



## 2017 SURVEY OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES NEW JERSEY HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 30, 2018

### OVERVIEW

The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) presents estimates of counts and incidence rates of employer-reported nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses by industry and type of cases, as well as more detailed estimates of case circumstances and worker characteristics for cases that resulted in days away from work. Findings from the most recent data release are highlighted below:

- One in 34 New Jersey workers sustained an occupational injury or illness during calendar year 2017. The incidence rate<sup>1</sup> for all New Jersey workplaces (public and private sectors combined), as measured by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), was 2.9 injury or illness cases per 100 full-time workers. This rate has been generally declining since 2003 when a rate of 4.8 cases per 100 New Jersey workers was recorded.
- During calendar year 2017, 92,200 work-related injury and illness cases were recorded among all New Jersey workplaces. Forty-one percent (37,600) of these cases involved loss of work-time beyond the day of the incident.

### PRIVATE SECTOR COUNTS AND INCIDENCE RATES BY INDUSTRY AND TYPE OF CASE

- **TOTAL.** There was a total of 71,700 injuries and illnesses in New Jersey's private sector in 2017. Fifty-nine percent of total private sector cases resulted in days away from work, light duty, or both.
- **INCIDENCE RATE.** New Jersey's private sector incidence rate was 2.6 in 2017. New Jersey's private sector total cases incidence rate has been consistently lower than the national rate, which was 2.8 in 2017, 2.9 in 2016, 3.0 in 2015, and 3.2 in 2014.
- **TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING SECTOR.** The transportation and warehousing sector has recorded the highest injury and illness incidence rate almost every year since 2003 when survey data was first tabulated by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The 2017 incidence rate for total cases was 4.7, 35 percent lower than in 2007 when the rate peaked at 7.2 cases per 100 full time workers (see attached table for industry breakouts). There were 7,900 injuries and illnesses within the transportation and warehousing sector.

- **TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING IN MORE DETAIL.** The high rate in the transportation and warehousing sector was driven by the couriers and messengers industry (NAICS 492) within the sector that registered an even higher incidence rate of 7.6. The couriers and messengers industry accounted for 1,400 injuries and illnesses during calendar year 2017. The number of employees in this industry has been steadily growing over time as an increasing amount of shopping occurs online and has to be delivered to consumers. From 2010 to 2017, the number of workers in the couriers and messengers industry grew 23 percent to approximately 26,500 workers in 2017.<sup>2</sup>
- **HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR.** The incidence rate for the health care and social assistance sector was 4.0 in 2017. The incidence rate for this sector has been the second highest of all private industry sectors in most years since 2005. The high rate in health care and social assistance was driven by two industries within the sector: hospitals, with a rate of 6.7, and nursing and residential care facilities, with an incidence rate of 6.8 cases per 100 full-time workers. These two industries combined accounted for 12,300 work-related injuries and illnesses during calendar year 2017.
- **DAYS AWAY FROM WORK.** The incidence rate for cases involving full days away from work beyond the day of the incident in the private sector was 1.0 cases per 100 workers in 2017. The national rate was 0.9 in 2017.
  - Two large industry sectors in New Jersey showing declining lost-workday cases incidence rates over time include manufacturing: (1.7 in 2003 to 1.0 in 2016) and wholesale trade (2.0 in 2005 to 1.2 in 2017).

## PUBLIC SECTOR COUNTS AND INCIDENCE RATES BY INDUSTRY AND TYPE OF CASE

### NOTE

When comparing private and public sector injury and illness rates, caution must be exercised because of differences in the risks associated with particular industry and occupational categories. For example, many public sector workers perform high-risk activities, such as supplying police protection, guarding correctional institutions, providing paid and volunteer fire protection, as well as caring for patients in state psychiatric hospitals and residential care facilities. These high-risk activities do not generally occur in the private sector.

