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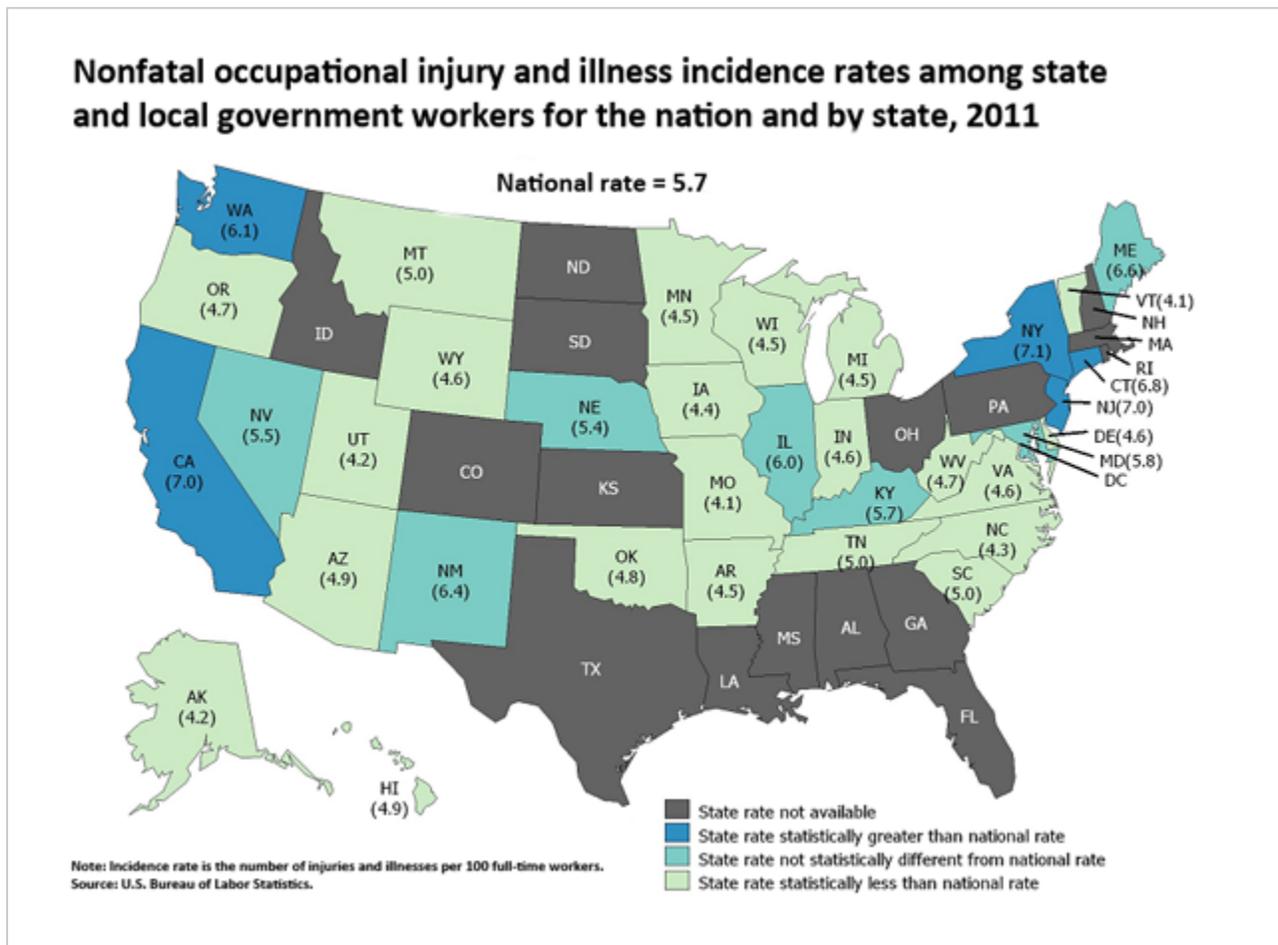
Nonfatal Injuries And Illnesses Among State And Local Government Workers

Shannon M. Maloney

The scope of the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses was expanded with the 2008 survey to cover a more complete section of the U.S. economy: state and local government workers. Prior to the publication of the 2008 survey results, data users commonly requested information about industries in the public sector. Estimates covering nearly 18.5 million state and local government workers show that these public sector employees experienced a higher incidence rate of work-related injuries and illnesses than their private industry counterparts. This *Spotlight on Statistics* compares characteristics of injury and illness cases in state and local government with those in private industry, highlighting incidence rate trends in selected state and local government industries and examining injury and illness rates and cases that occurred in state and local government workplaces in 2011.

