OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES AMONG NEW YORK STATE'S PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE INCREASE IN 2005

New York's public sector (state and local government) workforce recorded a total of 82,700 nonfatal work-related injuries and illnesses in 2005, according to the annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII)[1]**.** This rate was up from 69,900 in 2004 (which was the lowest total number of cases in the four-year period, 2002-2005), although average employment remained relatively unchanged. The increase was in large measure due to an almost 24 percent rise in total injuries and illnesses among local government workers (cases among state government workers increased by slightly less than 0.6 percent). While the incidence rate[2] of work-related injuries and illnesses among state government workers fell from 9.0 in 2004 to 8.3 in 2005, the overall public sector rate climbed from 8.2 to 8.7, again attributed largely to an increase from 7.9 to 8.8 among local government workers. **(See Table 1.)**

[1] See **Technical Note** for a description of the SOII.
[2] See footnote 1 to Table 1, page 2.

Table 1. Total nonfatal occupational injury and illness cases and rates
public sector
New York State, 2002 -2005
(Cases in thousands)

Cases and Rates	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total cases				
State and local government	74.6	71.5	69.9	82.7
State government	14.8	15.1	16.9	17.0
Local government	59.8	56.4	53.0	65.7
Total incidence rates[1]				
State and local government	8.6	8.1	8.2	8.7
State government	7.6	7.9	9.0	8.3
Local government	8.8	8.2	7.9	8.8
Number of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction[2]				
State and local government	45.5	44.7	43.6	48.7
State government	9.0	8.9	9.5	8.8
Local government	36.5	35.8	34.1	39.9
Incidence rates of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction				
State and local government	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1
State government	4.6	4.7	5.1	4.3
Local government	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.3
Number of other recordable cases[3]				
State and local government	29.1	26.8	26.3	33.9
State government	5.8	6.1	7.4	8.2
Local government	23.3	20.7	18.9	25.8
Incidence rates of other recordable cases				
State and local government	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.6
State government	3.0	3.2	3.9	4.0
Local government	3.4	3.0	2.8	3.4

[1] Incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as:
(N/EH) x 200,000 where

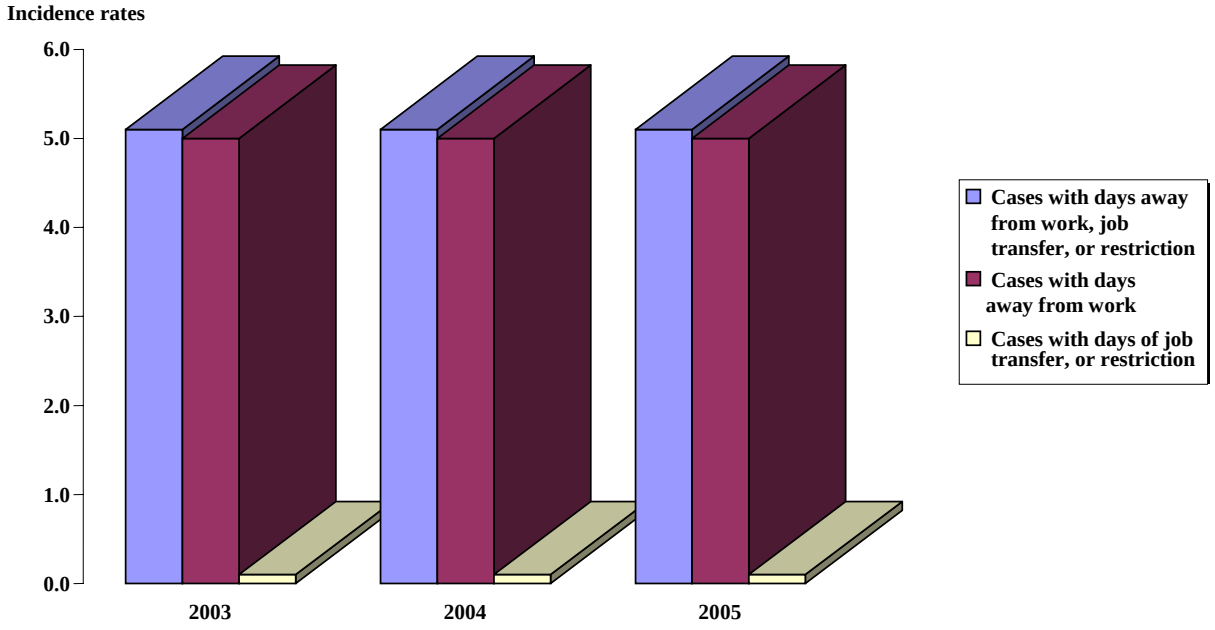
N = number of injuries and/or illnesses
EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year
200,000 = base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

