

DOL reports jobs with most injuries and illnesses

The U.S. Department of Labor recently reported that Americans working in the private sector incurred a total of 4.7 million nonfatal injuries and illnesses at work in 2002. Approximately one third of those injuries and illnesses (1.4 million) required one or more days away from the workplace beyond the day of the incident.

The DOL reports that the occupations with the most injuries and illnesses with days away from work were:

Occupation	Number of injuries/illnesses
Truck drivers	112,200
Nursing aids, orderlies and attendants	79,000
Non-construction laborers	76,600
Janitors and cleaners	42,000
Construction laborers	41,900
Assemblers	34,400
Carpenters	28,300
Supervisors and proprietors, sales occupations	26,100
Cooks	24,700
Sales workers, other commodities	24,700

These ten occupations accounted for one-third of all injuries and illnesses requiring recuperation away from work.

According to the report, 93 percent of the injured truck drivers were men. Half of their injuries were sprains or strains (often to the trunk or lower extremities) due to overexertion, contact with objects or equipment, or falls.

In contrast, 91 percent of the injured nursing aids, orderlies and attendants were women. They suffered

a predominance of sprains and strains to their backs, due to overexertion related to lifting or moving patients.

In fact, sprains and strains—most commonly to the back—accounted for 43 percent of all work-related injuries and illnesses resulting in days away from work. When combined, bruises and contusions, cuts and lacerations, and fractures accounted for another 20 percent of the cases of days away from work.

What this report means to counties

Although this report uses data from the private sector, many of the occupations listed here—such as truck drivers, nursing aids, and janitors—are also commonly found in the public sector. Counties should note that back injuries are a particular hazard of many of these occupations and should educate employees on how to avoid back injuries.

For tips on avoiding back injuries, see Technical Update: Volume 8, Number 4, dated January 22, 2004 which is available on the www.ctsi.org website.

To schedule a Back Injury Prevention class for your county, call your loss prevention representative at CTSI.

For more information about the DOL report, see Lost-Worktime Injuries and Illnesses: Characteristics and Resulting Days Away from Work, 2002 available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.toc.htm>

If you have any questions, please contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.