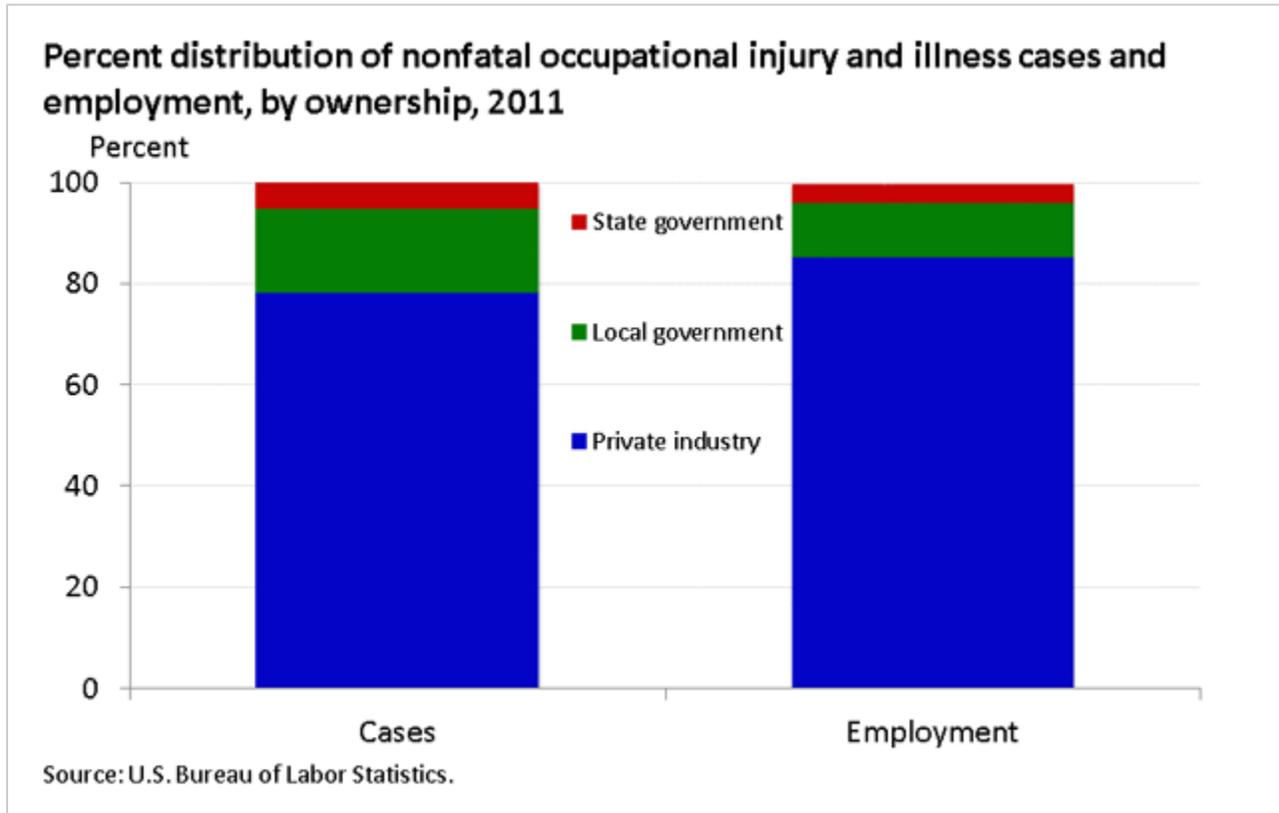
Nonfatal injury and illness rate greater than national average in five states

Among the 34 states for which data are available, the total recordable case injury and illness rates for state and local government were higher in 5 states than the national rate of 5.7 cases per 100 full-time workers. The rates were lower than the national rate in 22 states and not statistically different from the national rate in 7 states. State-level public sector estimates were unavailable for 16 states and the District of Columbia for various reasons, such as lack of state funding or failure to meet BLS reliability criteria. Among the states for which 2011 estimates are available, New York recorded an injury and illness incidence rate among state and local government workers of 7.1 cases per 100 full-time employees, which is statistically higher than the national rate. By contrast, Missouri and Vermont each registered a rate of 4.1 cases, which was statistically lower than the national rate. Some of these differences in incidence rates across states can be attributed to different industry composition among state and local government workers within each of the states.



