

Workers Memorial Day — April 28, 2010

Workers Memorial Day recognizes those workers who died or sustained work-related injuries or illnesses during the previous year. In 2008, a total of 5,071 U.S. workers died from occupational injuries (1), and 49,000 deaths annually are attributed to work-related illnesses (2). In 2008, an estimated 3.7 million workers in private industry and 940,000 in state and local government had a nonfatal occupational injury or illness; 40%–50% of these workers were transferred, placed on work restrictions, or took time away from work (3). An estimated 3.4 million workers were treated in emergency departments for occupational injuries and illnesses in 2007, and approximately 94,000 were hospitalized (CDC, unpublished data, 2010).

Work-related injuries and deaths are costly. Employers and insurers spent nearly \$85 billion on workers' compensation in 2007 (4). Those expenditures are only a portion of the costs borne by employers, workers, and society overall, including costs paid by other insurance systems and most of the costs of work-related illness. Additional information on workplace safety and health is available from CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>.

References

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Occupational Injuries and Deaths Among Younger Workers — United States, 1998–2007

Younger workers (defined as those aged 15–24 years) represent 14% of the U.S. labor force and face high risk for injury while on the job (1–4). To assess trends and help guide efforts to improve young worker safety, CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) analyzed data from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System occupational supplement (NEISS-Work) for the period 1998–2007. This report summarizes the results of that analysis. During the 10-year period, 5,719 younger workers died from occupational injuries. The fatality rate for younger workers was 3.6 deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers (FTE) (one FTE = 2,000 hours worked per year) and was lower than the rate for older workers (defined as aged ≥ 25 years) (4.4 deaths per 100,000 FTE). The fatality rate decreased an estimated 14% during the 10-year period. For the same period, an estimated 7.9 million nonfatal injuries to younger workers were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments (EDs). The nonfatal injury rate was 5.0 ED-treated injuries per 100 FTE and was approximately two times higher than among workers aged ≥ 25 years. The rate of nonfatal injuries among younger workers declined 19%, but the decline was not statistically significant. Public health, labor, and trade organizations should provide guidance to employers to help them in their responsibilities to provide safer workplaces and should identify steps that employers can take to remove or reduce injury hazards. Employers need to ensure that their younger workers have the

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