

Industry Sector Differences in Safety Policies and Practices Among Nebraska Worksites

Each year thousands of Nebraska workers experience a work-related injury. Employees and their employers share the costs of workplace injuries through medical expenses, lost wages, reduced productivity, and increases in workers' compensation and other insurance costs.

Businesses play a key role in promoting employee health and ensuring worker safety. Businesses that implement health and safety policies and practices can help prevent workplace injuries, reduce health care costs, increase productivity, decrease absenteeism, and ultimately contribute to the growth of their industry.

What We Did

The Nebraska Worksite Wellness Survey was conducted in 2013 by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Service (NDHHS). The survey provides information on worksite wellness, health, and safety policies and practices being implemented in businesses across the state with 10 or more employees. A total of 582 small businesses, 510 medium businesses and 260 large businesses participated in the 2013 survey. The full survey results and methodology are available at: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/WorkplaceWellnessToolkit/Documents/2013WorksiteWellnessSurvey.pdf>

We conducted a sub-group analysis of the 2013 survey results to determine industry sector differences in the prevalence of safety policies and practices among Nebraska businesses. Weighted percentages were calculated for policies and practices, including the percent of worksites that reported having a worksite safety committee and the percent of worksites that offered injury prevention education.

What We Found

Worksite Safety Committees

- 63% of all worksites reported having a worksite safety committee (Figure 1).
- Having a worksite safety committee was reported most frequently in the Manufacturing (94.0%) and Educational Services (86.1%) industry sectors.
- The Other Services (i.e. Accommodation and Food Services, Administrative and Support Services) sectors reported the lowest prevalence of worksite safety committees (40.5%).

Figure 1. Percentage of worksites reported having a safety committee by industry sector, Nebraska, 2013

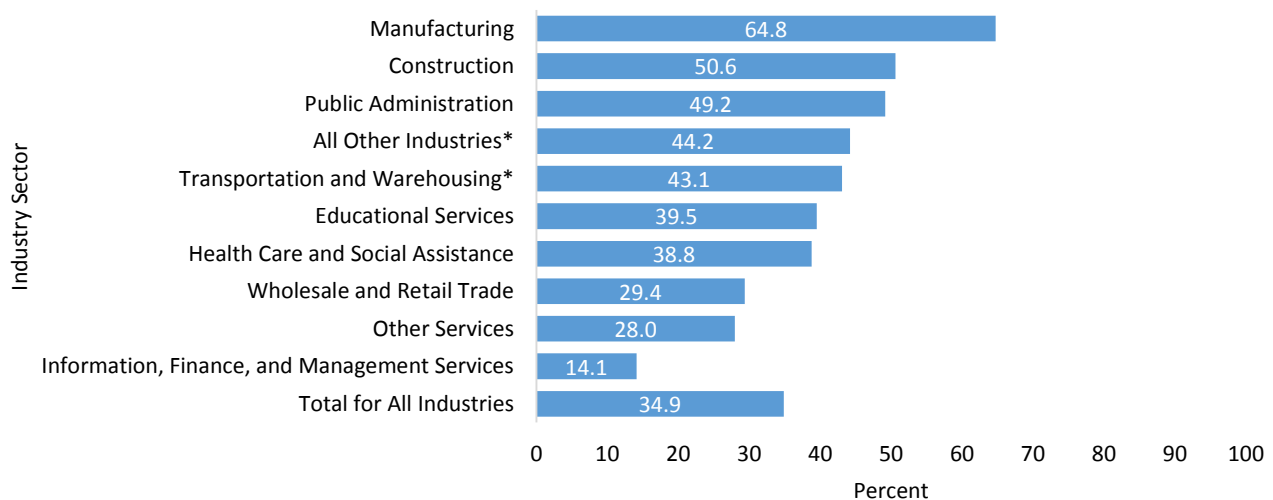


*Results for this industry sector group may be unreliable due to small cell sizes

Injury Prevention Education

- 34.9% of all worksites reported offering injury prevention education (Figure 2).
- Injury prevention education was offered most commonly in the Manufacturing (64.8%) and Construction (50.6%) industry sectors.
- Worksites in the Information, Finance, and Management Services sectors reported the lowest prevalence of worksite safety committees (14.1%).

Figure 2. Percentage of worksites reported offering injury prevention education by industry sector, Nebraska, 2013



*Results for this industry sector group may be unreliable estimates due to low cell sizes

Conclusions

Worksite practices and policies can help prevent work-related injuries. Nebraska law requires all worksites in Nebraska subject to workers' compensation to have a safety committee (1). Only 63% of worksites in Nebraska reported having a safety committee in 2013. We also found fewer worksites offered injury prevention education compared to those with worksite safety committees.

Safety committees and injury prevention education were more prevalent in Manufacturing and Construction, where injury and illness rates are the highest, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (2). Health Care and Social Assistance and Trade, Transportation and Warehousing are also high risk industry sectors in Nebraska and have elevated rates of work-related injury and illness. However, the presence of safety committees and injury prevention education was lower in these industry sectors.

Recommendations

- All Nebraska worksites subject to workers' compensation should implement worksite safety committees to address health and safety risks of workers.
- Nebraska businesses should consider offering injury prevention education to provide workers with information on reducing the risks of work-related injury, especially those in high risk industries.
- Injury prevention education and safety committees are especially recommended for high risk industry sectors with low adoption of these safety practices, such as the Health Care and Social Assistance and the Trade, Transportation, and Warehousing sectors.
- Provide technical support and resources to businesses for developing and implementing safety programs, which can help worksites reduce the incidence of work-related injury and increase the overall adoption of safety policies and practices in Nebraska.

For more information

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References

(1) Nebraska Administrative Code, Title 230, Chapter 6. http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Labor_Dept_of/Title-230/Chapter-6.pdf

(2) Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014. Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>