

# Hospital Workers Stats and Facts



## FACTS

Millions of people work in the hospitals in the United States, and different positions carry their own unique risks.

- Repetitive stress injuries and musculoskeletal injuries that are a result of doing the same activity over and over again or that require overexertion and strain. In most cases, the healthcare employees that suffer these types of injuries are orderlies, attendants, and nursing aids who may be responsible for lifting and transferring patients.
- Needle sticks that are a result of routine blood draws or injections, as well as those in which patients are combative. Needle sticks can also occur when needles are improperly disposed of or when they fall.
- Violence is a common occupational hazard for those who work in healthcare settings. Patients, their family members and friends can all become combative or aggressive in times of stress or grief. Additionally, the patient population can include violent criminals who are on criminal hold pending recuperation, patients who have taken illicit drugs that make their behavior unpredictable, and patients with psychiatric disorders who are similarly difficult to manage. Medical facilities are also frequent targets for robberies by those seeking drugs.
- Slip and fall accidents happen everywhere, and medical facilities are no exception. Many of these accidents are a result of floors not being cleaned or dried promptly after a spill, or floors being slippery from heavy applications of cleaning products.
- The injuries that are most frequently seen in healthcare and hospitals include sprains and strains, slipped discs, bloodborne infectious diseases, infections, and broken bones.

## STATS

- In 2019, U.S. hospitals recorded 221,400 work-related injuries and illnesses, a rate of 5.5 work-related injuries and illnesses for every 100 full-time employees. This is almost twice the rate for private industry as a whole.
- One major source of injury to healthcare workers is musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). In 2017, nursing assistants had the second highest number of cases of MSDs. There were 18,090 days away from work cases, which equates to an incidence rate (IR) of 166.3 per 10,000 workers, more than five times the average for all industries. This compares to the all-worker days-away from work rate of 30.5 per 10,000 workers.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that there are 75 lifting-related injuries for every 10,000 full-time hospital workers.

Hospital rates are nearly twice the national average for all industries, and nursing home rates are nearly three times as high.

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- Nurses and caregivers in both hospitals and residential care facilities suffer one of the highest levels of work-related back injuries compared to any other profession, accounting for over 70% of all injuries in the nursing profession.