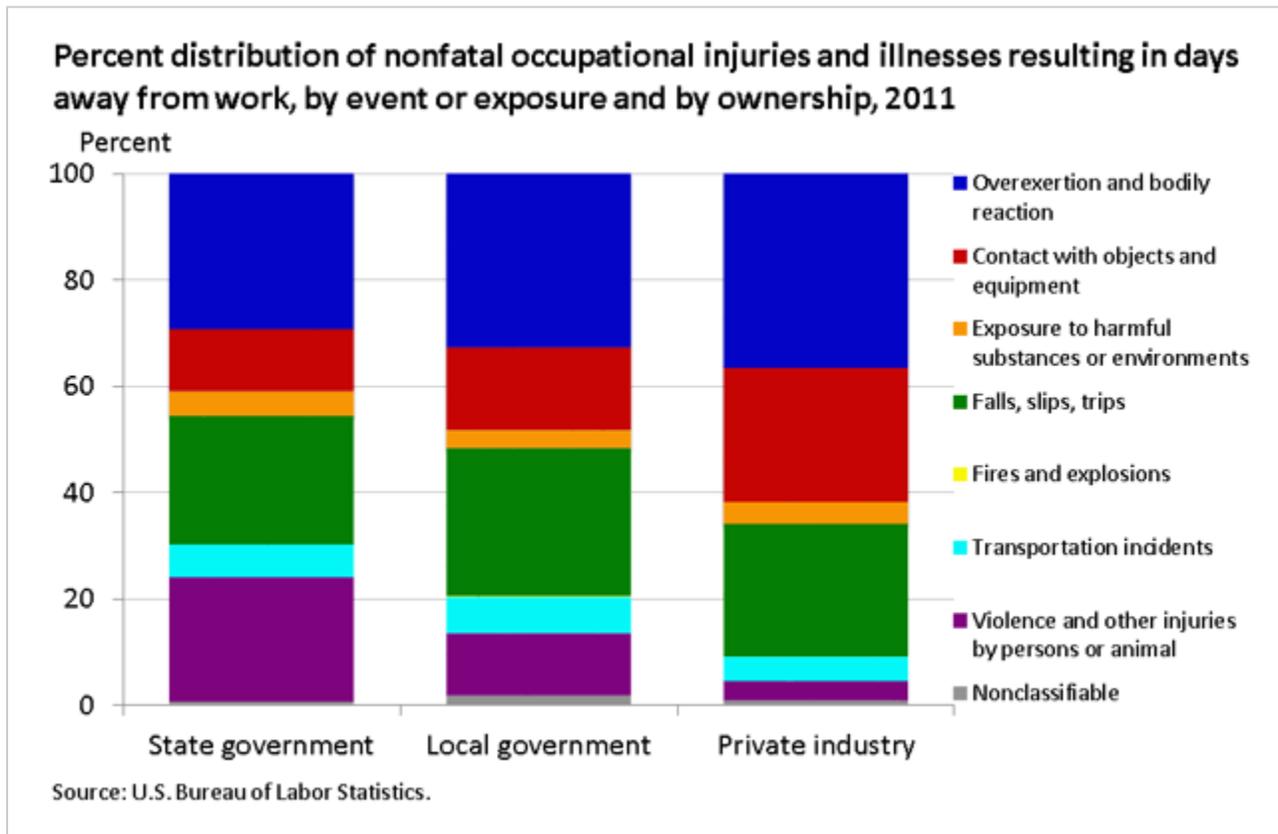
State and local government workers accounted for about 22 percent of nonfatal injuries and illnesses

Although state and local government workers made up 14.6 percent of the employees covered by the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in 2011, they accounted for 21.6 percent of the injury and illness cases that year. The difference was primarily driven by local government workers, who made up 10.8 percent of the employees covered by the survey but 16.8 percent of the injury and illness cases that occurred in 2011.



