

Work-Related Injuries in the Health Care Sector

HEALTH CARE IS THE SECOND-FATEST-GROWING SECTOR OF THE U.S. ECONOMY, employing over 12 million workers. In Maine, health care jobs have driven employment growth for the last decade and are expected to generate 50 percent of all new jobs created between 2006 and 2016 (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/healthcare).

Health care workers face a wide range of hazards on the job including needlestick injuries, back injuries, latex allergies, violence and stress.

Although it is possible to prevent or reduce health care worker exposure to these hazards, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that over the last decade health care workers actually have experienced increased numbers of occupational injuries and illnesses. This SafetyWorks! Info Brief explores the trend in Maine.



Health Care Injuries Increasing

The number of injuries is tracked by First Reports of Injury (FROIs) reported to the Maine Workers Compensation Board.

Six health care workers are injured on the job every day in Maine.

As the number of injuries reported in all sectors of the economy declined in recent years from 14,669 cases in 2005 to 12,401 in 2009, health care injuries increased from 2,105 cases in 2005 to 2,190 cases in 2009. On average, six health care workers are injured on the job every day in Maine.

First Reports of Injury
in Maine Health Care Industry

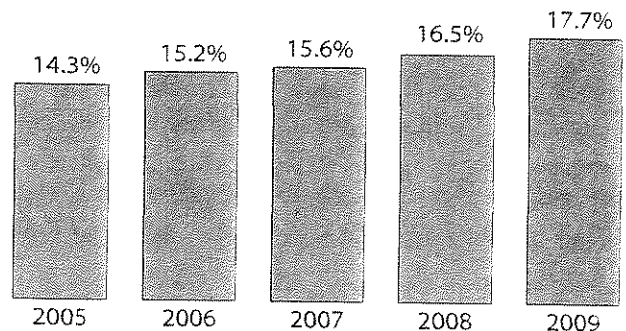


Figure 1

Jobs Most at Risk of Injury

Within health care, the most commonly injured occupations are:

- Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants
- Registered Nurses
- Personal & Home Care Aides
- Health care support workers, all other.

Most Common Injuries

Three of the most common events leading to injury are caused by poor ergonomics:

- lifting
- holding, carrying, turning or welding
- pulling or pushing.

Approximately one-third of injuries in the health care sector can be attributed to poor ergonomics. On average, poor ergonomics account for 2 injuries in health care each day.

Most Commonly Injured Occupations in the Maine Health Care Industry

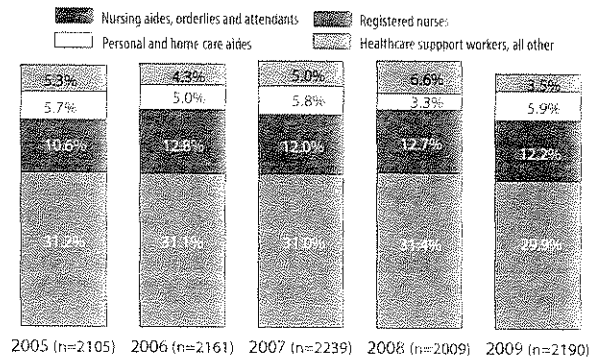


Figure 2

On average, nursing aides, orderlies and attendants file 31% of health care related FROIs, while registered nurses file about 12%.

Most Common Injuries in the Maine Health Care Industry

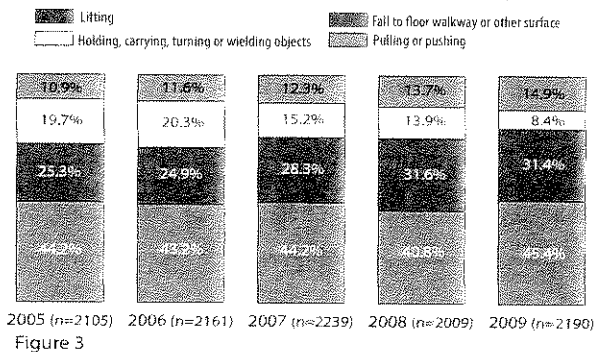


Figure 3

Nursing / Residential Care Facilities Have Highest Injury Rates

Injury rates for Nursing and Residential Care Facilities have been significantly higher than the injury rates for all private sector industries combined.

| | Private Sector All Industries | | | Ambulatory Health Care NAICS Code 621 | | | Hospitals NAICS Code 622 | | | Nursing & Residential Care Facilities NAICS Code 623 | | |
|------|-------------------------------|------|--------|---------------------------------------|------|--------|--------------------------|------|--------|--|------|--------|
| | TRC | DART | DAFWII | TRC | DART | DAFWII | TRC | DART | DAFWII | TRC | DART | DAFWII |
| 2005 | 7.2 | 3.9 | 1.7 | 4.2 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 8.0 | 4.5 | 2.1 | 11.7 | 5.9 | 2.6 |
| 2006 | 7.0 | 3.9 | 1.8 | 5.4 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 9.5 | 5.0 | 2.1 | 14.1 | 7.0 | 3.1 |
| 2007 | 6.4 | 3.6 | 1.6 | 3.4 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 9.1 | 5.4 | 2.1 | 11.6 | 5.9 | 2.9 |
| 2008 | 6.0 | 3.3 | 1.6 | 5.1 | 1.8 | 0.7 | 9.4 | 5.0 | 2.0 | 9.5 | 3.1 | 5.4 |

Source: Federal BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

The average Total Recordable Case Rate (TRC) of Nursing and Residential Care Facilities is about 1.7 times higher than all industries combined. The Days Away Restricted or Transfer Rate (DART) of the Nursing and Residential Care Facilities is twice as high the DART rate for all private sector industries and the Days Away From Work Incidence Rate (DAFWII) is also twice as high when compared to the DAFWII of all industries combined.

