



WORK DAYS LOST IN THE CHILD CARE SECTOR

Work days lost by the various classifications of injury or illness is a good way of looking at the problem of workplace injury or illness in the child care sector. When you think about it when a compensated injury or illness occurs the associated lost work days adversely affect both the employer and the employee.

By far the classification with the greatest number of work days lost over the three year period is muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down objects. Activities that were being undertaken at the time of injury include handling babies and toddlers, furniture and fittings or playground equipment. There are many factors that can contribute to such injuries but they can generally be prevented and controlled using the correct methods.

Falls on the same level come next and are usually very preventable. Contributing factors to these injuries include tripping over toddlers or furniture, internal ground road, pathway and floor surfaces (often wet or slippery), steps and stairways and holes in the ground.

Work days lost due to work pressure generally comes from a small number of high cost claims. As those who work in the industry know there are a variety of causes and prevention can be complex.

The next two relate again to muscular stress (other than lifting, carrying and putting down and when no objects are being handled). Common activities include using brooms and mops, activities around vehicles and other activities involving toddlers. These injuries can once again be controlled using correct methods.

Being accidentally hit by a person seems to be unpreventable but generally such incidents can be controlled. More detailed information on the activities being undertaken is sketchy.

Exposure to workplace or occupational violence accounted for only two claims during the period but you can see that there were also a significant number of work days lost.

Work days lost by being hit by moving objects also resulted form a small number of claims with the activities involving doors, brooms and mops and other people.

Factors of biological or human origin generally resulted in a small number of days being lost per claim and involved babies, toddlers and other persons.

The mechanisms other and multiple mechanisms of injury and unspecified mechanisms are quite broad and difficult to make generalisations about.

Being assaulted by a person did not result in a significant number of days lost but is an issue about which we need to be mindful. The sources of violence were toddlers, children and other persons.

The table below shows the work days lost for the mechanisms of injury or illness with the most work days lost for the Child Care Industry for the period. While this may be over simplifying the statistics it gives a good picture of the relative significance of the classifications.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF INJURY OR ILLNESS	WORK DAYS LOST
MUSCULAR STRESS WHILE LIFTING, CARRYING, OR PUTTING DOWN OBJECTS	7536
FALLS ON THE SAME LEVEL	4698
WORK PRESSURE	2266
MUSCULAR STRESS WHILE HANDLING OBJECTS OTHER THAN LIFTING, OR PUTTING DOWN	1242
MUSCULAR STRESS WITH NO OBJECTS BEING HANDLED	1771
BEING HIT BY MOVING OBJECTS	606
BEING HIT BY A PERSON ACCIDENTALLY	611
OTHER AND MULTIPLE MECHANISMS OF INJURY	480
EXPOSURE TO WORKPLACE OR OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE	349
UNSPECIFIED MECHANISMS OF INJURY	454
BEING HIT BY MOVING OBJECTS	364
CONTACT WITH, OR EXPOSURE TO, BIOLOGICAL FACTORS OF HUMAN ORIGIN	291
BEING ASSAULTED BY A PERSON OR PERSONS	158

Source Queensland Employee Injury/Disease Data 2003/04 to 2005/06

It is hoped that the information provided awakens interest in the variety of causes of injuries and illnesses in the child care industry and prompts development of effective prevention strategies.

A proactive approach to controlling compensation costs could include:

- Adopting a risk management approach for WHS hazards
- Providing training for staff in risk reduction methods
- Developing appropriate policies and procedures to control potential risks

For further information on options for controlling risks please do not hesitate contacting **Ian McNaughton, Workplace Health and Safety Advisor, at ACSEA on 07 3852 5177.**