### PUBLIC SECTOR

- **TOTAL.** New Jersey's public sector workers experienced 20,500 work-related injuries and illnesses in 2017.
- **INCIDENCE RATE.** The incidence rate for New Jersey's public sector has been steadily declining and was 5.2 cases per 100 workers in 2017, 42 percent less than the rate of 8.9 in 2003.
- **DAYS AWAY FROM WORK.** The lost-time cases rate within New Jersey's public sector remained the same as in 2016 after declining between 2015 and 2016. Cases involving

days out of work occurred in the public sector at a rate of 2.4 per 100 full-time workers in 2017 and 2016, down from a rate of 2.7 in 2015.

## STATE GOVERNMENT

- **INCIDENCE RATE.** The overall 2017 state government incidence rate was 4.1, statistically unchanged from the 2016 rate. The 2017 and 2016 overall state government incidence rates are the lowest recorded for New Jersey's state government sector since 1993, when public sector data was first collected as part of the BLS cooperative program.
- **DAYS AWAY FROM WORK.** Within New Jersey's state government, 2,600 of the 4,200 cases in 2017 resulted in days away from work. The state government incidence rate for cases involving days away from work was 2.5 cases per 100 full-time workers in 2017.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- **INCIDENCE RATE.** The total number of injury and illness cases in local government was 16,300, leading to an incidence rate of 5.6 in 2017.
- **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SECTOR.** The total cases incidence rate for the public administration industry sector within local government was 6.6 in 2017. This industry sector includes police protection, fire protection (paid and volunteer), county correctional institutions, and other municipal and county government operations. These services involve a greater risk for work-related injuries and illnesses. Incidence rates for 2017 total cases were as follows:
  - The fire protection industry incidence rate decreased again in 2017, falling from 8.7 in 2016 to 6.7 in 2017. The rate for fire protection is significantly lower than rates between 10 and 14 that occurred prior to 2014 when the Public Employee Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) program office within the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development began targeted enforcement inspections in this industry as part of their strategic plan.
  - The county correctional institutions rate was 9.0 in 2017, down from 10.4 in 2016 and 11.6 in 2015 and less than an industry high of 14.6 in 2008.
  - The police protection rate was 7.7 in 2017, statistically unchanged from 8.0 in 2016, but down from 9.2 in 2015, 2014, and 2013.
- **DAYS AWAY FROM WORK, LIGHT DUTY.** The lost-time cases rates within local government declined between 2016 and 2017. Lost time cases occurred at a rate of 2.4 in 2016 and decreased to 2.3 in 2017. The light-duty cases rate increased from 0.8 in 2016 to 0.9 in 2017, indicating that injured workers were more frequently able to remain on the job in a light duty capacity rather than staying home while they recover from injuries sustained on the job.

**NOTE**

Incidence rates for days away from work (DAFW) cases are presented at a different detail level than for other case types. Data users are cautioned to account for different levels of detail when analyzing estimates presented in these highlights. Total cases incidence rates are presented as the number of cases per 100 full-time workers. DAFW cases rates are presented as the number of cases per 10,000 full-time workers so that more detail for a smaller data set is seen and can be analyzed.

**PRIVATE SECTOR**

- **TOTAL.** There were 28,230 occupational injuries and illnesses in 2017 that resulted in DAFW in New Jersey's private sector, essentially unchanged from 2016. For New Jersey's private sector as a whole, the median days lost for DAFW cases was 10.
- **GENDER.** Nearly twice as many men sustained DAFW cases as did women. The incidence rate per 10,000 full-time workers for DAFW cases among men was 117.3, while female workers sustained a lower rate of 81.6 DAFW cases.
- **OCCUPATIONS.** Within New Jersey's private sector, there were four major occupation groups with DAFW cases incidence rates above 200 cases per 10,000 full-time workers: transportation and material occupations (263.5), construction and extraction occupations (216.8), building/grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations (213.4), and installation, maintenance and repair occupations (203.7). Combined, these four occupation categories account for 13,740 DAFW cases or 49 percent of the private sector total DAFW cases. Two of these major occupation groups with a high incidence rate for DAFW cases also had higher than private sector median days lost. Average days lost to recover from work-related injuries and illnesses among construction and extraction occupations was 30 days, while the median DAFW for transportation and material moving occupations was 16. Median DAFW is a key measure of severity of cases.
- **NATURE OF INJURY/ILLNESS.** Sprains and strains were the leading nature of injury/illness within New Jersey's private sector, making up one-third of the DAFW cases. Cuts/lacerations, fractures, and bruises each made up 10 percent of DAFW private sector cases.
- **EVENT OR EXPOSURE.** The most frequently occurring types of accident (event or exposure) resulting in DAFW cases were overexertion (28.7 cases per 10,000 full time workers), falls, slips, trips (28.5), and contact with objects (27.5). Combined, these three types of accident accounted for 23,550 DAFW cases - 83 percent of all DAFW cases within New Jersey's private sector.