[2] Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction are comprised of two case types: those requiring at least one day away from work, with or without job transfer or restriction, and those requiring only job transfer or restriction. The latter type may involve shortened work hours, a temporary job change, or temporary restrictions on a worker's regular duties (for example, no heavy lifting). For the survey years 1992-2001, this group was called "lost-workday cases".

[3] For survey years 1992-2001, this group was called "cases without lost workdays".

Almost 49,000 cases or slightly fewer than 59 percent of the public sector total for 2005, required recuperation away from work, transfer to another job, restricted duties at work, or a combination of these actions. The rate of occurrence of such cases among all public sector workers remained constant over the last three years **(Chart 1)**, but increased from a low of 5.1 posted by local government workers in 2004 to 5.3 in 2005. Approximately 34,000 cases were serious enough to require treatment beyond basic first aid, but did not result in any lost work time. Such cases increased dramatically over the year (by 36.5 percent) among local government workers and by almost 11 percent among the state government's workforce. In 2005, incidence rates for these cases increased to their highest levels in the past three years. **(See Table 1.**

Chart 1. Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction incidence rates, injuries and illnesses New York, state and local governments, 2003-2005



Since some participating states do not survey their public sector agencies, there are no national average incidence rates for the public sector. New York's public sector record can, however, be compared with those of its counterparts in this tri-state region – New Jersey and Connecticut. Of the three states, New Jersey posted the lowest total public sector incidence rate (8.1), followed by New York (8.7) and Connecticut (9.2). New York's incidence rate of 5.1 for cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction was, however, the highest among the three states; and its posted rate of 3.6 was the lowest with respect to other recordable public sector cases. **(See Table 2.)**

Table 2. Total nonfatal occupational injury and illness cases and rates public sector New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, 2005

(Cases in thousands)

Cases and Rates	New York	New Jersey	Connecticut
Total cases			
State and local government	82.7	32.6	15.3
State government	17.0	8.5	3.4
Local government	65.7	24.1	11.9
Total incidence rates[1]			
State and local government	8.7	8.1	9.2
State government	8.3	7.5	7.1
Local government	8.8	8.4	10.1
Number of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction[2]			
State and local government	48.7	16.9	6.4
State government	8.8	4.6	1.4
Local government	39.9	12.3	5.0
Incidence rates of cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction			
State and local government	5.1	4.2	3.9
State government	4.3	4.1	3.0
Local government	5.3	4.3	4.2
Number of other recordable cases[3]			
State and local government	33.9	15.7	8.9
State government	8.2	3.9	1.9
Local government	25.8	11.8	6.9
Incidence rates of other recordable cases			
State and local government	3.6	3.9	5.4
State government	4.0	3.5	4.1
Local government	3.4	4.1	5.9

