

Clinical Testing Laboratories Track Rise in Work Accidents among Cannabis Users

Read more about the latest workplace safety data and recommend steps employers can take to create a safer, more productive place to work.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New 2021 Bureau Of Labor Statistics (BLS) Data Signals A Likely Return To Pre-Pandemic Accident Rates Among America Workers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently published its latest [workplace](#) accident and fatality reports for 2021, the second year of the pandemic.

What do the statistics tell us?

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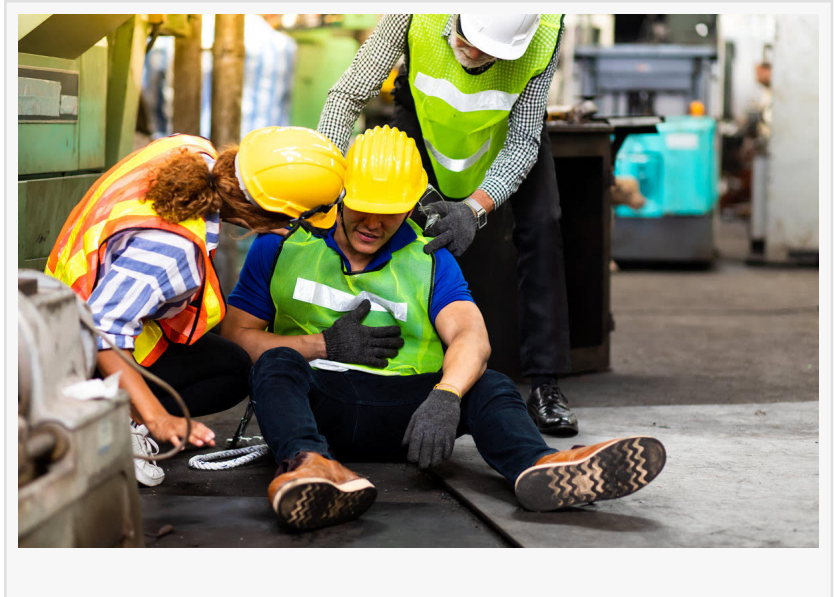
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At a high level, it confirms that 2020, the first year of the pandemic, was a statistical outlier.

Compared to 2022 and the years before the pandemic, total injuries and illnesses were down significantly in 2020 in every category, save the healthcare and social assistance sectors, which had dramatically higher rates, presumably due to dramatic increases in respiratory disease caused by Covid.

Now that we have new BLS data from 2021, the second year of the pandemic, we can see that overall injury and illness rates are broadly reverting to their pre-pandemic 2019 norm.

The largest exception to this trend for 2021 was found in transportation and warehousing, both



of which are experiencing a greater rate of incidents compared to both 2020 and 2019. Perhaps this increase is due to the rapid growth of e-commerce and home delivery services during the pandemic – or workers are less experienced and/or less safety conscious than in prior years.

Overall, the Transportation and Warehousing sector is essentially tied with Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting for the highest rate of injury cases among American workers, as shown in the following BLS chart:

The third most dangerous sector for workplace injuries in 2021 is somewhat unexpected: Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. This is followed by Healthcare and Social Assistance in 4th place and Retail Trade in 5th place. Perhaps these high rates of injuries reflect employees interfacing with the public during a period of significant Covid infections.

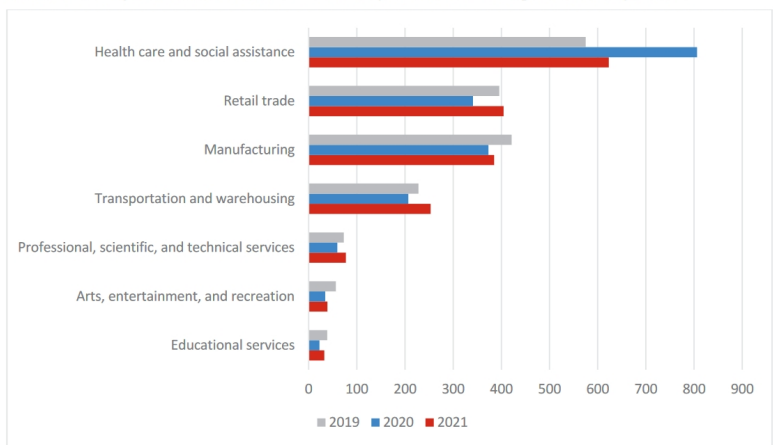
Manufacturing fell to 6th place in the number of nonfatal injuries, followed by the Construction industry in 7th place.

When it comes to fatal work injuries, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector was the most dangerous in 2021, with over 19 fatalities per 100,000 equivalent full-time workers.

This was followed by Transportation and Warehousing, then Construction. Interestingly, the Manufacturing Industry was in 6th place, with fewer workplace fatalities in 2021 than in the Wholesale Trade and the “Other Services” sector.

Dramatic Rise In Positive Cannabis Tests Among Workers Involved In Workplace Accidents

Chart 3. Total injuries and illnesses in selected industry sectors, thousands, private industry, 2019-21



BLS Chart 3. Total Injuries and Illnesses in Selected Industry Sectors, in Thousands, Private Industry 2019-21 – chart courtesy of BLS



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Unfortunately, it takes time for the BLS to compile its workplace safety statistics.

Based on past practices, we won't expect BLS to release their 2022 workplace safety data until the end of 2023.

But, in the meantime, we are seeing some worrying new data from one of the leading clinical testing laboratories, Quest Diagnostics.

(Disclaimer: Quest Diagnostics is a Formaspace customer).

Quest Diagnostics recently published new data from their workplace drug testing services which appear to indicate there is a correlation between rising cannabis use by American workers and accidents on the job site.

Quest Diagnostics reports that positive cannabis test rates among American workers have climbed over the past decade to a new high of 4.8% in 2022 (this is significantly higher compared to the recent low 3.5% rates of 2010, 2011, and 2012).

More concerning are the employee drug test results taken after a workplace accident.

Here, Quest Diagnostics reports that positive cannabis results (as measured by urine drug tests after an accident) climbed to 7.3% of workers involved in an accident.

Quest Diagnostics also notes that this post-accident cannabis positivity rate has increased by over 200% between the years 2012 and 2022.

Which industry sectors have the highest cannabis positivity rates?

According to Quest Diagnostics, these are the worst affected sectors, based on urine drug tests:

1. Retail Trade at 7.7% (up 42.6% in 5 years)
2. Accommodation and Food Services at 7.0% (up 42.6% in 5 years)
3. Other Services at 6.2% (up 19.2% in 5 years)
4. Wholesale Trade at 5.5% (up 27.9% in 5 years)
5. Administrative Support, Waste, and Remediation Services at 5.5% (up 19.6% in 5 years)

In addition to positive Cannabis drug tests, Quest Diagnostics reports an increase in the use of other types of illicit drugs among American workers.

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