

# PUBLIC SECTOR WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

## NEW YORK STATE, 2004

New York's public sector (state and local government) workforce recorded a total of 8.2 work-related injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time equivalent workers in 2004, making that level the second lowest since the annual *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* was redesigned in 1992. This rate was up 0.1 from its 2003 level, although the total number of cases fell from 71,500 in 2003 to 69,900. The total incidence rate for local government fell from 8.2 in 2003 to 7.9 in 2004, while the rate for state government rose from 7.9 to 9.0. Approximately 62 percent of the total cases reported were those 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<sup>1</sup>. The remaining 26,300 occupational injuries and illnesses were other recordable cases<sup>2</sup> (those cases which required treatment above basic first aid, but did not result in lost work time). The incidence rate for cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction among local government workers fell from 5.2 in 2003 to 5.1 in 2004. Among state government workers, the incidence rate increased from 4.7 to 5.1. Over that period, the incidence rate for other recordable cases dropped from 3.0 to 2.8 for local government employees, but rose from 3.2 to 3.9 for state government workers. (See Table 1.)

**TABLE 1. TOTAL NONFATAL OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES AND INCIDENCE RATES  
PUBLIC SECTOR  
New York State, 2000-2004  
(Cases in Thousands)**

Cases/Rates	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Total cases</b>					
State and local government	93.2	90.3	74.6	71.5	69.9
State government	18.4	17.0	14.8	15.1	16.9
Local government	74.8	73.3	59.8	56.4	53.0
<b>Total incidence rates</b>					
State and local government	9.8	9.4	8.6	8.1	8.2
State government	8.8	8.3	7.6	7.9	9.0
Local government	10.1	9.7	8.8	8.2	7.9
<b>Number of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction<sup>1</sup></b>					
State and local government	52.8	54.5	45.5	44.7	43.6
State government	9.4	8.6	9.0	8.9	9.5
Local government	43.5	42.9	36.5	35.8	34.1
<b>Incidence rates of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction</b>					
State and local government	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.1
State government	4.5	4.2	4.6	4.7	5.1
Local government	5.9	5.0	5.4	5.2	5.1
<b>Number of other recordable cases<sup>2</sup></b>					
State and local government	40.4	38.7	29.1	26.8	26.3
State government	9.0	8.3	5.8	6.1	7.4
Local government	31.4	30.4	23.3	20.7	18.9
<b>Incidence rates of other recordable cases</b>					
State and local government	4.3	4.0	3.3	3.0	3.1
State government	4.3	4.1	3.0	3.2	3.9
Local government	4.3	4.0	3.4	3.0	2.8

<sup>1</sup>Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction are comprised of 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".

<sup>2</sup> For Survey years 1992-2001 this group was called "cases without lost workdays".

Since some states that participate in the annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses do not survey their public sector agencies, there are no national average incidence rates for the public sector as there are for the private sector. It is possible, however, to compare New York State's record with that of its tri-State counterparts – New Jersey and Connecticut. (See Table II.)

**TABLE II. TOTAL NONFATAL OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS CASES  
AND INCIDENCE RATES  
PUBLIC SECTOR  
New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, 2004  
(Cases in Thousands)**

<b>Cases/Rates</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>
<b>Total cases</b>			
State and local government	69.9	33.2	13.7
State government	16.9	8.5	3.2
Local government	53.0	24.7	10.5
<b>Total incidence rates</b>			
State and local government	8.2	8.5	8.4
State government	9.0	7.5	7.0
Local government	7.9	8.9	9.0
<b>Number of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction<sup>1</sup></b>			
State and local government	43.6	16.7	7.3
State government	9.5	4.8	1.9
Local government	34.1	11.9	5.5
<b>Incidence rates of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction</b>			
State and local government	5.1	4.3	4.5
State government	5.1	4.3	4.1
Local government	5.1	4.3	4.6
<b>Number of other recordable<sup>2</sup> cases</b>			
State and local government	26.3	16.4	6.4
State government	7.4	3.6	1.3
Local government	18.9	12.8	5.1
<b>Incidence rates of other recordable cases</b>			
State and local government	3.1	4.2	3.9
State government	3.9	3.3	2.9
Local government	2.8	4.6	4.3

