**Safety in the Workplace**

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**Abstract**

The goal of Safety in the workplace is to prevent injuries, illnesses and deaths in the workplace as well as the effects these events can cause for workers, families and employers. Managing workplace safety traditionally are reactive because these problems are only addressed after the fact. However, the new standard or regulation for approach recommends practices that find and fix the hazards before they cause injury or illness which is far more effective than the traditional approach. Focusing on achieving goals, monitoring performance, and evaluating outcomes, will lead to higher levels of safety in the workplace. The reasoning behind this new goal is to begin with a basic program with simple goals and grow from there. The evidence for these claims are discussed and presented.

*Keyword*: Workplace safety, workplace injuries, workplace illnesses, workplace death

**Safety in the Workplace**

If one were to look into the history of workplace safety one would see that workplace safety has come a far away from the days when workers in machine shops didn’t wore eye protection or constructions workers in a building didn’t wear a construction hat to protect their head from falling objects or constructions boats to protect their feet from pointed objects on the ground. If you look into history, you will see that workplace safety is a necessity. However, even today some countries still don’t practice workplace safety. Most industrialized countries know the importance of having a skilled employee on the job and they know it cost less to protect these employees than to hire and train new employees every time there is a workplace safety issue. Today these practices are protected by common law and statue laws and these laws may impose other general duties, introduce specific duties, and create government bodies with powers to regulate workplace safety issues.

**Before workplace safety**

People would lose their arm and feet on the job without any compensation. Today employers would have to pay up and insurance companies would have to pay up enough money to cover that employee’s long term medical build and most times pay up enough money for that employee to survive in this world of bills and expenses. If someone were to lose their arm and foot on the job, who had a family depending on him/her imagine the impact this would have on his family. This is another reason why workplace safety is important.

Here are some statistics that I obtained from Wikipedia about workplace fatalities and injuries within the United States.

## Workplace fatality and injury statistics

### United States

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureau_of_Labor_Statistics) of the [United States Department of Labor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Labor) compiles information about workplace [fatalities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupational_fatality) and non-fatal injuries in the [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). In 1970, an estimated 14,000 workers were killed on the job – by 2010, the workforce had doubled, but workplace deaths were down to about 4,500.
Between 1913 and 2013, workplace fatalities dropped by approximately 80%.



Number of occupational fatal work injuries in the U.S. from 1992 until 2014. Note, 2001 statistics do not include death related to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The Bureau also compiles information about the most dangerous jobs. According to the census of occupational injuries 4,679 people died on the job in 2014.

| **Job** | **Fatalities** | **Fatalities per100,000 employees** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Fishermen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishermen) | 22 | 80.8 |
| [Pilots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aviator) | 81 | 63.2 |
| [Timber cutter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logging) | 77 | 109.5 |
| [Structural metal workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Association_of_Bridge%2C_Structural%2C_Ornamental_and_Reinforcing_Iron_Workers) | 15 | 25.2 |
| [Waste collectors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waste_collector) | 27 | 35.8 |
| [Farmers and ranchers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture) | 263 | 26.0 |
| [Power-line workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_line) | 25 | 19.2 |
| [Construction workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Construction_workers) and [miners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mining) | 130 | 17.9 |
| [Roofers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roof) | 81 | 46.2 |
| [Truck drivers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truck_driver) and other drivers | 835 | 23.4 |
| **All occupations** | **4,679** | **3.3** |

| **2014 employer-reported injuries and illnesses** |
| --- |
| **Industry** | **Rate per 100 full-time employees** | **Number** |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | 5.5 | 52,400 |
| Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction | 2.0 | 17,900 |
| Construction (private) | 3.6 | 200,900 |
| Manufacturing | 4.0 | 483,300 |
| Wholesale trade | 2.9 | 163,100 |
| Retail trade | 3.6 | 416,100 |
| Transportation and warehousing (private) | 4.8 | 201,500 |
| Utilities (private) | 2.4 | 13,400 |
| Information | 1.4 | 35,300 |
| Finance and insurance | 0.7 | 34,800 |
| Real estate, rental, and leasing | 2.9 | 51,100 |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services | 0.9 | 69,900 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 1.0 | 21,100 |
| Administrative and support services | 2.4 | 109,300 |
| Waste management and remediation services (private) | 5.1 | 19,900 |
| Educational services (private) | 2.1 | 38,500 |
| Health care and social assistance (private) | 4.5 | 612,500 |
| Leisure and hospitality | 3.6 | 337,500 |
| State government: Education | 4.1 | 31,100 |
| State government: Health care and social assistance | 8.1 | 43,800 |
| State government: Justice, public order, and safety activities | 6.1 | 43,200 |
| Local government: Construction | 8.6 | 8,700 |
| Local government: Transportation and warehousing | 7.5 | 17,900 |
| Local government: Utilities | 5.4 | 12,200 |
| Local government: Education | 4.1 | 225,100 |
| Local government: Health care and social assistance | 5.6 | 41,000 |
| Local government: Justice, public order, and safety activities | 9.5 | 84,200 |
| **All industries including state and local government** | **3.4** | **3,675,800** |

| **Cause of injury and illness** | **2014 rate per 10,000 full-time employees** |
| --- | --- |
| Contact with objects | 23.8 |
| Fall to lower level | 5.4 |
| Fall on same level | 18.8 |
| Slips or trips without fall | 4.4 |
| Over-exertion in lifting/lowering | 11.0 |
| Repetitive motion | 2.7 |
| Exposure to harmful substances or environments | 4.3 |
| Transportation incidents | 5.8 |
| Fires and explosions | 0.2 |
| Violence and other injuries by person or animal | 6.8 |
| **Total** | **107.1** |

**Workplace safety was a problem and it is still a problem today**

As the world grows the demand grow for employees and the more employees in the workplace is the higher the risk of workplace injury. So implementing these recommended practices in the long run will bring benefits to the employer. These safety and health practices brings added value to the business and they help to:

* **Prevent** workplace injuries and illnesses
* **Improve** compliance with laws and regulations
* **Reduce** costs, including significant reductions in workers' compensation premiums
* **Engage** workers
* **Enhance** their social responsibility goals
* **Increase** productivity and enhance overall business operations

***A safe workplace is a sound business***

Without these practices there would be a lot more workplace injuries, a lot more suffering families, and a lot more employees not willing to work in certain industry like construction and manufacturing. The goal of Safety in the workplace is to prevent injuries, illnesses and deaths in the workplace as well as the effects these events can cause for workers, families and employers. Managing workplace safety traditionally are reactive because these problems are only addressed after the fact. However, the new standard or regulation for approach recommends practices that find and fix the hazards before they cause injury or illness which is far more effective than the traditional approach. Focusing on achieving goals, monitoring performance, and evaluating outcomes, will lead to higher levels of safety in the workplace. The reasoning behind this new goal is to begin with a basic program with simple goals and grow from there. The evidence for these claims are discussed and presented.

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