

Analysis of Work-related Injury and Illness 2001 - 2014

Transport and Storage Sector

A plain
English guide



This report is published as part of the ESRI and Health and Safety Authority (HSA) *Research Programme on Health Safety and wellbeing at Work*. It has been peer reviewed. The authors are solely responsible for the content and the views expressed.

Analysis of Work-related Injury and Illness 2001 - 2014

Transport and Storage Sector

Sectoral Analysis No. 5: Transport Sector
by O. Kenny, B. Maître and H. Russell (April 2018)



Analysis of Work-related Injury and Illness 2001 - 2014

About this report

This report is a summary of the longer document named in the title above. It focuses on the **Transport and Storage** sector findings of earlier reports that examined work-related injury and illness across the economy as a whole.

All injuries and illnesses reported by workers are included regardless of whether or not they were absent from work, as many people continue to work while sick or injured.

For ease of reading, the 'transport and storage' sector is simply referred to as the 'transport' sector throughout.

Why is this report necessary?

In 2013, the transport sector had the third highest fatality rate of all sectors and, despite a downward trend, still has a high number of fatalities, with 26 cases between 2008 and 2014.

The number employed in this sector in 2014 (about 89,400 workers) accounts for about 4.7% of total employment, and annual rates of both illness and injury per 1,000 workers fluctuate dramatically. After falling in the 2012 – 2013 period, injury rates rose to a rate of 38 per 1,000 workers in the 2013 – 2014 period.

It is important, therefore, to examine and analyse these trends and patterns in the sector with a view to improving worker health and wellbeing, and reducing the number fatalities and injuries.

How was this report completed, and what research information does it cover?

We used information from the Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) to inform this report. Specifically, we used information gathered in the annual special module on work-related accidents and illnesses. The module is restricted to those who are employed at the time of the survey, or who are not currently employed but had worked during the 12-month reference period.

For example, in 2015, in the case of injuries, respondents were asked:

'How many, if any, injuries did you incur at work (excluding commuting) during the period January 2014 to December 2014?'

For illnesses, the following question was asked:

'How many, if any, illnesses or disabilities have you experienced during the 12 months January 2014 to December 2014, that you believe were caused or made worse by your work?'

Respondents were also asked how many days they had taken off work as a result of these injuries or illnesses.

The QNHS is carried out in private households and the responses are unconnected to any workplace reporting.

Using the survey information, we analysed it and applied it to the sector under the following headings:

- Worker and job characteristics and risk of injury
- Worker fatalities in the transport and storage sector
- Work-related illness in the transport and storage sector
- Days lost due to illness and injury
- Inspections

The findings for each section are presented below.

Worker and job characteristics and risk of injury

In this section, we examined the relationship between the risks of injury among transport sector workers and a range of factors such as personal and job characteristics – for example, age, gender, nationality, shift work, whether workers were employees or self-employed, how experienced they are, and so on.

The significant findings were:

- Those working shifts or night hours have a higher risk of injury (4.2%) than those who don't work these hours (2.7%).
- Workers with less than six months' experience on the job have a significantly higher injury risk than those with longer tenure. For example, those with less than six months' experience have an 18% risk compared to those who have one to two years' experience (4%). This drops to 2.8% for those with more than five years' experience.

Worker fatalities in the transport sector

Analysis of the information regarding worker fatalities over the period in question yielded the following findings:

- The transport sector has one of the highest worker fatality rates, after the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector and the construction sector.
- There was an increase in the fatality rate in the sector between 2001 and 2004, but there is a longer-term downward trend for the whole period of 2001–2014.
- There were 38 fatalities in the sector in the boom years from 2001 – 2007. This figure fell to 26 across the seven years 2008 – 2014.

Work-related illness in the transport sector

In this section, we examined the association between illness and time period (the boom years 2001 – 2007; recession years 2008 – 2011; and recovery years 2012 – 2014), together with the characteristics of those working in the transport sector and their job structure.

The significant findings were:

- The risk of illness was highest in the boom period (3.6%) dropping to 2.4% in the recession period, and 2% in the recovery period.
- At a rate of 0.6%, the under 25 age group have a significantly lower illness risk than other age groups which ranged from 2.6% – 3.5%.
- The risk of illness for those working less than 30 hours a week is more than four times greater than for those working 30 – 39 hours and those working 40 – 49 hours.
- Workers with less than six months' experience have a four-times greater risk of illness than those with five or more years' experience.

Days lost due to illness and injury

In this section, we examined the information in terms of two timeframes – the boom years of 2001 – 2007 and the recession and recovery years of 2008 – 2014. The main findings were as follows:

- In the boom years, the average rate of days lost to injury per 1,000 workers was 669, which was much **higher** than the average of all other sectors combined (402).
- The average rate of days lost to illness per 1,000 workers in the boom years was 424, which was **lower** than the average of all other sectors (437).

- The average rate of days lost to illness increased significantly to 507 in the recession and recovery years, which is much higher than all other sectors combined (324) which recorded a drop in rates for this timeframe.

Inspections

In this section, we examined the impact of health and safety inspections in relation to the rates of injury and illness. The main findings were as follows:

- Inspection rates in this sector have generally been higher than those in other sectors, though in recent years this gap has narrowed.
- Inspection rates peaked in 2009, at 16.7 inspections per 1,000 workers. This was almost double the rate of the previous year with relatively little change in employment figures.
- The overall economy-wide research found that higher inspection rates were associated with lower injury and illness risks. However, in the transport sector, higher inspection rates are associated with significantly lower risk of work-related illness, but **not** injury.

Where can I get more information?

You can get the full version of this document on the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) website www.esri.ie

Also, you can download the following documents:

Trends and patterns in occupational health and safety in Ireland.

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders and stress, anxiety and depression in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS 2002–2013.

These are ESRI publications and are available on their website at www.esri.ie/publications/

You can also access plain English summaries of these publications on the Health and Safety Authority's website at:

www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications

*'healthy,
safe and
productive
lives'*

Further Information and Guidance

Visit our website at
www.hsa.ie

Call our contact centre on
1890 289 389

Email us at
wcu@hsa.ie

Use **BeSMART**, our free
online risk
assessment tool at
www.besmart.ie

Check out our range of
free online
courses at
www.hslearning.ie



HEALTH AND SAFETY
AUTHORITY