## PUBLIC SECTOR

- **TOTAL.** There were 9,320 occupational injuries and illnesses in 2017 that resulted in DAFW in New Jersey's public sector, essentially unchanged from 2016. For the New Jersey public sector as a whole, the median days lost for DAFW cases was 9.
- **INCIDENCE RATE.** The DAFW incidence rate for state government was 252.1 per 10,000 full-time workers in 2017, unchanged from 2016. However, the local government rate decreased to 232.4 in 2017 from 240.5 in 2016. In 2017, there were 2,600 DAFW cases in New Jersey's state government, with a median DAFW of 14. There were 6,720 DAFW cases in New Jersey's local government, with a median DAFW of seven for 2017.
- **OCCUPATIONS.** Within New Jersey's state government, the occupations with the highest number of DAFW cases were social and human service assistants (250 DAFW cases, median of 20 days lost per case), psychiatric aides (240 DAFW cases, median 12 days), nursing assistants (230 DAFW cases, median 49 days), bus drivers transit and intercity (230 DAFW cases, median 16 days), and correctional officers and jailers (210 DAFW cases, median 47 days). Injuries and illnesses among these five occupations combined made up 45 percent of the state government DAFW cases. The occupations with the highest number of DAFW cases within local government were elementary school teachers, except special education (930 DAFW cases, median of 4 days lost per case), police and sheriff's patrol officers (820 DAFW cases, median 6 days), janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners (580 DAFW cases, median 7 days), teacher assistants (550 DAFW cases, median 5 days), and firefighters (400 DAFW cases, median 8 days). These five occupations accounted for a total of 3,280 DAFW cases, or 49 percent of the local government DAFW cases in New Jersey.
- **NATURE OF INJURY/ILLNESS.** Within New Jersey state government, sprains and strains had the highest incidence rate for DAFW cases (99.7), accounting for 1,030 or 40 percent of the total DAFW cases in state government. Within New Jersey local government, sprains and strains also had the highest incidence rate for DAFW cases (77.9), accounting for 2,250 or 33 percent of the total DAFW cases in local government.
- **EVENT OR EXPOSURE.** Event or exposure categories with more than 20 percent of the DAFW cases within New Jersey state government were: overexertion and bodily reaction (26 percent, 64.8 DAFW cases per 10,000 full-time workers), violence and other injuries by persons or animals (22 percent, 56.4 DAFW cases per 10,000 full-time workers), and falls, slips, trips (21 percent, 53.8 DAFW cases per 10,000 full-time workers). Combined, these three event/exposure categories accounted for 1,800 DAFW cases. Within local government, two event/exposure categories had more than 20 percent of the cases each: falls, slips, trips (31 percent, 71.6 DAFW cases per 10,000 full-time workers), and overexertion and bodily reaction (24 percent, 56.6 DAFW cases per 10,000 full-time workers). Combined, these two event/exposure categories accounted for 3,710 DAFW cases.

## SURVEY BACKGROUND

The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) provides comprehensive statistics on work-related injuries and illnesses in New Jersey. The survey, conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the past 25 years, is designed to produce data to be used as an essential tool for promoting efforts to make New Jersey's workplaces safer and healthier. Additional information about the survey and detailed New Jersey data tables can be found online at

[http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/content/occsafheasvy\\_index.html](http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/content/occsafheasvy_index.html)

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<sup>1</sup> Incidence rates represent 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 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.)

<sup>2</sup> Current Employment Statistics (CES)