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ARE OUR WORKPLACES SAFE ?

(Seventh of a ten part series)



While technological improvements may have contributed to gains in productivity, changes in work methods and machines used may have also exposed the workforce to greater risks in the workplace. In the past, the safety and health of workers was given lesser importance than the provision of monetary or economic benefits. Although this perspective has been gradually changing through the years, much has still to be done to ensure that the workers enjoy a safe working environment.

Injury statistics are useful to policy and decision-makers in labor administration particularly in the enforcement of health and safety standards. Further, establishments can use the data in their accident prevention programs.

This report is based on the 1991 to 1996 results of the Occupational Injuries Survey (OIS) conducted by the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics. The OIS covers establishments employing at least 10 workers. This seventh issue focuses on work-related injuries in the wholesale and retail trade sector.

ESTABLISHMENTS WITH INJURIES

Wholesale and retail trade establishments employing 10 and over reported work-related injuries at 27.7 percent or 2,573 out of 9,273 establishments in 1996. This was

slightly lower than the 29.2 percent posted in 1995. (Table 1).

In proportion to establishment population, establishments with disabling cases reported the highest share at 22.0 percent in 1991. This proportion significantly lowered to 13.0 percent a year after and further went down to a single digit at 6.5 percent in 1996. The year 1994 recorded the lowest proportion at 5.2 percent.

Affected establishments (with injuries) averaged below 2,400 in 1991-1994. In particular, their lowest figures at 1,735 in 1993 and at 1,718 in 1994 were less than one-fifth of their respective total establishments. (Table 2).

TABLE 1. COMPARATIVE STATISTICS ON ESTABLISHMENTS WITH WORK-RELATED INJURIES IN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE SECTOR, PHILIPPINES: 1991-1996

(Establishments employing 10 and over.)

Year	Total Establishments	% of Establishments with Work Related Injuries to Total	% of Establishments with Disabling Injuries to Total
1991	8,956	26.8	22.0
1992	9,278	21.8	13.0
1993	9,282	18.7	10.0
1994	9,284	18.5	5.2
1995	9,261	29.2	9.5
1996	9,273	27.7	6.5

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, Occupational Injuries Survey.

Of the total establishments with injuries during the period more than four fifths (82.2%) had disabling cases that resulted to lost workdays in 1991. However, succeeding annual shares have considerably decreased to 53.4 percent by 1994 and continued its downtrend to 23.6 percent in 1996. (Table 2)

Non-disabling cases (no workday losses) among establishments with injuries were reported lowest at 36.5 percent in 1991. Thereafter, about 56 percent to 94 percent of establishment with work-related injuries reported non-disabling cases. It should be noted that an establishment may have both disabling and non-disabling injuries.

WORK-RELATED INJURIES

Injuries in wholesale and retail trade establishments have increased by 4.0 percent at 29,980 in 1996 over its 1995 caseload of 28,830. In 1991-1994, injuries at the workplace ranged from 13,660-19,480 cases. However, 1996 with the highest number of caseload 29,980 accounted for the lowest proportion of disabling cases (9.4%). In contrast, 1991 with 19,480 cases reported the highest percent share of disabling injuries at 37.3%. (Table 3)

Relative to area totals, injuries in work areas at the National Capital Region (NCR) posted larger shares than their counterparts in outside NCR in 1992-1996. In 1991, however, ONCR share of injuries at 65.8 percent was higher over NCR's 34.2 percent. This pattern held true in non-disabling cases while disabling cases were reported slightly higher in other parts of the country than in NCR.

DISABLING INJURIES

The first half of the review period recorded the height of disabling injuries in the sector ranging from 4,020-7,270. On the other hand, 1994-1996 posted the least at 2,560-3,760. (Table 4)

➤ Size of Establishment

Wholesale and retail trade establishments with employment of 10-99 workers accounted for the biggest shares of disabilities in 1991-1996 (63.3%-88.0%). In contrast, the least annual shares were found in establishments with 100-199 workers (3.0%-14.1%).

➤ Extent of Disability

During the period, about 9 out of 10 of total disabling injuries were temporary total disabilities. Permanent partial disabilities numbered to 30-130 cases, while permanent total disabilities occurred only in 1994-1995 at 40 and 50 cases respectively. Except at 80 cases in 1994 fatal injuries numbered to 20 or less cases each year.

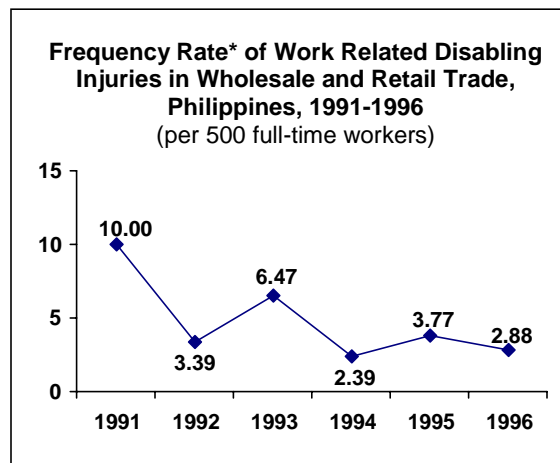
➤ Nature of Disability

Most common disabling injuries were cuts, lacerations, punctures, avulsions with annual shares ranging from 45.7 to 60.6 percent (1,170 to 3,720 cases). Of sizeable proportions also were strains, sprains, dislocations, fractures (14.0%-29.3%) and contusions, bruises, hematoma, abrasions (13.1%-17.8%).