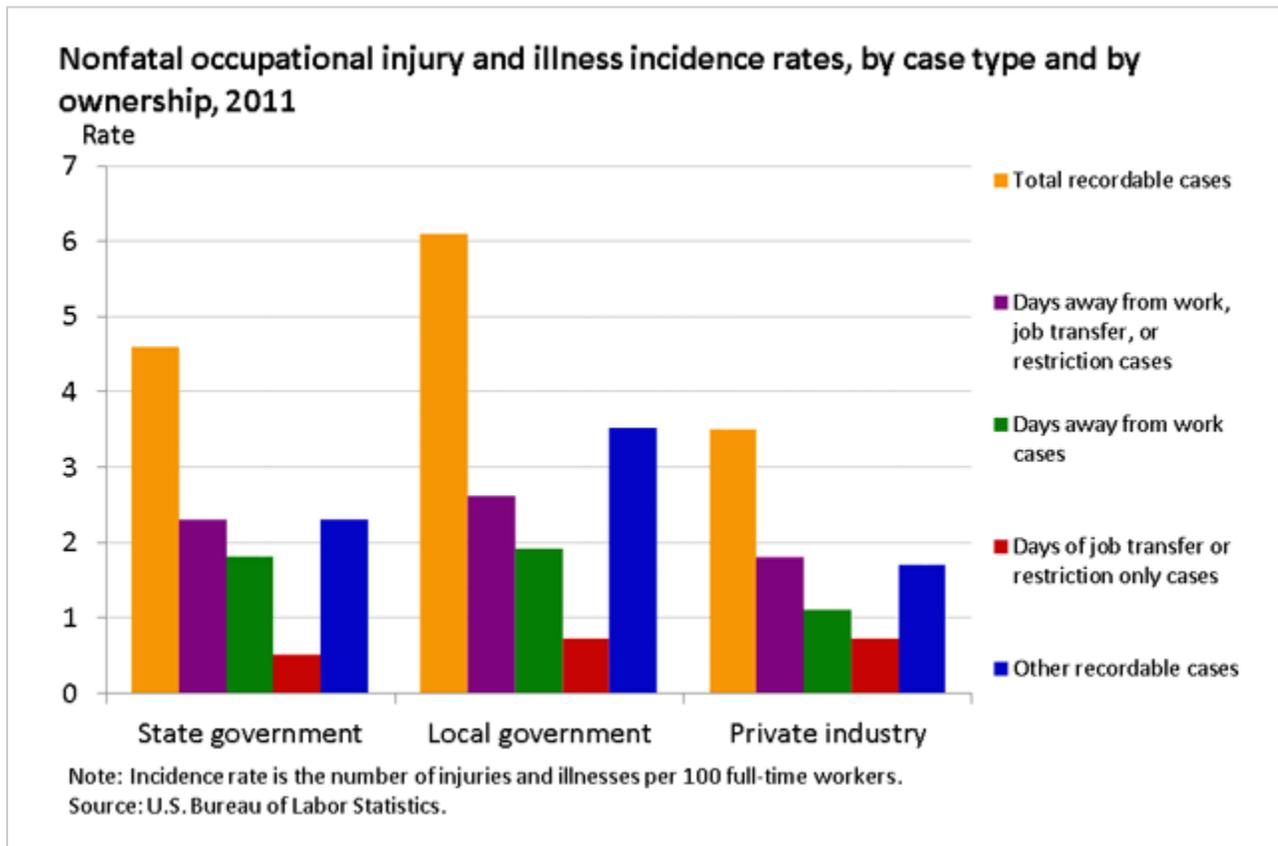
Violence made up 23.4 percent of injuries and illnesses with days away from work in state government

The 2011 estimates show that injuries and illnesses resulting in days away from work from overexertion and bodily reaction accounted for 32.9 percent (64,740) of all cases among local government workers, 29.3 percent (21,150) among state government workers, and 36.7 percent (329,910) among private industry workers. Violence and other injuries by persons or animals accounted for 11.8 percent (21,130) of all cases among local government workers, 23.4 percent (16,880) among state government workers, and 3.7 percent (33,230) in private industry. In state government, the 23.4 percent of cases that resulted from violence could possibly result from a higher concentration of state government workers in occupations that experienced high rates of violence, such as psychiatric aides.



