

Indicator #15: Percentage of Workers Employed in Occupations with High Risk for Occupational Morbidity

Background and Public Health Significance

In 2014, there were almost 3 million work-related injuries and illnesses reported by employers in the U.S. private industry sector. Of those, 95.1% were recordable injuries and 4.8% were recordable illnesses. Workers in certain occupations sustain non-fatal injuries and illnesses at much higher rates than the overall workforce. The proportion of the workforce that is employed in these high-risk occupations varies by state. This variation can help explain differences in injury and illness rates among states.

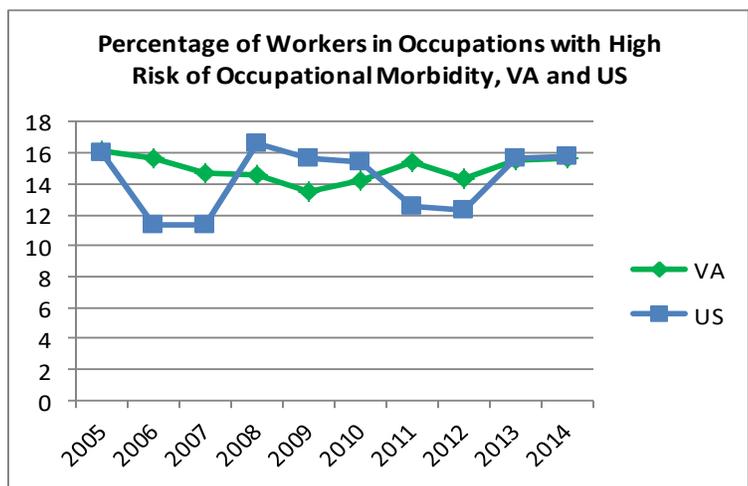
High risk occupations are defined as those in the U.S. private sector, that have a two-fold or higher rate of injuries or illnesses involving one or more missed days of work. The overall injury rate has shown a significant decline therefore the actual rate considered to be high risk is modified every five years. A list of the occupations considered to be “high risk” for this report can be found in the Occupational Health Indicators: A Guide for Tracking Occupational Health Conditions and Their Determinants.

Data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Population Survey (CPS)

Rationale:

Work-related injuries and illnesses are preventable, and control of occupational hazards is the most effective means of prevention. Concentrating on high-risk occupations for non-fatal injuries and illnesses helps prioritize limited resources.

	14.1 Number of Employed Persons in High Morbidity Risk 2010 Bureau of Census Occupations	14.2 Percentage of Employed Persons in High Morbidity Risk 2010 Bureau of Census Occupations
2005	442,614	16.2 %
2006	438,031	15.7 %
2007	410,265	14.7 %
2008	410,425	14.6 %
2009	367,346	13.5 %
2010	380,426	14.2 %
2011	433,811	15.4 %
2012	406,543	14.3 %
2013	443,322	15.6 %
2014	453,885	15.7 %



NOTE: 2013 & 2014 rates may change when the updated 2015 Occupational Health Indicators: A Guide for Tracking Occupational Health Conditions and Their Determinants is released due to changes in high risk industries and occupations.

Limitations

Differences in regional industrial practices may cause the ranking of high-risk occupations within a specific state or industry to differ from those identified from national data. The industries for which data are available also vary among states, primarily due to differences in industry concentration and sample size. As a result, it is not recommended to compare numbers or rates between state or national data.

The BLS annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness (SOII) is based on injury and illness data maintained by employers and is subject to sampling error. A function of BLS is the use of a probability sample instead of a census of all employers. Excluded from the survey are the military, self-employed, farms with fewer than 11 employees, and federal agencies. The CPS can be used to estimate the private sector employment in the US, excluding the self-employed, but it may not perfectly match those covered in the SOII.