NEW YORK'S PRIVATE SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES REACH AN ALL-TIME LOW IN 2004

Private sector work-related injuries and illnesses in New York State fell to 166,600 in 2004, a decline of 5,500 cases from the 2003 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 3.0, the lowest rate recorded since 1992, the year the survey was redesigned, and 0.1 below its 2003 rate of 3.1. (New York's private sector workforce, at approximately 7 million in 2004, increased by slightly less than 59,000 persons or almost 1 percent over 2003's employment.) In addition to having declined steadily since 1992, the State's total private sector 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 2004. However, only two other participating locations – the District of Columbia (2.3) and the Virgin Islands (2.7) – posted lower total incidence rates. Of the 166,600 private sector occupational injury and illness cases reported in 2004, 95,700 were cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction; that is, they required recuperation away from work, transfer to another job, restricted duties at work, or a combination of these actions[1]. The remaining 70,900 injuries and illnesses were other recordable cases[2] (those cases which required more than just first aid treatment, but did not result in lost work time). The incidence rate for cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction was 1.7 per 100 workers, a decrease of 0.1 from 2003, and the rate for other recordable cases was 1.3 (unchanged from 2003). **(See Table I.)**

TABLE I. TOTAL NONFATAL WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES PRIVATE SECTOR New York State and the United States, 2000-2004 (Cases in thousands)

Cases/Rates	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total cases					
U.S.	5650.1	5,215.6	4,700.6	4,365.2	4,257.3
New York State	230.2	214.4	190.0	172.1	166.6
Total incidence rates					
U.S.	6.1	5.7	5.3	5.0	4.8
New York State	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.0
Number of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction[1]					
U.S.	2,752.1	2,559.1	2,494.3	2,301.9	2,225.0
New York State	125.2	110.9	109.1	100.1	95.7
Incidence rates of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction					
U.S.	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.5
New York State	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.7
Number of other recordable cases[2]					
U.S.	2,898.0	2,656.5	2,206.3	2,063.3	2,032.3
New York State	105.0	103.5	80.9	72.0	70.9
Incidence rates of other recordable cases					
U.S.	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.4	2.3
New York State	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.3

[1] Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction comprise two case types; those requiring at least one day away from work, with or without job transfer or restriction, and those requiring only job transfer or restriction. The latter case type may involve shortened work hours, a temporary job change, or temporary restrictions on a worker's regular duties (for example, no heavy lifting). For Survey years 1992- 2001, this group was called "lost-workday cases".

[2] For Survey years 1992-2001, other recordable cases were called "no lost-workday cases".

In 2004, New York State's incidence rate for occupational injuries and illnesses varied greatly by industrial category. The highest total incidence rates were reported for transportation and warehousing (5.7) and for construction (4.9). Arts, entertainment, and recreation (4.4); utilities (4.4); manufacturing (4.3); accommodation and food services (4.2); health care and social assistance (4.0); retail trade (3.9); agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (3.8); wholesale trade (3.2); and, administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (3.2) posted incidence rates that were higher than the rate of 3.0 recorded for all private sector industries combined. Mining (2.7); educational services (2.5); real estate and rental and leasing (2.3); information (1.9); other services, except public administration (1.8); management of companies and enterprises (1.5); professional, scientific, and technical services (0.8); and finance and insurance (0.6) all reported rates that were significantly lower than the 3.0 rate for all private sector industries. (**See Table II**.)

Table II. EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES BY NAICS SECTOR[1] PRIVATE SECTOR, NEW YORK STATE, 2004

NAICS Sector	Industry Category	Employment (000's)	Incidence Rate
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	16.7	3.8
21	Mining	4.7	2.7
22	Utilities	39.3	4.4
23	Construction	318.8	4.9
31-33	Manufacturing	593.3	4.3
42	Wholesale trade	351.9	3.2
44-45	Retail trade	863.0	3.9
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	217.3	5.7
51	Information	269.2	1.9
52	Finance and insurance	516.8	0.6
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	180.8	2.3
54	Professional scientific, and technical services	512.7	0.8
55	Management of companies and enterprises	119.0	1.5
56	Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	19.2	3.2
61	Educational services	263.3	2.5
62	Health care and social assistance	1,150.5	4.0
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	130.6	4.4
72	Accommodations and food services	78.7	4.2
81	Other services, except public administration	285.2	1.8

The highest incidence rates among the NAICS employment subsectors, industry groups, and industries were reported for siding contractors (29.6) and ventilation, heating, air conditioning, and commercial refrigeration equipment manufacturing (13.0). Warehouse clubs and supercenters (10.9), vending machine operators (10.7), scheduled air transportation (10.1), and performing arts companies (10.0) also reported incidence rates of 10.0 or greater. Completing the list of the ten industries with the highest incidence rates were direct selling establishments (9.1), couriers and messengers (8.9), motor vehicle parts manufacturing (8.5), and heavy and civil engineering construction (7.3). **(See Table III.)**

[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 sectors, subsectors, industry groups and NAICS industries.

Table III. PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST[1] TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATES BY NAICS[2] INDUSTRY CATEGORY[3] NEW YORK STATE, 2004

Industry Category	NAICS Code	Employment (000's)	Incidence Rate
Siding contractors	23817	1.9	29.6
Ventilation, heating, air conditioning, and commercial refrigeration equipment manufacturing	3334	6	13
Warehouse clubs and supercenters	45291	25.5	10.9
Vending machine operators	4542	2.7	10.7
Scheduled air transportation	4811	27.1	10.1
Performing arts companies	7111	18.3	10
Direct selling establishments	4543	15.7	9.1
Couriers and messengers	492	38.2	8.9
Motor vehicle parts manufacturing	3363	25.5	8.5
Heavy and civil engineering construction	237	27.3	7.3

In 2004, total occupational illnesses in New York State represented 5.2 percent of all private sector work-related injuries and illnesses, while nationally they accounted for 5.8 percent of all work-related injury and illness cases. New York State's private sector workers recorded an estimated 8,700 occupational illnesses in 2004, down by 700 from the 2003 level. The largest individually defined category of occupational illness in 2004 was skin disorders, with 1,100 cases, or 12.6 percent of the total. It should be noted that since 2002, as a result of OSHA record-keeping changes, the category "All other illnesses" was redefined to include disorders due to repeated trauma (such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome). In 2004 therefore, this category accounted for 67.8 percent of all newly reported private sector illnesses. (Nationally, this category accounted for 65 percent of total illness cases in 2004). Approximately 64 percent of New York's private sector occupational illness cases in 2004 occurred in the services-providing sector of the economy (employing about 86 percent of the total private sector workforce); while nationally, services-providing industries, which employed just under 79 percent of the private sector workforce, accounted for approximately 53 percent of new occupational illnesses.

[1] These industry categories are the subsectors 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, industry groupings, and industries.

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[1]) 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 guidelines specified by the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year can also be influenced by a variety of factors such as: 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 web site at www.osha-slc.gov/recordkeeping/index.html or from OSHA's Office of Public Affairs at 202-693-1999. Because of the revised requirements, the estimates from the 2002-2004 surveys are not comparable with those from prior years. Further, since 2003, industries have been classified using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) rather than the previously used Standard industrial Classification Codes (SIC); and therefore direct industry category rate comparisons with prior years are unavailable.

The survey also provides detailed characteristics (such as age, sex, race, length of service, and occupation) for 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) are also available. The source of the employment data in this report was the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Please note that this data series may undergo revisions as more complete data are obtained.

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[1] The incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as: (N/EH) x 200,000, where

N = number of injuries and/or illnesses
EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year
200,000 = base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)