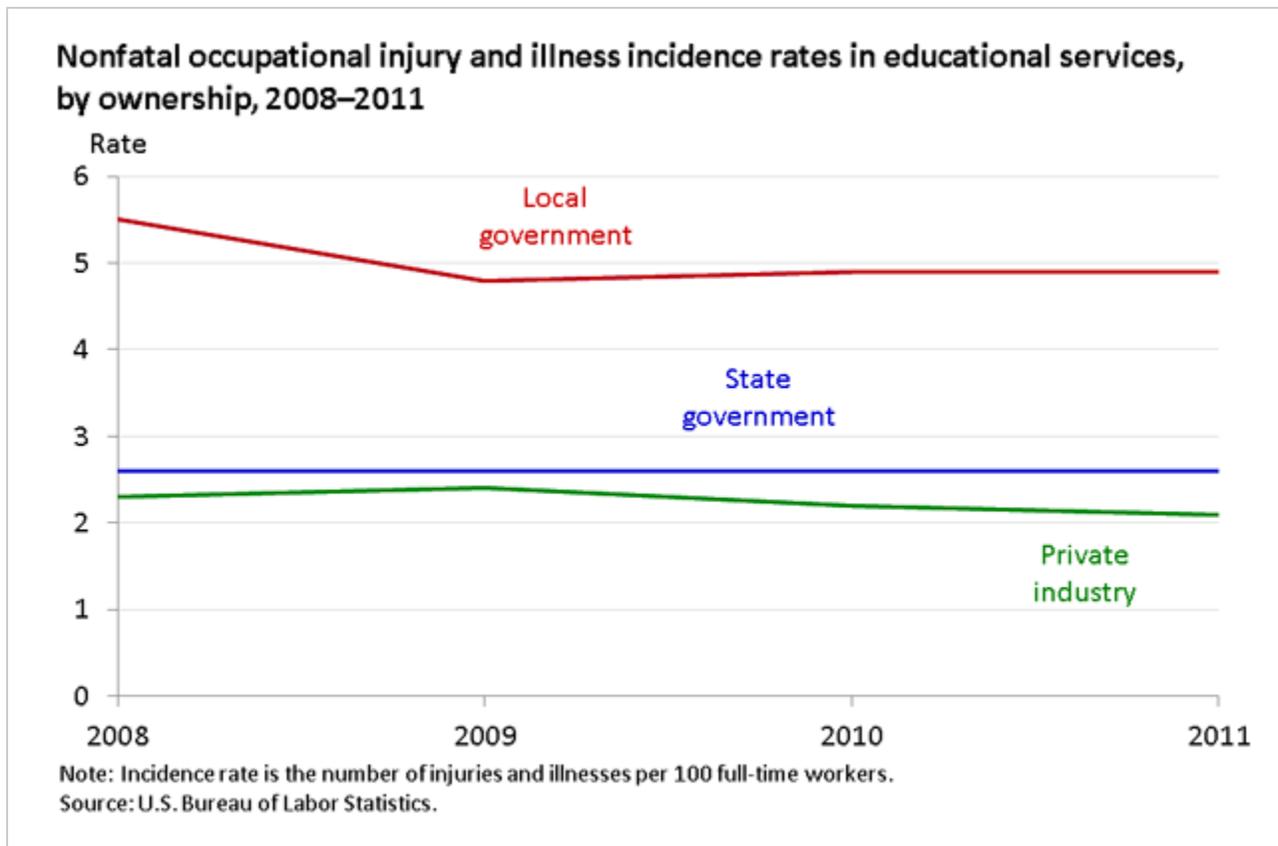
Nonfatal injury and illness rate continued to be highest among local government workers in 2011

Continuing a trend since 2008, the total rate of injuries and illnesses in 2011 remained highest in local government workplaces, at 6.1 cases per 100 full-time workers, compared with 4.6 cases per 100 workers in state government and 3.5 cases in private industry. For cases resulting in days away from work, the rates for both state government (1.8 cases per 100 full-time workers) and local government (1.9 cases per 100 full-time workers) were higher than the rate in private industry (1.1 cases).



