



MINNESOTA SAFETY COUNCIL

 Chapter of the National Safety Council

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Annual Minnesota Workplace Safety Report Shows Worker Fatality Rate is Highest in a Decade

ST. PAUL, MINN. (August 29, 2019) – One Minnesota worker died every 87 hours, or 3.6 days, in 2017 as the result of a workplace accident, the highest rate in a decade, according to the state’s annual report on workplace safety released in conjunction with Labor Day.

Minnesota’s 100 workplace fatalities for 2017 boosted the state’s overall fatal occupational injury rate to 3.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers, an increase from 3.4 in 2016 and the highest in a decade.

The 2019 Minnesota Workplace Safety Dashboard is a joint effort of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Safety Council. The annual statistical report highlights several key worker safety and health indicators through 2017, the most recent data available for most categories.

Minnesota Safety Council President Paul Aasen says “after a steady decline over the more than nine decades since the Minnesota Safety Council was founded, we’re now seeing a concerning uptick in workplace fatalities. This means all of us – employers, government agencies, the Minnesota Safety Council and others – must continue to join forces to make our state’s workers safer.”

Aasen notes that in 2017, each day 198 Minnesotans sustained a workplace injury or illness, 100 of which were severe.

“Even as we make important traffic safety strides, such as the state’s new hands-free cellphone law, we know that over the past five years one-in-three fatal workplace injuries involved driving a vehicle,” Aasen says. “And, while 65% of crashes take place in the Twin Cities Metro Area, 75% of fatalities occur in Greater Minnesota. That means we must continue to make safe driving a top priority.”

“Safety at work and at home shouldn’t be taken for granted. Eleven people a day are injured by falls at work and Minnesota has the third highest rate of fall fatalities for people over 65,” says Assistant Commissioner Dr. Courtney Jordan Baechler. “Taking time to identify falling and tripping hazards before a project starts and taking fall prevention steps can truly change a life.”

Highlights of the 2019 dashboard include:

- Minnesota’s 2017 fatal occupational injury rate increased to 3.5 per 100,000 workers, up from 3.4 in 2016 and equal to the national rate of 3.5 for 2017.
- Agriculture remains one of the state’s most dangerous sectors. Between 2013-2017, 107 fatal work injuries involved those employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting businesses, particularly workers in crop production jobs. Seven people in this sector are seriously injured each day.
- The 533 concussion injuries resulting in wage loss payments for 2018 were six times greater than that recorded in 2009.
- Falls remain a leading cause of injuries. Eleven people a day are injured by falls at work. Minnesota also has one of the highest fatality rates in the nation for falls at home.
- While Minnesota’s number of workers’ compensation claims has dropped since 2008, the inflation-adjusted cost per claim has remained steady at \$11,000.

The dashboard, “Minnesota Workplace Safety, 2019” is available at <http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/WorkplaceSafetyDashboard.pdf>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Minnesota Safety Council President Paul Aasen is available for interviews. Contact Erin Petersen, 651-228-7314 erin.petersen@minnesotasafetycouncil.org
- For more Minnesota workplace injury and illness data, see:
 - <http://www.dli.mn.gov/our-areas-service/research-and-statistics/survey-occupational-injuries-and-illnesses> (non-fatal)
 - <http://www.dli.mn.gov/our-areas-service/research-and-statistics/census-fatal-occupational-injuries-foi> (fatal)
 - <http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workers-compensation/work-comp-minnesota-workers-compensation-system-report> (workers’ comp system annual report)
 - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/occhealth/data/index.html> (occupational safety and health indicators)

The Minnesota Safety Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preventing injuries on the road, at work, at home, and in the community. For more information, see www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry oversees the state's programs for apprenticeship, construction codes and licensing, occupational safety and health, wage and hour standards, and workers' compensation. Visit them online at www.dli.mn.gov.

The Minnesota Department of Health’s mission is to protect, maintain and improve the health of *all* Minnesotans. Visit www.health.state.mn.us for more information.