Most Severe Injuries Concentrated in Three Occupations

The most severe injuries, categorized by lost work days, are most likely to be sustained by Registered Nurses (RNs), Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants (CNAs) and Personal and Home Care Aides (PCAs.)

Those workers had more lost days when compared to all occupations combined, particularly in the One Day to the 6 - 10 Days severity categories. This injury trend was consistent each year from 2005 to 2009. During that time, RNs and CNAs had a higher percentage of cases resulting in 10 or fewer days away from work than for all occupations in the private sector (see the area in orange.)

In 2007 and 2008, PCAs accounted for a higher percentage of cases resulting in 31 or more days away from work.



Table 2 - Severity of Injuries and Illnesses Among Health Care Workers By Occupation and Days Away From Work (Maine)

| | One Day | Two Days | 3-5 Days | 6-10 Days | 11-20 Days | 21-30 Days | 31 or More Days |
|-----------------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| 2008 | | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 14.8 | 13.7 | 19.5 | 12.8 | 9.6 | 7.4 | 22.4 |
| RNs | 10.0 | 36.7 | 40.0 | 10.0 | n/p | n/p | 6.7 |
| CNAs | 7.8 | 23.5 | 41.2 | 9.8 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 7.8 |
| PCAs | n/p | n/p | 16.7 | n/p | 20.0 | | |
| 2007 | | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 15.1 | 12.3 | 23.2 | 10.9 | 12.0 | 4.8 | 21.8 |
| RNs | 12.5 | 18.8 | 25.0 | 18.8 | n/p | n/p | 12.5 |
| CNAs | 21.9 | 12.5 | 25.0 | 15.6 | 9.4 | 6.3 | 12.6 |
| PCAs | 11.1 | n/p | 22.2 | n/p | 11.1 | | |
| 2006 | | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 17.5 | 10.4 | 19.9 | 11.8 | 11.4 | 6.8 | 21.8 |
| RNs | 37.5 | 12.5 | 18.8 | n/p | 12.5 | n/p | 12.5 |
| CNAs | 23.3 | 11.6 | 18.6 | 18.6 | 16.3 | n/p | 9.3 |
| PCAs | 16.7 | n/p | n/p | n/p | n/p | | |
| 2005 | | | | | | | |
| All Occupations | 18.1 | 14.2 | 18.4 | 11.4 | 8.8 | 6.1 | 23.1 |
| RNs | 23.1 | n/p | 23.1 | 15.4 | 15.4 | n/p | 23.1 |
| CNAs | 34.1 | 29.5 | 9.1 | 4.5 | 9.1 | n/p | 13.6 |
| PCAs | 47.6 | 14.3 | 9.5 | 14.3 | 14.3 | n/p | n/p |

*n/p = not publishable
Source: Federal BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

Table 2 describes the severity of work-related injuries among Registered Nurses (RNs), Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants (CNAs) and Personal & Home Care Aides (PCAs).

Summary

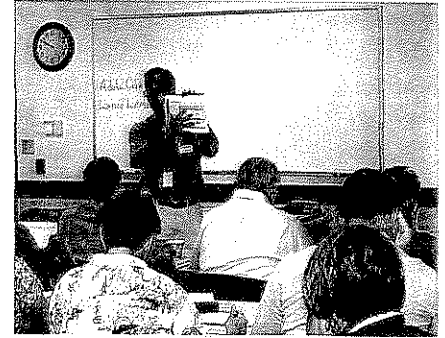
Based on the Maine Workers' Compensation Board's First Report of Injuries, approximately one-third of the injuries in the health care sector can be attributed to poor ergonomics and another 12% to falls to floors, walkways or other surfaces.

Data from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics Survey of Occupational Injuries & Illnesses revealed that in the injuries rates for health care workers are much higher when compared to the injuries rate for all other workers combined. Many of these injuries can be prevented with proper ergonomic training and interventions.

SafetyWorks! Can Help

The Maine Department of Labor SafetyWorks! program can help you improve the safety and health of your workplace.

At your request, one of our experienced occupational safety and health professionals can come to your workplace and help you identify hazards and reduce or eliminate the risk of injuries and illnesses.



SafetyWorks! Training on OSHA Recordkeeping

Other services include safety classes on a variety of topics and a video and publication lending library. SafetyWorks! is not OSHA and cannot assess fines or penalties. All services are offered at no charge to Maine workers and businesses.

For more information on how SafetyWorks! can help you, call 1-877-723-3345 (TTY: 1-800-794-1110) or visit www.safetyworksmaine.com.

For More Information on Maine Work Related Injuries

To learn more, contact :

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