



A story of **Impact**

NIOSH Researchers Partner with a University and Make the Business Case for Workplace Safety and Health

Hard economic times are often very dangerous to U.S. workers because some companies under financial strain are tempted to cut safety programs for quick cost savings. This philosophy and the related actions can have high human and financial costs. Workplace injuries cause hardships on many levels. The untold human loss and suffering are the greatest cost but businesses suffer financially too, losing billions of dollars each year to preventable work-related injuries.

Each year workplace incidents kill more than 5,000 U.S. workers, and more than 1.2 million workers suffer an injury that results in at least one day of missed work. These costs take a significant toll on businesses, with one report putting the price of non-fatal injuries at \$254 billion in a recent year alone.

Relevant Information

More than 5,000 U.S. workers die annually from work-related incidents, averaging almost 15 worker deaths each day.

Each day more than 11,500 private sector workers suffer work-related injury or illness; more than half result in a job transfer, work restrictions, or time away from their jobs.

Approximately 200 U.S. workers are admitted to the hospital each day due to a workplace injury.

One cost assessment of a real-world ergonomic project found that the economic investment paid for itself in 2 months.



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Impact

U.S. employers can see big returns on money they invest to make workplaces safer. That's the message students seeking their Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio have been learning since the Spring of 2009 in a course called *Business Value of Safety and Health*. This course is offered by Xavier University in partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The belief that good workplace safety measures are a sound investment is one of the reasons NIOSH and Xavier University initially teamed to create this course. As part of its curriculum, the course uses real-world success stories taken from the National Safety Council's Robert W. Campbell Awards and students learn how to choose cost-effective ways to boost worker safety while supporting the business goals of their company. MBA graduates who are aware of and understand cost savings will likely become future business leaders who promote and support workplace safety and health.

According to Xavier University and NIOSH, both the partnership effort and *Business Value of Safety and Health* course have been valuable and a resounding success. The class is currently offered through the Sedler Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, with plans of the university to expand and integrate this business value approach into more of its MBA classes on topics such as risk management, operations, finance, economics, and marketing and communication. In addition, Xavier University decided to hold an annual conference dedicated to economics, safety, and health.

Visit www.cdc.gov/niosh for more information about the business value of workplace safety and health. Authors of *Developing an MBA Class on the Business Value of Safety and Health*—Steve Wurzelbacher, DeLon Hull, Rene Pana-Cryan, Steve Hudock, Elyce Biddle, Tapas Ray, Anasua Bhattacharya, Tim Bushnell, Abay Getahun, and Jane Roemer; NIOSH—received the 2009 Bullard-Sherwood Award in the Knowledge category.

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