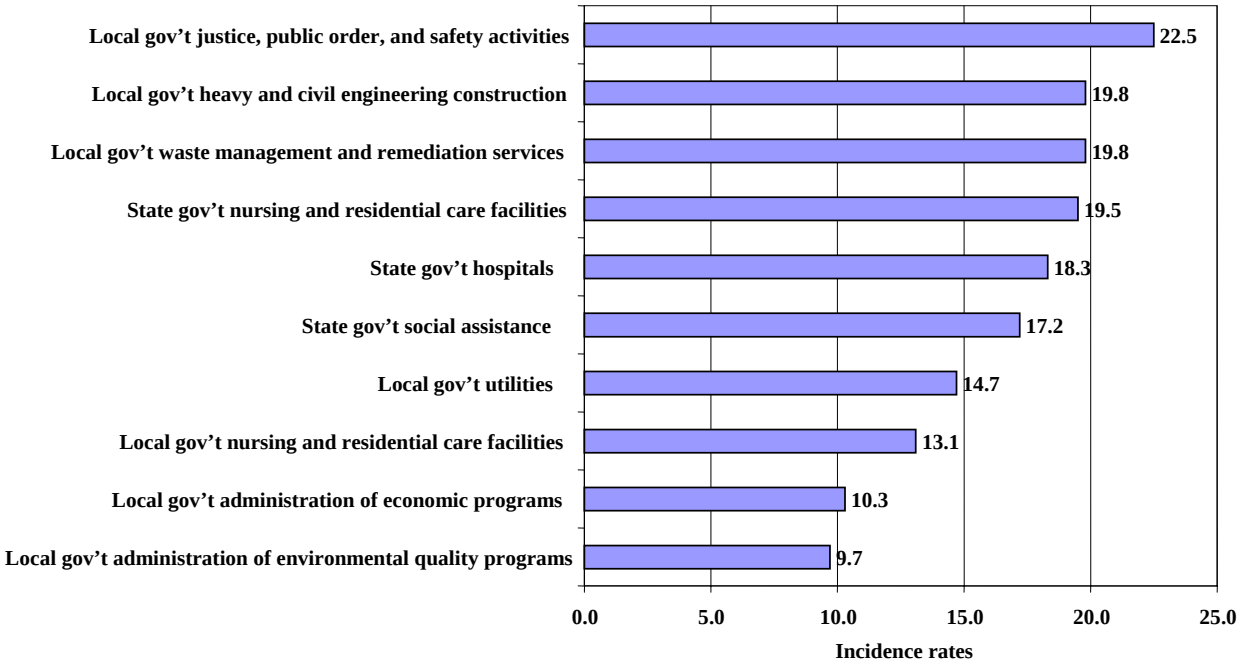
[1] Incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as:
(N/EH) x 200,000 where
N = number of injuries and/or illnesses
EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year
200,000 = base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

[2] Cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction are comprised of two case types: those requiring at least one day
away from work, with or without job transfer or restriction, and those requiring only job transfer or restriction. The latter type may involve shortened work hours, a temporary job change, or temporary restrictions on a worker's regular duties (for example, no heavy lifting). For the survey years 1992-2001, this group was called "lost-workday cases".

[3] For survey years 1992-2001, this group was called "cases without lost workdays".

The 2005 survey identified 10 major public sector industries with incidence rates that were markedly higher than the total public sector rate. **(See Chart 2.)** These industries accounted for slightly more than 48 percent of all public sector work-related injuries and illnesses. Seven of these industries came under the jurisdiction of local government and accounted for almost one half of all that division's cases. In fact, one major industry category – local government justice, public order, and safety activities (comprising police protection, correctional institutions, and fire protection) – alone accounted for 22,600 injuries and illnesses, or 34 percent of all local government cases.

Chart 2. Industries with the highest nonfatal occupational injury and illness incidence rates for all cases, State and local government New York, 2005



The annual survey measures the number of new work-related illness cases that are recognized, diagnosed, and reported during the year. Some conditions (such as long-term latent illnesses caused by exposure to carcinogens) are often difficult to relate to the workplace and are not adequately recognized and reported. However, the vast majority of the reported new illnesses are those that are easier to directly relate to workplace activity (for example, Contact Dermatitis or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)). New York's public sector workplace illnesses accounted for fewer than 5 percent (4,100) of the 82,700 injury and illness cases in 2005 (just marginally more than in 2004) and occurred at a rate of 43.4 cases per 10,000 full-time workers. Most of these illnesses, 3,400, were attributed to local government workers and occurred at an incidence rate of 45.5. Of the total public sector illnesses, 2,300 cases were classified as "all other illnesses", occurring at a rate of 24.2 cases per 10,000 full-time workers. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is included in this category. Both the rates and numbers of all illness categories – skin disorders, respiratory conditions, poisonings, hearing loss, and all other illnesses – were significantly higher than in 2004. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) included "hearing loss" as a separate illness category beginning with the 2004 calendar year. Prior to 2004, this category was included with "all other illnesses".

