

Injury / Illness Quiz



QUESTION

What are the basic elements of an injury/illness prevention program?

ANSWER

- Management leadership.
- Worker participation.
- Hazard identification and assessment.
- Hazard prevention and control.
- Education and training.
- Program evaluation and improvement.

WHY IS IT RIGHT

2019 RECENT DATA

Most-Common Non-Fatal Workplace Injuries ' 2019 BLS Data

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2019 data break down the most-common workplace injuries into five categories. In order from most common to least, these five categories are:

- Sprains, strains, and tears (approximately 35 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Soreness or pain (approximately 18 incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Cuts, lacerations, and punctures (approximately nine incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Bruises and contusions (approximately nine incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)
- Fractures (approximately eight incidents per 10,000 full-time workers)

DAYS AWAY FROM WORK (DAFW)

The injuries that cause employees and independent contractors to miss the most time from work are:

- Multiple injuries with fractures (median of 48 days)
- Fractures (median of 32 days)
- Amputations (median of 31 days)
- Carpal tunnel syndrome (median of 30 days)
- Tendonitis (median of 14 days)
- Sprains, strains, and tears (median of 11 days)
- Multiple traumatic injuries (median of nine days)
- Soreness or pain (median of eight days)
- Multiple injuries with sprains (median of seven days)
- Bruises and contusions (median of five days)
- Heat (thermal) burns (median of five days)
- Cuts, lacerations, and punctures (median of four days)
- Chemical burns (median of three days)

RISING NUMBER OF FATAL WORKPLACE INJURIES

The Number of Fatal Workplace Injuries is on the Rise

The BLS's workplace injury statistics published in 2019 indicate that while the number of non-fatal workplace accidents has been falling, the number of fatal workplace accidents is on the rise. Over the past five years, the number of fatal accidents has increased each year, with just one exception. In 2018, the BLS reported the most fatal accidents of any of the previous five years.

According to the BLS, the six most-common causes of fatal workplace accidents are:

- Transportation accidents (2,080 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Violence and other injuries caused by persons or animals (828 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Falls, slips, and trips (792 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Contact with objects and equipment (786 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Exposure to harmful substances or environments (621 fatalities in the most-recent year)
- Fires and explosions (115 fatalities in the most-recent year)

The occupations with the most fatal workplace accidents are very different from those with the most non-fatal injuries and illnesses. **According to BLS, the occupations with the highest number of fatalities based on the most-recent data available in 2019 are:**

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (23.4 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Transportation and warehousing (14.0 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Construction (9.5 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Wholesale trade (5.3 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)
- Professional and business services (3.3 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers)

WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG

PREVENTION

Injury and Illness Prevention Program

An enhanced focus on prevention is needed to bring these numbers down. To accomplish this, an effective, flexible, commonsense tool is available that can dramatically reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries and illnesses: **the injury and illness prevention program**. This tool helps employers find hazards and fix them **before** injuries, illnesses or deaths occur. It helps employers meet their obligation under the OSH Act to “furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees.” It also helps employers avoid the significant costs associated with injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM BASIC ELEMENTS

Most successful injury and illness prevention programs include a similar set of commonsense elements that focus on finding all hazards in the workplace and developing a plan for preventing and controlling those hazards. Management leadership and active worker participation are essential to ensuring that all hazards are identified and addressed. Finally, workers need to be trained about how the program works and the program needs to be periodically evaluated to determine whether improvements need to be made.

These basic elements ‘ management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, and program evaluation and improvement ‘ are common to almost all existing health and safety management programs. Each element is important in ensuring the success of the overall program, and the elements are interrelated and interdependent.

When it comes to injury and illness prevention programs, every business is different, and one size certainly does not fit all. Employers who implement injury and illness prevention programs scale and adapt these elements to meet the needs of their organizations, depending on size, industry sector or complexity of operations.

COSTS OF WORKPLACE INJURIES, ILLNESSES AND DEATHS TO EMPLOYERS, WORKERS

The main goal of injury and illness prevention programs is to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths, the suffering these events cause workers, and the financial hardship they cause both workers and employers.

Workplace incidents cause an enormous amount of physical, financial and emotional hardship for individual workers and their families. Combined with insufficient workers’ compensation benefits and inadequate medical insurance, workplace injuries and illnesses can not only cause physical pain and suffering but also loss of employment and wages, burdensome debt, inability to maintain a previous standard of living, loss of home ownership and even bankruptcy. When implemented effectively, injury and illness prevention programs can help workers and their families avoid these disruptive and sometimes calamitous impacts on their lives.

INDIRECT COSTS INCURRED BY EMPLOYERS

Employers incur a variety of other costs that may be hidden or less obvious when an employee is injured or ill, but in most cases involve real expenditures of budget or time. These expenditures are commonly referred to as **indirect costs**

and can include:

- Any wages paid to injured workers for absences not covered by workers' compensation;
- The wage costs related to time lost through work stoppage;
- Administrative time spent by supervisors following injuries;
- Employee training and replacement costs;
- Lost productivity related to new employee learning curves and accommodation of injured employees; and
- Replacement costs of damaged material, machinery and property.

IMPLEMENTATION

Injury and illness prevention programs are not new, nor are they untested. Most large companies whose safety and health achievements have been recognized through government or industry awards cite their use of injury and illness prevention programs as their key to success. Convinced of the value, effectiveness, and feasibility of these programs, many countries around the world now require employers to implement and maintain them. These countries include Canada, Australia, all 27 European Union member states, Norway, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea. This initiative also follows the lead of 34 U.S. states that have already implemented regulations requiring such programs.

BREAKTHROUGH

Injury and illness prevention programs provide the foundation for **breakthrough** changes in the way employers identify and control hazards, leading to a significantly improved workplace health and safety environment. Adoption of an injury and illness prevention program will result in workers suffering fewer injuries, illnesses and fatalities. In addition, employers will improve their compliance with existing regulations, and will experience many of the financial benefits of a safer and healthier workplace cited in published studies and reports by individual companies, including significant reductions in workers' compensation premiums.

Background

In the four decades since the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) was signed into law, workplace deaths and reported occupational injuries have dropped by more than 60 percent. Yet the nation's workers continue to face an unacceptable number of work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses, most of them preventable:

- Every day, more than 12 workers die on the job ' over 4,500 a year.
- Every year, more than 4.1 million workers suffer a serious job-related injury or illness.