

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES NEW YORK STATE, 1999

Occupational injuries and illnesses in New York State's public sector (state and local government) occurred at a rate of 10.0 per 100 full-time equivalent workers in 1999. This was the lowest rate recorded since the redesigned survey began in 1992, and was down by 0.5 from 1998. Both state and local government contributed significantly to this reduction. The state government rate fell to 8.9 in 1999 from 9.2 in 1998, and the local government rate fell to 10.4 from 10.9 over the same period. (See Table I.)

I. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES¹ PUBLIC SECTOR New York State, 1995–1999 (cases in thousands)

Cases/rates	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total cases					
State and local government	105.0	111.2	98.8	100.3	93.1
State government	24.3	20.0	19.1	19.2	18.7
Local government	80.8	91.2	79.7	81.2	74.3
Total incidence rates					
State and local government	11.1	11.9	10.8	10.5	10.0
State government	11.3	9.4	9.5	9.2	8.9
Local government	11.1	12.6	11.1	10.9	10.4
Lost-workday cases²					
State and local government	57.9	61.7	56.1	56.9	52.4
State government	12.7	10.9	11.1	10.1	9.3
Local government	45.2	50.8	45.0	46.7	43.1
Lost-workday rates²					
State and local government	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.0	5.6
State government	5.9	5.1	5.5	4.9	4.4
Local government	6.2	7.0	6.3	6.3	6.0
No lost-workday cases					
State and local government	47.1	49.5	42.8	43.4	40.7
State government	11.6	9.1	8.0	9.0	9.4
Local government	35.6	40.4	34.7	34.4	31.3
No lost-workday rates					
State and local government	5.0	5.3	4.7	4.6	4.4
State government	5.4	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.5
Local government	4.9	5.6	4.8	4.6	4.4

There is no national average for the public sector as there is for the private sector because some states do not participate in the government component of the annual survey of occupational injuries and illnesses. It is possible, however, to compare New York's record with that

of New Jersey and Connecticut, the other two states in the tri-state area. Although New York had the largest public sector workforce of these three states, New York's incidence rate (the frequency of occurrence) of 10.0 for all cases in 1999 was the lowest, below the rates for both Connecticut (11.2) and New Jersey (11.0). This good showing for New York was primarily due to the lower incidence of injuries and illnesses among New York's local government workers. (See Table II.)

II. WORK INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES
Public Sector, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, 1999
(cases in thousands)

Cases/rates	New York	New Jersey	Connecticut
Total cases			
State and local government	93.1	40.4	16.2
State government	18.7	9.0	4.3
Local government	74.3	31.3	11.9
Total incidence rates			
State and local government	10.0	11.0	11.2
State government	8.9	8.6	7.9
Local government	10.4	11.9	13.1
Lost-workday cases²			
State and local government	52.4	17.0	6.4
State government	9.3	4.3	2.2
Local government	43.1	12.8	4.2
Lost-workday rates²			
State and local government	5.6	4.6	4.4
State government	4.4	4.1	4.0
Local government	6.0	4.8	4.7
No lost-workday cases			
State and local government	40.7	23.3	9.8
State government	9.4	4.8	2.1
Local government	31.3	18.6	7.7
No lost-workday rates			
State and local government	4.4	6.3	6.8
State government	4.5	4.6	3.9
Local government	4.4	7.0	8.4

New York's public sector recorded more than 52,400 non-fatal, work-related injuries and illnesses resulting in days away from work² in 1999. This represented a rate of 5.6 per 100 full-time workers. Approximately 80 percent of the cases involved local government workers. Male employees accounted for 62 percent of the total; 47 percent of the affected employees worked in public administration jobs; and 48 percent had been employed in their current occupations for more than 5 years³. Approximately 32 percent of the days-away-from-work cases⁴ were sprains, strains, and tears; the back was affected 19 percent of the time; overexertion caused 20 percent of the incidents; and floors, walkways, and ground surfaces were the incident sources in 22 percent of the cases.

Of the 10 most hazardous published public industries (ranked according to total case incidence rates), the 1999 survey identified six -- two in state and four in local government -- that posted rates higher than that for the state's total public sector. These were local government construction (21.0); local government justice, public order, and safety (20.2); state government health services (16.8); local government health services (15.9); state government amusement and recreation services (12.3); and local government amusement and recreation services (10.6). The 10 most hazardous industries combined accounted for 84 percent of the total public sector work-related injury and illness cases. (See Table III.)

III. MOST HAZARDOUS⁵ PUBLIC SECTOR INDUSTRIES New York State, 1999

Industry	Total cases (000's)	Incidence rate
Total state and local government	93.1	10.0
Local government construction	4.1	21.0
Local government justice, public order, and safety	22.4	20.2
State government health services	7.0	16.8
Local government health services	8.8	15.9
State government amusement and recreation services	0.5	12.3
Local government amusement and recreation services	1.3	10.6
State government public administration	8.4	7.5
Local government education services	21.6	7.2
State government transportation and public utilities	0.6	5.6
Local government executive, legislative and general	3.9	5.5

The annual survey is used to estimate the number and frequency (incidence rates) of non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses. These accidents are reported on logs (DOSHS 900) that public sector employers maintain 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, the experience and training of the workers, and the number of hours worked. The survey also provides details on the characteristics of workers whose injuries and illnesses involved at least 1 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 or parts of the body affected, the event or exposure involved in the case, and the primary and secondary sources of the injury or illness).

For further information, please contact Marie Flom, NYS Department of Labor, Division of Research and Statistics, P. O. Box 669, Mailstop 8D, New York, NY 10014-0669, Telephone: (212) 352-6706, Fax: (212) 352-6711, e-mail: usamcf@labor.state.ny.us

¹ The incidence rate represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers.

² Lost-workday cases or rates involve days away from work, or days of restricted work activity, or both.

³ Nearly 32 percent of the cases did not report length of service with employer.

⁴ Days-away-from-work cases include those that result in days away from work, with or without restricted work activity.

⁵ Most hazardous industries are ranked according to the total cases incidence rates, which include lost-workday cases as well as cases without lost workdays, for published New York State work injury data.