New York recorded the lowest total public sector (state and local government) work-related injury and illness incidence rate among the three states examined in Table II. At 8.2 public sector injury and illness cases per 100 full-time equivalent employees, New York's incidence rate was 0.2 cases below Connecticut's rate and 0.3 cases less than New Jersey's. Among these three states, New York recorded the lowest total work-related injury and illness rate per 100 full-time local government workers, with a rate of 7.9. The corresponding rates for New Jersey and Connecticut were 8.9 and 9.0, respectively. However, with a rate of 9.0 per 100 full-time equivalent workers, New York had the highest incidence of work-related injuries and illnesses among state government workers in the tri-State region – 1.5 above New Jersey's and 2.0 higher than Connecticut's.

<sup>1</sup> Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction are comprised of 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".

<sup>2</sup> For Survey years 1992-2001 this group was called "cases without lost workdays".

The 2004 survey identified nine public sector industrial categories (both state and local government entities), which recorded incidence rates that were markedly higher than those of New York's total public sector. These industrial categories with their total incidence rates were as follows: local government fire protection (79.3); state government nursing and residential care facilities (22.7); local government highway, street, and bridge construction (18.6); local government waste management and remediation services (18.4); local government police protection (17.1) state government correctional institutions (13.9); local government nursing and residential care facilities (13.4); local government water, sewage, and other systems (10.7); state government police protection (9.1). (See Table III.)

**TABLE III. PUBLIC SECTOR NAICS<sup>1</sup> INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES<sup>2</sup> WITH THE HIGHEST<sup>3</sup> RATES OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES  
New York State, 2004**

<b>NAICS Code</b>	<b>Industry Category</b>	<b>Total Cases (000's)</b>	<b>Incidence Rate</b>
92216	Local government fire protection	10.2	79.3
623	State government nursing and residential care facilities	5	22.7
2373	Local government highway, street, and bridge construction	3.1	18.6
562	Local government waste management and remediation services	1.7	18.4
92212	Local government police protection	7.8	17.1
92214	State government correctional institutions	3.7	13.9
623	Local government nursing and residential care facilities	1	13.4
2213	Local government water, sewage, and other systems	0.3	10.7
92212	State government police protection	0.6	9.1

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the 2003 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses all data were 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.

<sup>2</sup> Includes NAICS employment sectors, subsectors, industry groups, and industries.

<sup>3</sup> These industrial categories are ranked according to highest total cases incidence rates that include cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction, as well as other recordable cases, for published New York State occupational injury and illness data.<sup>3</sup>

## Technical Note

The public sector data of the annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses are used to estimate the number and frequency (incidence rate<sup>1</sup>) of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses in that sector. These accidents are reported on logs (SH 900) that public sector employers maintain during the year. Those records reflect not only the year's injury and illness experience, but also the employers' understanding as to which cases are work-related under record-keeping rules published by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor. In the case of New York State, those rules are promulgated through the New York State Department of Labor, Division of Safety and Health (DOSHS). On January 19, 2001, OSHA revised their requirements for recording occupational injuries and illnesses. Rule revisions became effective January 1, 2002, and are therefore reflected in the 2002 and later years' surveys. It should be noted that due to OSHA's changes to its record-keeping requirements, data for 2002 through 2004 are strictly comparable with each other, but not with previous years' data. DOSHS has incorporated these changes into its reporting requirements for the public sector.

In addition to incidence rates, the survey also provides detailed characteristics (such as age, sex, race, length of service, and occupation) of those workers that suffered injuries and illnesses requiring at least one full day away from work, excluding the day of occurrence. Illnesses and injuries that involved time away from work are viewed as more serious than those that did not lead to lost time. The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year can be influenced by a variety of factors such as: the level of economic activity, work conditions and practices, the experience and training of workers, and the number of hours worked. Data on the circumstances of public sector injuries and illnesses (the nature of the injury/illness, the part 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The incidence rates represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as:  $(N/EH) \times 200,000$ , 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)