Just over 78,000 cases, or about 95 percent of New York's total public sector occupational injuries and illnesses, were due to injuries. A little more than 79 percent of these cases (62,300) were attributed to local government employees. The majority of injuries occurred among workers in local government educational services (22,900 cases) and local government justice, public order, and safety (21,100 cases). **(See Table 3.)**

Table 3. Incidence rates[1] and numbers of nonfatal occupational injuries by selected industries, public sector New York State, 2005

Industry[2]	NAICS code[3]	2005 Average annual employment[4] (000's)	Incidence rates	Numbers (000's)
State and local government		1,290.0	8.2	78.5
State government		233.9	7.9	16.2
Educational services	611	47.6	3.8	1.5
Hospitals	622	17.4	18.1	3.0
Nursing and residential care facilities	623	27.4	19.2	4.8
Social assistance	624	0.0	17.0	0.3
Justice, public order, and safety activities	922	59.6	7.1	3.9
Administration of human resource programs	923	21.3	1.9	0.4
Administration of environmental quality programs	924	5.0	6.2	0.2
Administration of economic programs	926	19.5	5.0	0.9
Local government		1,056.2	8.3	62.3
Heavy and civil engineering construction	237	0.0	18.4	3.2
Transit and ground passenger transportation	485	56.1	3.1	1.5
Utilities	221	--	13.7	0.4
Waste management and remediation services	562	--	19.3	2.1
Educational services	611	537.8	6.3	22.9
Hospitals	622	43.1	7.1	3.3
Nursing and residential care facilities	623	11.3	12.7	1.6
Executive, legislative, and other general government support	921	214.8	3.1	1.6
Justice, public order, and safety activities	922	79.2	20.9	21.1
Administration of human resource programs	923	27.2	2.1	0.6
Administration of environmental quality programs	924	7.3	9.2	0.5
Administration of housing programs, urban planning, and community development	925	4.7	1.6	0.1
Administration of economic programs	926	8.9	9.9	0.9

[1] Incidence rates represent the number of injuries per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as:
(N/EH) x 200,000 where

N = number of injuries
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).

[2] Totals include data for industries not shown separately.

[3] *North American Industry Classification System* 2002 Edition

[4] Employment is expressed as an annual average and is derived primarily from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

NOTE: Because of rounding, components may not add to totals.
-- Indicates data not available.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, in cooperation with participating state agencies.

About 33 percent of state government cases with days away from work were sprains and strains (39 percent for local government). The trunk was the part of the body that was most often injured for both state and local government workers (31 percent of days away from work cases). For state government workers, overexertion was cited in 24 percent of days away from work cases as the cause of the injury or illness, while local government workers cited contact with objects or equipment as the event or exposure. **(See Table 4.)**

Table 4. Number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work[1] by case characteristics public sector, New York State, 2005

Characteristic	State government	Local government
Average annual employment (000's)[2]	233.9	1,056.20
Nature[3]		
Sprains, strains	2,800	15,120
Soreness, pain	2,380	10,280
Other	1,670	4,360
Bruises, contusions	860	4,060
Cuts, lacerations, punctures	360	2,530
Fractures	240	1,180
Heat burns	--	770
Multiple injuries	260	510
Part of the body[4]		
Trunk	2,630	11,870
Lower extremities	1,710	9,250
Upper extremities	1,540	7,350
Multiple body parts	1,630	6,700
Head	710	2,520
Body systems	210	--
Other	160	1,140
Source[5]		
Other	2,510	16,930
Health care patient	1,980	--
Floor, ground surfaces	1,580	8,030
Worker motion or position	1,190	5,530
Containers	520	2,290
Vehicles	480	3,910
Parts and materials	--	2,110
Furniture, fixtures	360	--
Event[6]		
Overexertion	2,030	6,570
Contact with object, equipment	1,410	7,230
Fall on same level	1,100	6,130
Assaults, violent acts	1,480	5,350
Slips, trips	490	3,300
Fall to lower level	420	2,720
Exposed to harmful substance	330	1,630
Transportation accidents	270	2,550
Other	1,070	3,340
Total count:	8,600	38,820

[1] Days-away-from-work cases include those that result in days away from work, with or without job transfer or restriction.

[2] Employment is expressed as an annual average and is derived primarily from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

[3] Nature refers to the physical characteristic of the disabling injury.

[4] The part of the body directly linked to the nature of the injury or illness.

[5] The object, substance, or bodily motion that produced or inflicted the condition.