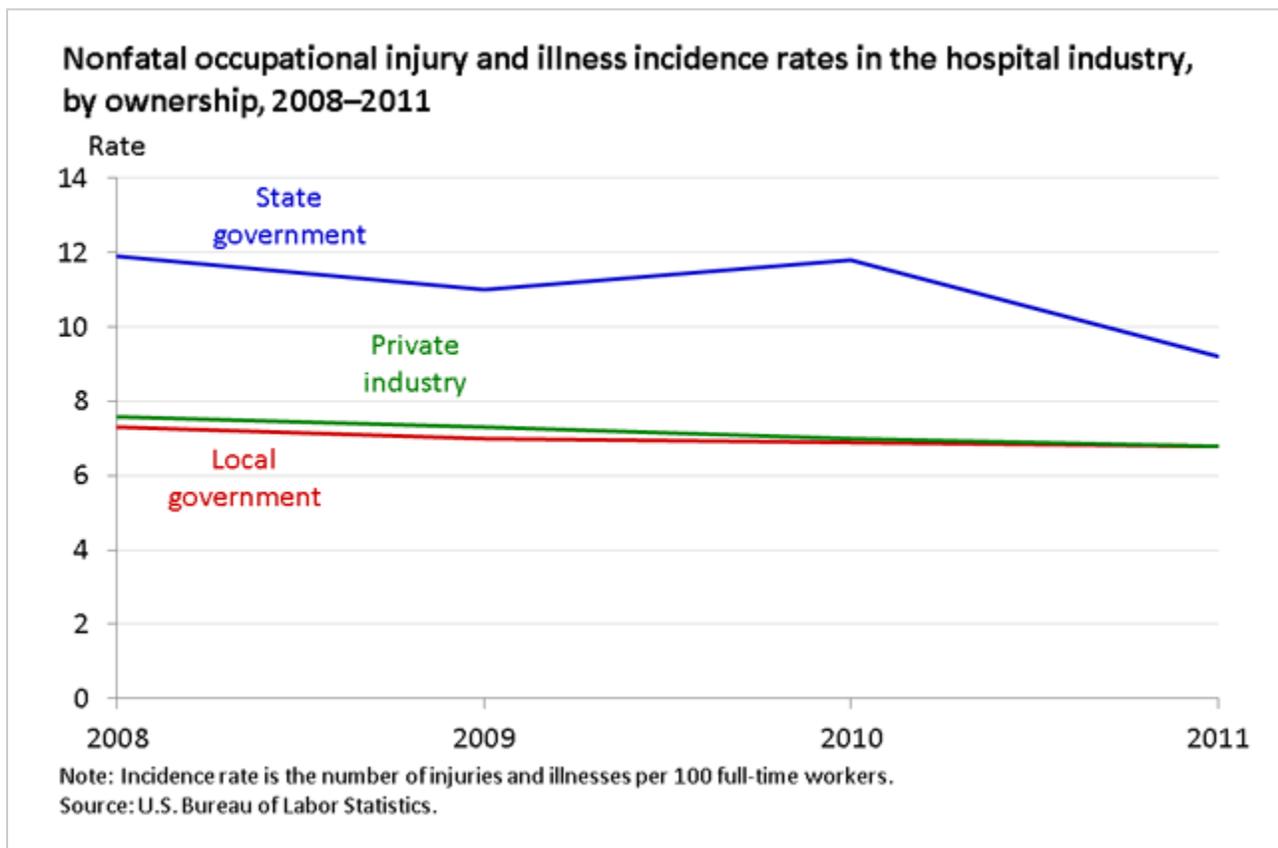
Nonfatal injury and illness rate in educational services declined in local government, 2008–2011

Since 2008, the incidence rate of injuries and illnesses in the educational services industry dropped in local government and remained steady in state government and in private industry. In 2011, local government establishments reported an injury and illness incidence rate of 4.9 cases per 100 full-time workers; this was more than twice the rate reported in private industry (2.1 cases). One factor contributing to the higher incidence rate in local government could be the distribution of employees among different types of educational establishments. For example, a higher distribution of state government workers in the educational services industry were employed at colleges and universities, compared with local government workers in this industry, who were more commonly employed in elementary and secondary schools. Private industry is more diverse, with a mix of workers in all education areas.



