003
(Cases in thousands)

Cases/rates	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total cases					
U.S.	5,707.2	5,650.1	5,215.6	4,700.6	4,365.2
New York State	239.2	230.2	214.4	190.0	172.1
Total incidence rates					
U.S.	6.3	6.1	5.7	5.3	5.0
New York State	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.1
DART cases[1]					
U.S.	2,742.8	2,752.1	2,559.1	2,494.3	2,301.9
New York State	125.7	125.2	110.9	109.1	100.1
DART incidence rates					
U.S.	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.6
New York State	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.8
Other recordable cases[2]					
U.S.	2,964.5	2,898.0	2,656.5	2,206.3	2,063.3
New York State	113.5	105.0	103.5	80.9	72.0
Other recordable cases rates					
U.S.	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.4
New York State	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.3

[1] DART cases are those that result in days-away-from work, job transfer, or restriction. DART cases include incidents that result in days-away-from-work with or without job transfer/restriction, as well as job transfer/restriction cases only. From Survey years 1992- 2001, this group was called lost-workday cases.
[2] From Survey years 1992-2001, other recordable cases were called no lost-workday cases.

In 2003 New York State's incidence rate for occupational injuries and illnesses varied greatly by industrial category. The highest total incidence rates reported were for the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector (7.7) and the transportation and warehousing sector (7.1). Manufacturing (4.9), health care and social assistance (4.5), construction (4.1), retail trade (3.6), and utilities (3.3) also posted total incidence rates that were higher than that of all private industries combined (3.1). The remaining sectors: arts, entertainment and recreation (3.2); accommodations and food services (3.0); mining (2.9); wholesale trade (2.9); administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (2.5); management of companies and enterprises (2.1); real estate rental and leasing (2.0); educational services (2.0); other services except public administration (1.8); information (1.7); professional, scientific, and technical services (1.0); finance and insurance (0.6) all reported rates that were lower than the 3.1 incidence rate level for all industries. (See **Table II**.)

Table II. EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES BY NAICS SECTOR[1] PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT, NEW YORK STATE, 2003

NAICS Code	Sector	Employment (000's)	Incidence Rate
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	21.3	7.7
21	Mining	4.4	2.9
22	Utilities	41	3.3
23	Construction	316.9	4.1
31-33	Manufacturing	610.5	4.9
42	Wholesale trade	350.8	2.9
44-45	Retail trade	852.2	3.6
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	215	7.1
51	Information	275.3	1.7
52	Finance and insurance	513.8	0.6
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	178.6	2
54	Professional scientific, and technical services	505.7	1
55	Management of companies and enterprises	120.3	2.1
56	Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	410.5	2.5
61	Educational services	257.4	2
62	Health care and social assistance	1,133.70	4.5
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	125.3	3.2
72	Accommodations and food services	517.5	3
81	Other services (except public administration)	284.7	1.8

[1] Beginning with the 2003 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, all data are aggregated according to North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes. By introducing NAICS, the United States, Canada, and Mexico, according to the NAICS Manual "have jointly updated the system of classifying economic activities that makes industrial statistics produced in the three countries comparable. … NAICS is the first industrial classification system that was developed in accordance with a single principle of aggregation, the principle that producing units that use similar processes should be grouped together. NAICS also reflects, in a much more explicit way, the enormous changes in technology and the growth and diversification of services that have marked recent decades." Therefore, direct comparison of data from the 2003 Survey with those of previous years is not available. Industrial categories under NAICS are divided into supersectors, subsectors, industry groups and NAICS industries.

The highest incidence rate among the NAICS employment subsectors and industry groups (14.9) was recorded for vending machine operators, followed by that of natural gas distribution companies (14.2). Urban transit systems (13.7), and boiler, tank and shipping container manufacturers (13.3) reported more than 13 work-related injury and illness cases per 100 full-time workers. Completing the list of most hazardous industrial groupings were courier and messenger services (12.1), warehousing and storage (10.4), clay product and refractory manufacturing (10.2), cement and concrete product manufacturing (10.1), heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and commercial refrigeration equipment manufacturing (9.6), and lawn and garden equipment supply stores (9.4). (See **Table III.)**

Table III. EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES BY MOST HAZARDOUS[1] NAICS[2] INDUSTRY CATEGORY[3] PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT, NEW YORK STATE, 2003

NAICS Code	Industry	Employment (000's)	Incidence Rate
4542	Vending machine operators	2.8	14.9
2212	Natural gas distribution	3.9	14.2
4851	Urban transit systems	5.2	13.7
3324	Boiler, tank, and shipping container manufacturing	4.5	13.3
492	Courier and messenger services	37.6	12.1
493	Warehousing and storage	16.8	10.4
3271	Clay product and refractory manufacturing	4.1	10.2
3273	Cement and concrete products manufacturing	6.3	10.1
3334	HVAC and commercial refrigeration equipment	6.6	9.6
4442	Lawn and garden equipment supply stores	6.4	9.4

[1] Most hazardous industry categories are the sub-sectors and industry groups with the highest total work-related injury and illness incidence rates among all NYS published data.
[2] North American Industrial Classification System
[3] Industry categories include subsectors and industry groupings.

New York State's private sector workers recorded an estimated 9,400 occupational illnesses in 2003, down by 500 from the 2002 level. The largest individually defined category of occupational illness in 2003 was skin ailments, with 1,400 cases, or 15.0 percent of the total. However, as a result of OSHA recordkeeping changes, the category "All other occupational illnesses" included disorders due to repeated trauma (such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome) for the first time in 2002. Previously, repeated trauma cases were a separate category that accounted for 59 percent of total occupational illnesses in 2001. "All other illness cases" accounted for 75.6 percent of all reported private sector illnesses in 2003. In 2003, occupational illnesses represented 9.9 percent of all work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State. In 2003, occupational illnesses accounted for 6.2 percent of all work-related injury and illness cases nationally. Of that total, 16.1 percent were skin disorders and 75.4 percent were recorded as "All other illnesses." Approximately 33 percent of New York's private sector occupational illness cases occurred in the manufacturing sector. Nationally, workers in the manufacturing sector reported 41.8 percent of new occupational illnesses.

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 encompasses collection, compilation, analysis, and publication of work-related injury and illness statistics for both the private and public employment sectors of New York State. The occupational injury and illness survey contains about 11,500 private sector establishments and approximately 2,000 public sector units drawn from state and local government agencies.

The annual survey provides estimates of the number and frequency (incidence rates) of workplace injuries and illnesses based on logs kept by private industry employers during the year. The records reflect not only the year's injury and illness experience, but also the employers understanding of which cases are work related under OSHA (the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration). The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year also 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.

On January 19, 2001, OSHA promulgated revisions to their requirements for recording occupational injuries and illnesses. These revisions became effective January 1, 2002 and are reflected in the 2002 and later years' surveys. Details about the revised requirements are available from the OSHA website at www.osha-slc.gov/recordkeeping/index.html or from OSHA's Office of Public Affairs at 202-693-1999. Due to the revised requirements, the estimates from the 2002 and 2003 surveys are not comparable with those from prior years. NAICS codes replaced Standard Industrial Codes (SIC) for the 2003 Survey. Therefore, direct industry category rate comparisons may not be available for 2002 and 2003 data.

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. The source of the employment data in this report was the Covered Employment and Wages (ES-202) program. Please note that this data series may undergo revisions as more complete data are obtained.

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