

# TIRESpin



Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis Study

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**1 out of every 13 truck drivers will suffer a serious work-related injury.**

## Coming Soon: The Trucking Industry Report

Washington's trucking industry employs approximately 32,000 workers. These workers are vital to our community and they work in a risky profession. The *Trucking Industry Report* contains information on injuries, injury rates, costs and common causes. This information can be used to help prevent injuries in the trucking industry.

On average, one out of every five workers in the trucking industry will have an accepted medical-only workers' compensation claim each year. Medical-only claims cost about \$700 each. One out of every thirteen trucking industry employees will have an accepted compensable workers' compensation claim each year.<sup>1</sup> These claims cost about \$30,000 each.

The most frequent injury types are:

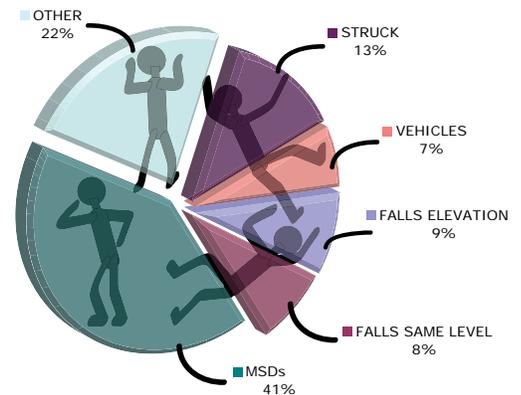
- Musculoskeletal disorders of the neck, back, and upper extremity
- Falls from elevation
- Falls on the same level
- Struck by or against injuries
- Vehicle-related injuries

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries to muscles, tendons and joints.

A 'musculoskeletal disorder' claim occurs when a worker's injury is the result of a

1. Compensable workers' compensation claims may result in lost work time, total disability, death or restricted work duty while being kept on salary.

### Trucking industry injuries by type.



non-impact overexertion or bodily reaction. Stated another way, a musculoskeletal disorder can be caused or aggravated by work activities such as repetitive or forceful motions, awkward postures, use of vibrating tools or equipment, or by manual handling of heavy or awkward loads.

Examples of claim text for MSDs:

*"While unloading a pallet from the back of the truck, hurt back."*

*"Shoulder pain lifting heavy boxes."*

*"Hurt back while picking up cans on route."*

*"Excessive use of shoulder pulling fifth wheel."*

*"Picked up a 27" TV and turned at the same time and heard a pop come from my back."*

Visit [www.KeepTruckingSafe.org](http://www.KeepTruckingSafe.org) for tips on preventing these and other injuries or to access the complete report.

## Be heard: comment on the next decade's safety research for trucking

The federal occupational safety research agenda for the next 10 years is being decided right now. The National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) is the primary federal program in charge of providing direction and funding for research to reduce injuries and illnesses on the job. Guidance documents are being prepared for the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA).

NORA's goals:

- Direct where research money is spent to most effectively identify causes and solutions to workplace hazards.
- Provide a framework for organizations, companies and funding agencies to direct health and safety research.
- Implement a quick move from research solutions into use by the industry.

The research agenda has eight industry sectors. Trucking is within the Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities (TWU) sector. Each sector has a separate council of industry, government, university and labor representatives to provide input and review.

Each NORA sector will publish a draft guidance document that anyone can comment on. The TWU sector document will be available for comments in March. These documents will be presented July 29, 2008 at a symposium in Denver. If you are interested in reviewing the work and commenting on the TWU sector draft document, go to the NORA web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/councils/twu>.

Have you  
heard from  
a TIRES  
researcher?

## Getting to the root causes of injuries

Common injuries like sprains, pains and falls often have identifiable root causes. TIRES is working on an in-depth investigation into serious injuries in trucking to get at these root causes. The goal is to figure out the chain of events that led to each injury and find systematic ways that companies can address risks before injuries happen.

TIRES research staff review workers' compensation claim data to find serious injuries to drivers in the trucking industry. Then, our safety engineer visits these companies to learn more about conditions and processes. TIRES is not involved in rule enforcement, so these visits are purely informational for both TIRES and the employer.

The TIRES team has also been conducting interviews with trucking industry workers while they are on time-loss compensation. The workers are asked questions that go beyond what is reported in workers' compensation data. The purpose is to find out what conditions may have caused or contributed to the injury so that we can identify prevention strategies for the industry to use.

A summary report should be available by the end of this year. Helpful strategies are incorporated into the TIRES safety and health materials that are mailed to employers and are accessible at [www.KeepTruckingSafe.org](http://www.KeepTruckingSafe.org).

## Company

Corner

# What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure refers to the force of blood pushing against artery walls as it courses through the body. Like air in a tire, blood fills arteries to a certain capacity. Just as too much air pressure can damage a tire, too much blood pressure can threaten healthy arteries and lead to life-threatening conditions such as heart disease and stroke.