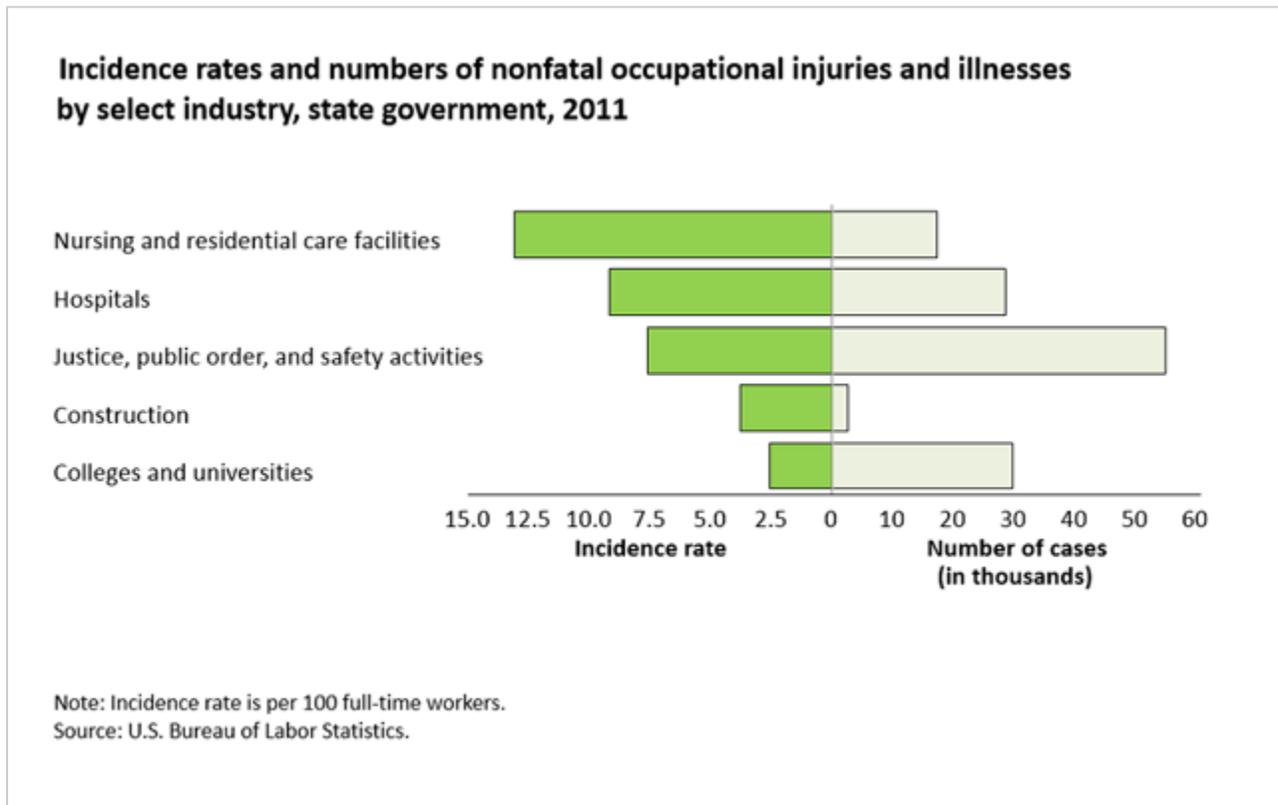
Nonfatal injury and illness rate among hospital workers highest in state government in 2011

The incidence rate of injuries and illnesses for state government hospitals varied from 2008 to 2011, while the incidence rates for hospitals in local government and in private industry decreased over the same period. The incidence rate for hospitals was highest in state government, with a rate of 9.2 cases per 100 full-time workers in 2011. One contributing factor to the higher rates in state government could be the types of hospitals where employees work. For example, private industry and local government had a larger proportion of workers employed in general medical and surgical hospitals in 2011, while state government had a larger proportion employed in psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals (37.8 percent compared with less than 1 percent in local government and 2.2 percent in private industry).