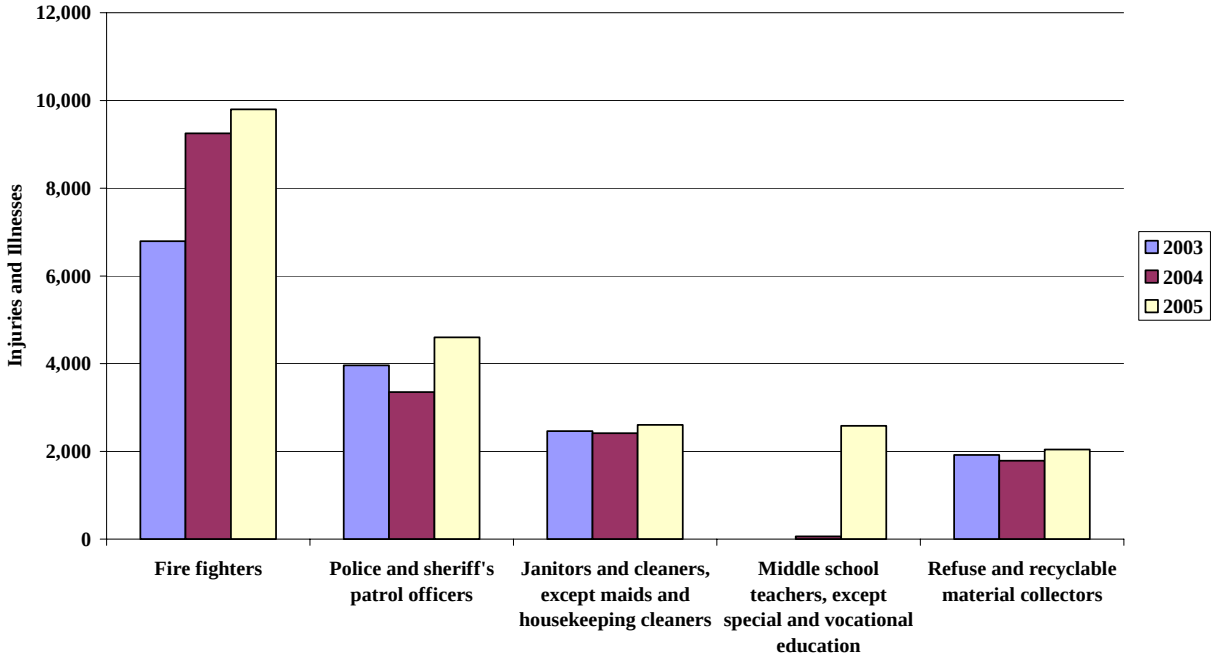
[6] The event or exposure refers to the manner in which the injury or illness was produced.

NOTE: Dashes indicate data that are not available. Because of rounding and data exclusion of nonclassifiable responses, data may not sum to the totals.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in cooperation with participating state agencies.

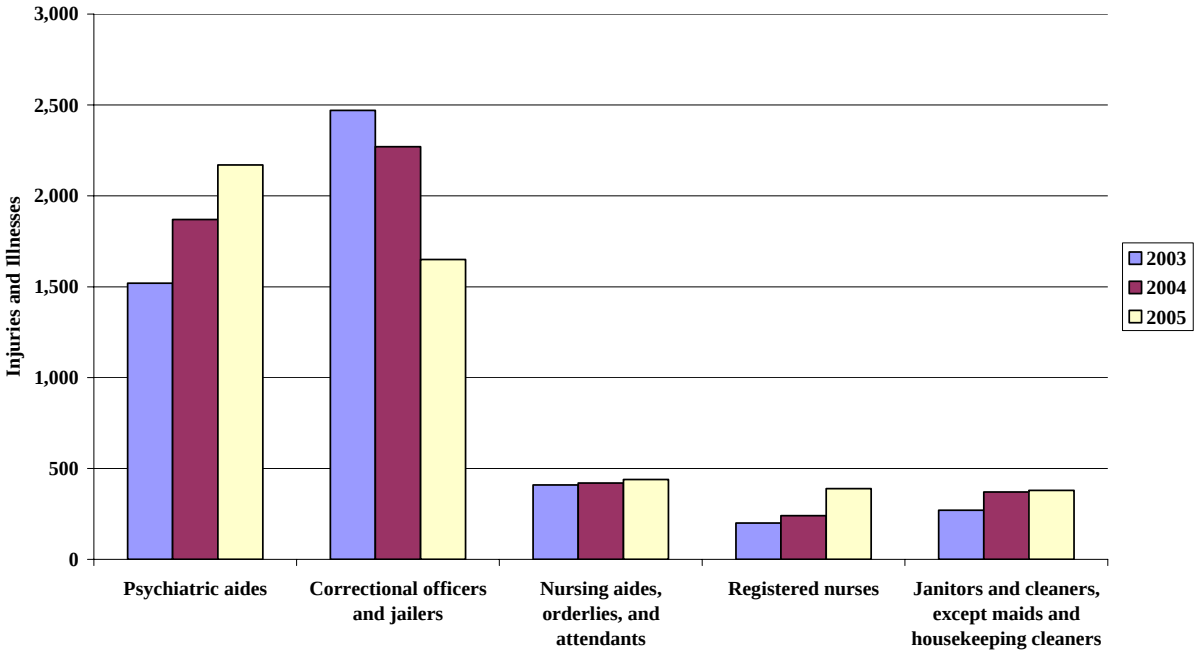
Among local government occupations, fire fighters recorded the highest number of work-related injuries and illnesses, 9,800, in 2005 (up by 550 cases from 2004). The increase was even more dramatic among local government middle school teachers, except special and vocational education, who suffered 2,580 days-away-from-work injuries and illnesses in 2005, up from 60 in 2004. **(See Chart 3).**