High blood pressure is the most common of all cardiovascular diseases in the industrialized world. It is the leading cause of stroke and a major cause of heart attack. In the U.S. alone, approximately 80 million people have high blood pressure.

A blood pressure reading appears as two numbers. The first and higher of the two is a measure of systolic pressure or the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats and fills them with blood. The second number measures diastolic pressure or the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats. Normal blood pressure rises steadily from about 90/60 at birth to about 120/80 in a healthy adult.

In most reported high blood pressure cases in the U.S., the underlying cause cannot be determined.

This type of high blood pressure is called essential hypertension. Other factors that have been associated with essential hypertension include obesity; diabetes; stress; insufficient intake of potassium, calcium and magnesium; lack of physical activity; and chronic alcohol consumption.

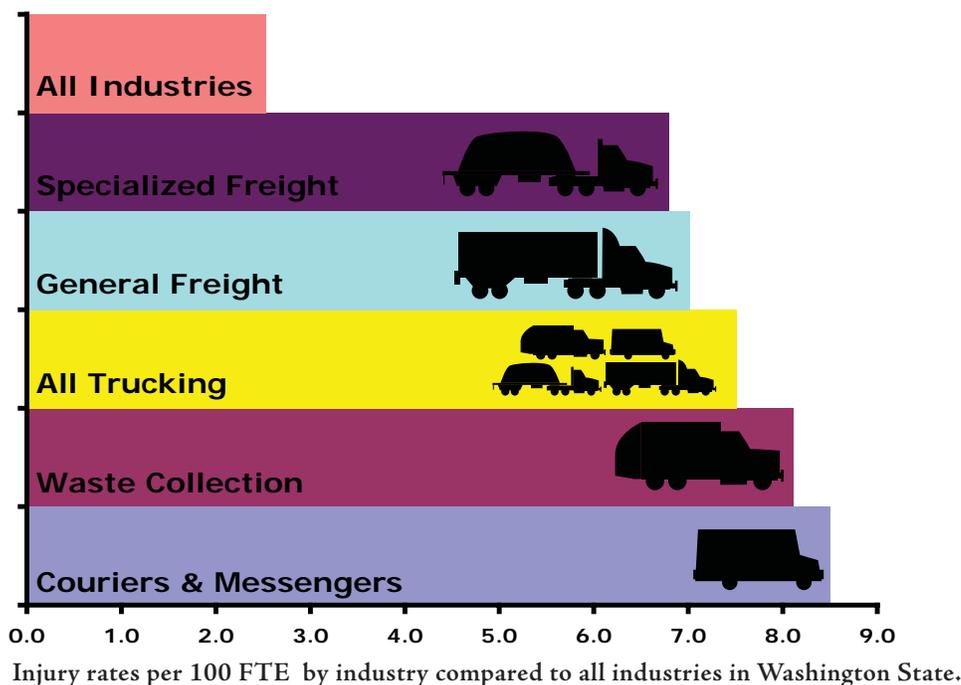
The Department of Transportation has revised the accepted BP level to qualify for CDL licenses from 160/90 mmHg to 140/90 mmHg or lower.

You can help keep your blood pressure at a healthy level and reduce your risk of heart disease by making a few changes in your lifestyle. Watch what you eat. Stay away from salt and fat. Consume foods that are high in fiber, calcium, and magnesium.

Get plenty of exercise. Regular exercise will condition the heart and keep blood vessels dilated and working properly. If you are overweight, try to slim down. Even a small weight reduction can make a huge difference. If you smoke or drink alcohol excessively, now is the time to stop. Make a change, make a difference!

Guest author: Marty Ertler, CDS, West Division Fleet Safety Manager, Frito-Lay, Inc.

## Trucking compared to other industries



The two industry groups with the highest compensable claims<sup>1</sup> rates are:

- Waste Collection
- Couriers and Messengers

Each has a compensable claim rate of one in twelve full-time trucking industry employees compared to one in forty for all industries in Washington State.

Trucking industry rates have been decreasing from 1997 to 2004 but are far above those compared to all industries in Washington State.

1. Compensable workers' compensation claims may result in lost work time, total disability, death or restricted work duty while being kept on salary.

## Grant money available for safety and health innovations

Eight million dollars in safety and health grants are available to stimulate development of creative, new advancements in workplace safety and health in Washington. Eligible grant projects will aim to prevent injuries and illnesses, save lives, and educate workers and employers about workplace hazards and safe workplace activities.

### Who can apply?

- Trade and business associations
- Labor organizations
- State fund insured companies
- Employee organizations
- Joint labor / management groups
- Groups of employees

### Where can I get more information?

Safety and Health Investment Projects (SHIP) grant program

SHIP Program Manager: Ken Mettler

Web site: <http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/Grants>

E mail: [invest@LNI.wa.gov](mailto:invest@LNI.wa.gov)

Phone: 360-902-6307



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