

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE: NORA SECTOR BULLETIN



National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Oh 45226
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh> dhornback@cdc.gov 513-533-8484

Universality of Disability – Focus on the Workplace

The following synopsis is from a presentation prepared for a Columbia University (NY) seminar: “Diversity and Human Rights,” 2007, N.Y. by Ilise L. Feitschans, JD & ScM.

As a reminder to us, the author notes: “Every person is different yet every person must have opportunities to be treated the same.” Moreover, the cause of injury does not matter. A person may not be fired because of an on-the-job injury, a pre-existing injury, or even a substantial impairment of one or more major life activities [OSHA Act, 1970; ADA, 1990]. In the broader sense, few families remain free of disabilities, visible as well as invisible. Recent surveys indicate persons with physical and mental disabilities are joining the workforce in large numbers. This positive trend should also be a signal to occupational health researchers to include workers with disabilities in their study samples.

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This is necessary to ensure the sample is truly representative of that worker population. The presence of more workers with disabilities will also change the nature of many job descriptions. Only the “essential functions” will be relevant. Jobs will be customized to the workers’ abilities. This holds important implications for job design and job hazard analysis. New strategies for training will be necessary, often multisensory in nature. The author concludes that providing for disability will be a great challenge for a new generation of epidemiologists and occupational health scientists.

Synopsis by Vern Anderson. Contact Ms. Ilise Feitschans at ilise@prodigy.net for further information on this topic, feedback or comments.

Economic Cost and Event, Injury & Illnesses – Retail

Economic cost of fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, 1992-2001, Retail Trade, Occupational groups [Fact Sheet by Elyce Biddle]

NIOSH Fatal Occupational Injury Cost in 2003 Dollars:
Number, rate, and costs of fatal occupational injuries in the U.S. retail trade industry by selected characteristics, 1992-2002

Event or exposure	Number of Fatalities	Total (Millions)
Contact with objects and equipment	279	\$204
Falls	310	\$162
Bodily reaction and exertion	13	\$7
Exposure to harmful substances or environments	201	\$165
Transportation accidents	1,529	\$1,214
Fires and explosions	118	\$85
Assaults and violent acts	4,231	\$3,268

WRT Musculoskeletal Disorders: Progress Report

The WRT sub-sector team, focusing on MSDs, identified 10 topic areas that merited special attention when considering musculoskeletal injuries and illnesses among the hundreds of wholesale and retail trade jobs.

- ❖ Develop and evaluate tools for exposure assessment for MSDs (e.g., NIOSH lifting equation or new tools that can be utilized by practitioners).
 - ❖ Identify specific levels and thresholds of exposures for MSDs.
 - ❖ Identify unique exposures for MSDs in the WRT.
 - ❖ Investigate the role of prolonged standing on low back and lower extremity disorders and pain.
 - ❖ Investigate lifting and other manual material handling in WRT.
 - ❖ Determine the trade-off between package weight and frequency with respect to risk of MSDs and biomechanical loading.
 - ❖ Identify assessment tools that effectively provide valid risk assessments and determine if intervention based on these tools can be developed.
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- ❖ Determine why there is variation between similar operations or facilities in reporting MSDs.
 - ❖ Identify role of such factors as psychosocial, local management, behavioral issues, state and federal regulations, safety culture, and other factors.
 - ❖ Identify collaborations and partnerships that will strengthen the understanding of the impact of MSDs within the WRT.

What's NRF?

The National Retail Federation (NRF) is the world's largest retail trade association, with membership that comprises all retail formats and channels of distribution including department, specialty, discount, catalog, Internet, and independent stores, chain restaurants, drug stores and grocery stores, as well as the industry's key trading partners of retail goods and services. NRF represents an industry with more than 1.6 million U.S. retail establishments, more than 24 million employees –about one in five American workers– and 2005 sales of \$4.4 trillion. As the industry umbrella group, NRF also represents more than

100 state, national, and international retail associations.

NRF publishes a daily e-mail news bulletin entitled "NRF SmartBrief." NRF SmartBrief contains a brief summary of articles that appear in WRT publications along with URL links to the original source. Information and registration for the NRF SmartBrief can be found at:

<http://www.smartbrief.com/nrf/>

Additional information about NRF can be found on the web at: <http://www.nrf.com>

What's New in the WRT News?

The following articles and websites provide additional follow-up information about topics that were mentioned in this issue. If you are interested in receiving copies of these documents, please contact Debbie Hornback, Editor, WRT e-Bulletin at: dhornback@cdc.gov or 513-533-8484.

1. *Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies and Research Needs*. NIOSH Publication 2006-144. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-144/>
2. *NIOSH Fatal Occupational Injury Cost Fact Sheets*. [A new series of fact sheets that estimate the cost to society of a workplace fatality using the cost-of-illness approach. This approach combines the direct and indirect costs to produce an overall cost of a fatal occupational injury. Fact sheets are available for the wholesale trade at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-156/pdfs/2006-156.pdf> and for retail trade at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-157/pdfs/2006-157.pdf>]
3. Changing Trends in US Injury Profiles: Revisiting Non-Fatal Occupational Injury Statistics. A. Subramanian, A. Desai, L. Prakash, A. Mital and Anil Mital, March, 2006. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, Vol, 16. No.1, 123-155. [Data from BLS. While the absolute number of work-related injuries and illnesses has declined over the last decade, the basic trends associated with different factors (sectors) remain almost unchanged. The reason for this is discussed in the paper. Useful comparison information for the WRT Sector: Table 1 Figs 1-Fig 6.

Please send ideas for information sharing or questions for our March WRT e-Bulletin.

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Wholesale and Retail Trade Sector

4676 Columbia Pkwy
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Phone:

513-533-8484 Fax: 513-533-8317

E-Mail: dhornback@cdc.gov

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