Chart 3. Number of occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work for selected occupations New York, local government, 2003-2005



For state government occupations, psychiatric aides recorded the highest number of days-away-from-work cases (2,170) in 2005, up by 300 from 2004. State correctional officers and jailers, however, saw their days-away-from-work cases fall from 2,470 in 2003 to 1,650 in 2005 **(Chart 4)**.

Chart 4. Number of occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work for selected occupations New York, state government, 2003-2005



Collectively, public sector workers lost a median of 7 days as a result of their work-related injuries and illnesses. Most of these cases, 20.1 percent, required 3 to 5 days of recuperation away from work; but almost a similar amount, 19.4 percent, required a recuperation period of 31 days or more. Specifically, local government employees identified as bus drivers (transit and intercity), recorded a median of 88 days away from work to recuperate from their injuries and illnesses **(Chart 5)**, while state government first-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives recorded a median of 101 days away from work **(Chart 6)**.

Chart 5. Occupations with the highest median days away from work
New York, local government, 2005

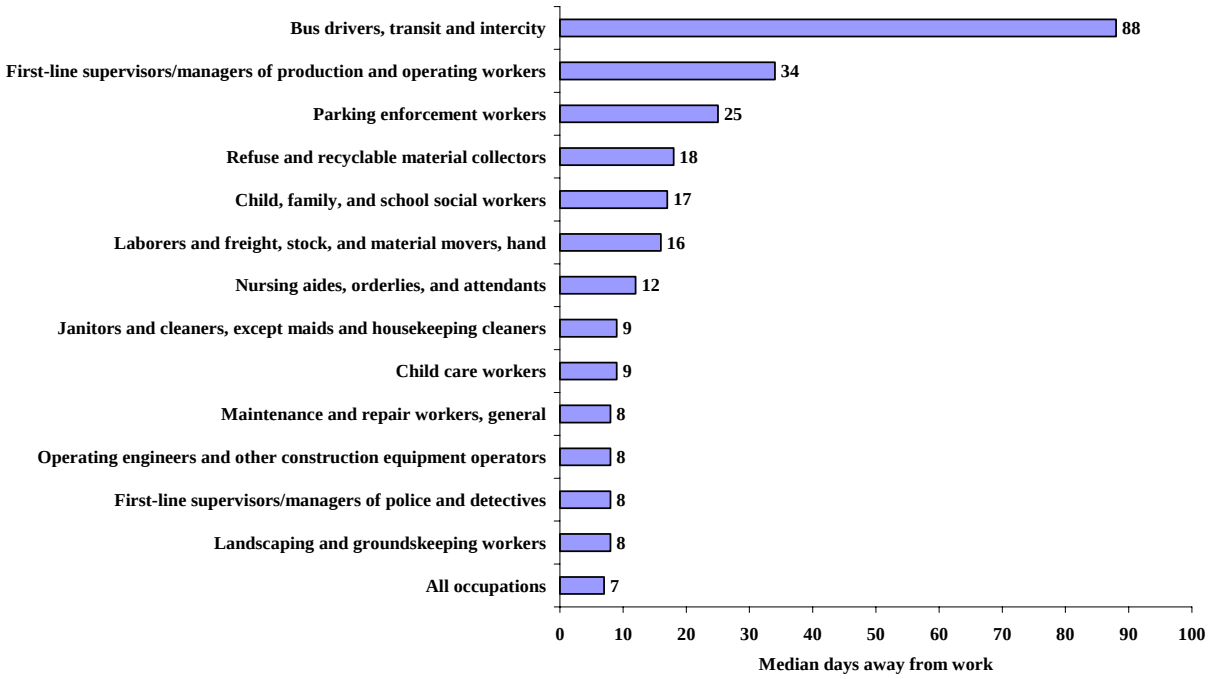
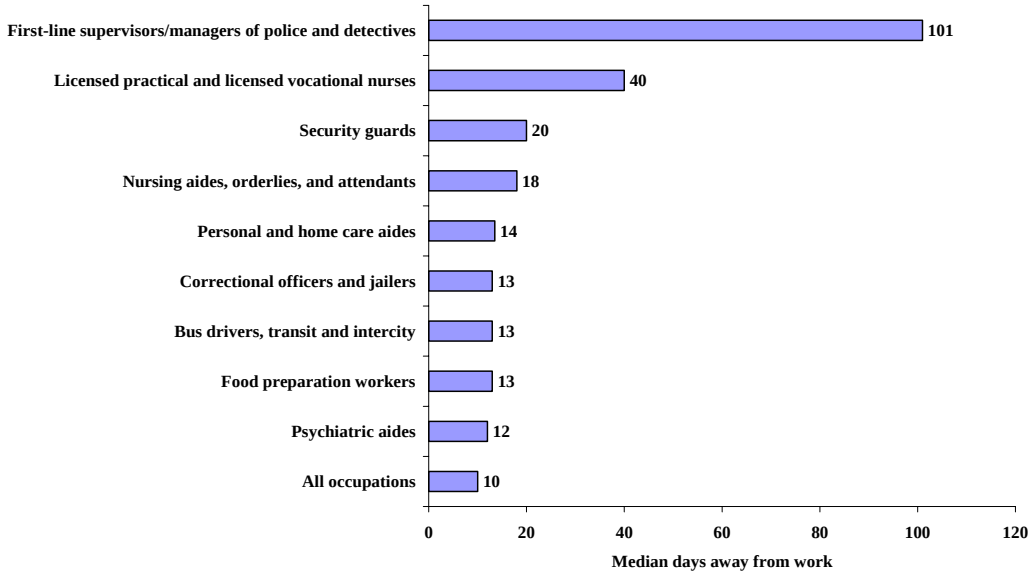
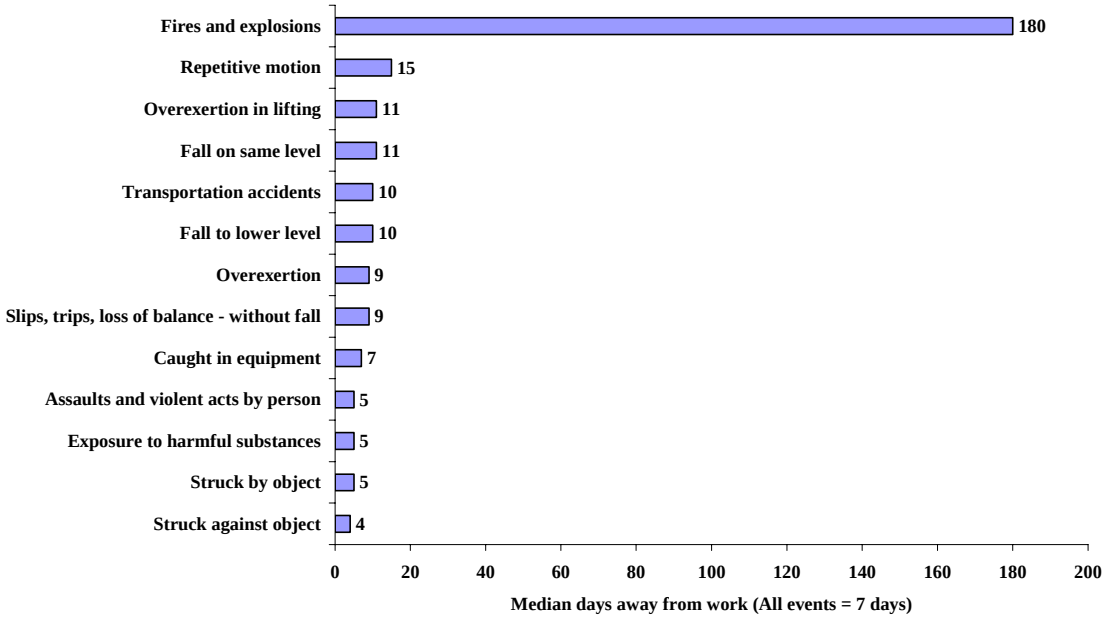