SAFETY PERFORMANCE

➤ Frequency Rate

During the six-year review period, the highest frequency rate of work-connected disabling injuries in wholesale and retail trade was reported at 10.0 (one injury out of every 50 workers) in 1991. Thereafter, lower frequency rates of annual disabilities were observed with 1994 reporting the least at 2.39 (one injury for every 209 employed persons). By 1996, frequency rate stood at 2.88 (one out of every 174 workers sustained a disabling injury).



* Frequency Rate (FR) is the number of disabling injuries per 500 full-time workers each working 2,000 hours per year. It can be translated as follows:

CY 1991: 10.00 injuries per 500 workers
or
1 injury per 50 workers (i.e. 500/10)

➤ Severity Rate

Severity rate of workplace injuries in the wholesale and retail trade establishments averaged to 0.2-0.7 workday lost per worker during the period except in 1994 which recorded the longest duration of 1.4 workday lost per worker. It was in this year when 80 fatalities were noted.



* Severity Rate (SR) is the number of lost workdays due to disabling injuries per 500 full-time workers. It can be translated as follows:

CY 1991: 122 lost workdays per 500 workers
or
0.2 lost workdays per worker (i.e. 122/500)

Overall, this sector seemed to have better working conditions as evidenced by less frequent and severe disabilities. However, as earlier observed, disabling injuries in this sector mainly affected those establishments with 10-99 workers. This calls for further advocacy towards better safety practices for workplaces within this employment group.

FOR INQUIRIES:

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**TABLE 2. ESTABLISHMENTS REPORTING
WORK-RELATED INJURIES IN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE,
PHILIPPINES: 1991-1996**

Indicator	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Total Establishments	8,956	9,278	9,282	9,284	9,261	9,273
Establishments with Work-Related Injuries ¹	2,402	2,020	1,735	1,718	2,705	2,573
Establishments with Disabling Injuries	1,974	1,209	927	486	881	607
Establishments with Non-Disabling Injuries	876	1,130	1,023	1,566	2,317	2,412

¹ Establishments with disabling (with lost workdays) and non-disabling injuries will not add up to total as an establishment may have both kinds of injuries.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, Occupational Injuries Survey.

**TABLE 3. WORK-RELATED INJURIES BY AREA IN WHOLESALE
AND RETAIL TRADE, PHILIPPINES: 1991-1996**

Indicator	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Total Work-Related Injuries	19,480	13,660	16,700	15,630	28,830	29,980
National Capital Region (NCR)	6,670	8,800	10,830	9,010	20,630	20,630
Outside NCR	12,810	4,860	5,870	6,620	8,190	9,350
Disabling Injuries	7,270	4,020	6,010	2,560	3,760	2,810
National Capital Region (NCR)	3,450	1,900	3,270	1,080	2,170	1,050
Outside NCR	3,830	2,120	2,740	1,480	1,590	1,760
Non-Disabling Injuries	12,210	9,640	10,690	13,070	25,070	27,170
National Capital Region (NCR)	3,220	6,900	7,560	7,930	18,460	19,580
Outside NCR	8,980	2,740	3,130	5,140	6,600	7,590

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, Occupational Injuries Survey.

**TABLE 4. SUMMARY STATISTICS ON DISABLING INJURIES
IN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE,
PHILIPPINES: 1991-1996**

Indicator	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
TOTAL DISABLING INJURIES	7,270	4,020	6,010	2,560	3,760	2,810
By Establishment Size						
10-99 workers	6,400	2,920	4,090	1,620	2,990	2,080
100-199 workers	220	350	470	360	430	310
200 or more workers	650	750	1,460	580	340	420
By Extent						
Fatal	a	20	20	80	a	10
Permanent Total Disability	0	0	0	40	50	0
Permanent Partial Disability	130	40	30	80	80	50
Temporary Total Disability	7,140	3,960	5,960	2,360	3,620	2,750
By Nature						
Cuts, lacerations, punctures, avulsions	3,720	2,410	3,160	1,170	2,280	1,410
Contusions, bruises, hematoma, abrasions	950	640	1,070	390	560	370
Strains, sprains, dislocations, fractures	1,350	710	840	750	590	630
Burns and scalds (thermal/chemical)	260	210	390	70	100	60
Crushing, spinal, cranial injuries	10	a	90	20	30	40
Amputations, loss of body parts	a	0	10	a	30	40
Foreign body in the eye and other eye injuries	920	20	260	110	70	260
Electrocution, electric shock	a	0	a	10	20	a
Asphyxiation, poisoning	10	20	20	20	a	10
Other injuries	60	a	170	20	70	0
By Area						
National Capital Region (NCR)	3,450	1,900	3,270	1,080	2,170	1,050
Outside NCR	3,830	2,120	2,740	1,480	1,590	1,760

a Less than five (5) cases.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, Occupational Injuries Survey.