Chart 6. Occupations with the highest median days away from work
New York, state government, 2005



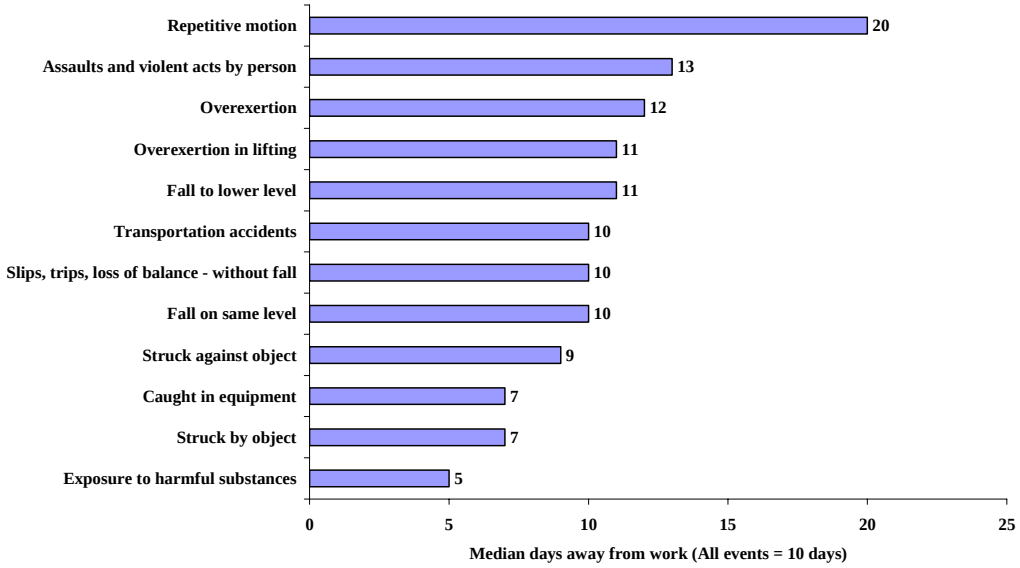
While local government workers lost a median of 7 days from work based on the cause of their afflictions (the event or exposure), nonfatal occupational injuries or illnesses which resulted from fires and explosions accounted for a median of 180 days away from work **(Chart 7).**

Chart 7. Median days away from work due to nonfatal occupational injury or illness by event or exposure New York, local government, 2005



On the other hand, state government workers recorded a median of 10 days away from work as a result of all events; but nonfatal occupational injuries or illnesses produced by repetitive motion accounted for a median of 20 days away from work **(Chart 8).**

Chart 8. Median days away from work due to nonfatal occupational injury or illness by event or exposure New York, state government, 2005



Technical Note:

The public sector data of the annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) are used to estimate the number and frequency (incidence rate) of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses in that sector. These incidents are reported on logs (SH 900) that public sector employers maintain during the year. Those records reflect not only the year's injury and illness experience of the agency, but also the employers' understanding as to which cases are work related under record-keeping rules published by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). New York State promulgates those rules through the New York State Department of Labor, Division of Safety and Health (DOSH).

On January 19, 2001, OSHA revised their requirements for recording occupational injuries and illnesses. Rule revisions became effective on January 1, 2002, and are therefore reflected in the 2002 and later years' surveys. It should be noted that due to OSHA's changes to its record-keeping requirements, data for 2002 through 2005 are strictly comparable with each other, but not with previous years' data. DOSH has incorporated these changes into its reporting requirements for the public sector.

In addition to incidence rates, the survey also provides detailed characteristics (such as age, sex, race, length of service, and occupation) of those workers that suffered injuries and illnesses requiring at least one full day away from work, excluding the day of occurrence. (Illnesses and injuries that involved time away from work are viewed as more serious than those that did not result in lost time.) The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year can be influenced by a variety of factors such as: the level of economic activity, work conditions and practices, the experience and training of workers and the number of hours worked. Data on the circumstances of public sector injuries and illnesses (the nature of the injury or illness, the part of the body affected, the event or exposure involved in the case, and the primary and secondary sources of the injury or illness) are also available.

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