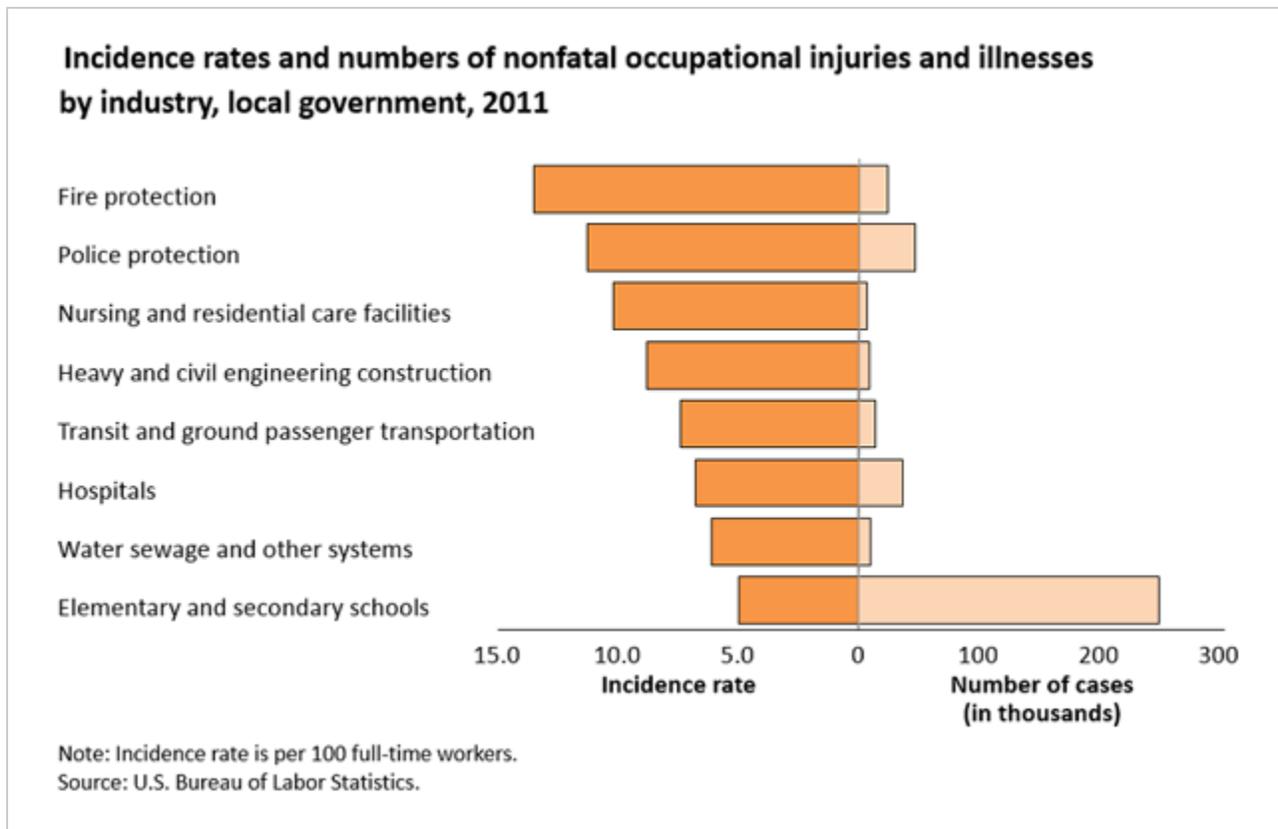
Nonfatal injury and illness rates varied among state and local government and private sector workers

Injury and illness estimates covering approximately 4.8 million state government workers were available in 2011 for selected industries within state government. For example, 55,000 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses were reported among justice, public order, and safety activities workers in state government in 2011. The distribution of workers by industry varies substantially for workers in state government, local government, and private industry. For example, 73.8 percent of state government nursing and residential care facilities workers were employed in residential mental health and substance abuse facilities in 2011, compared with 14.1 percent in local government and 18.0 percent in private industry.



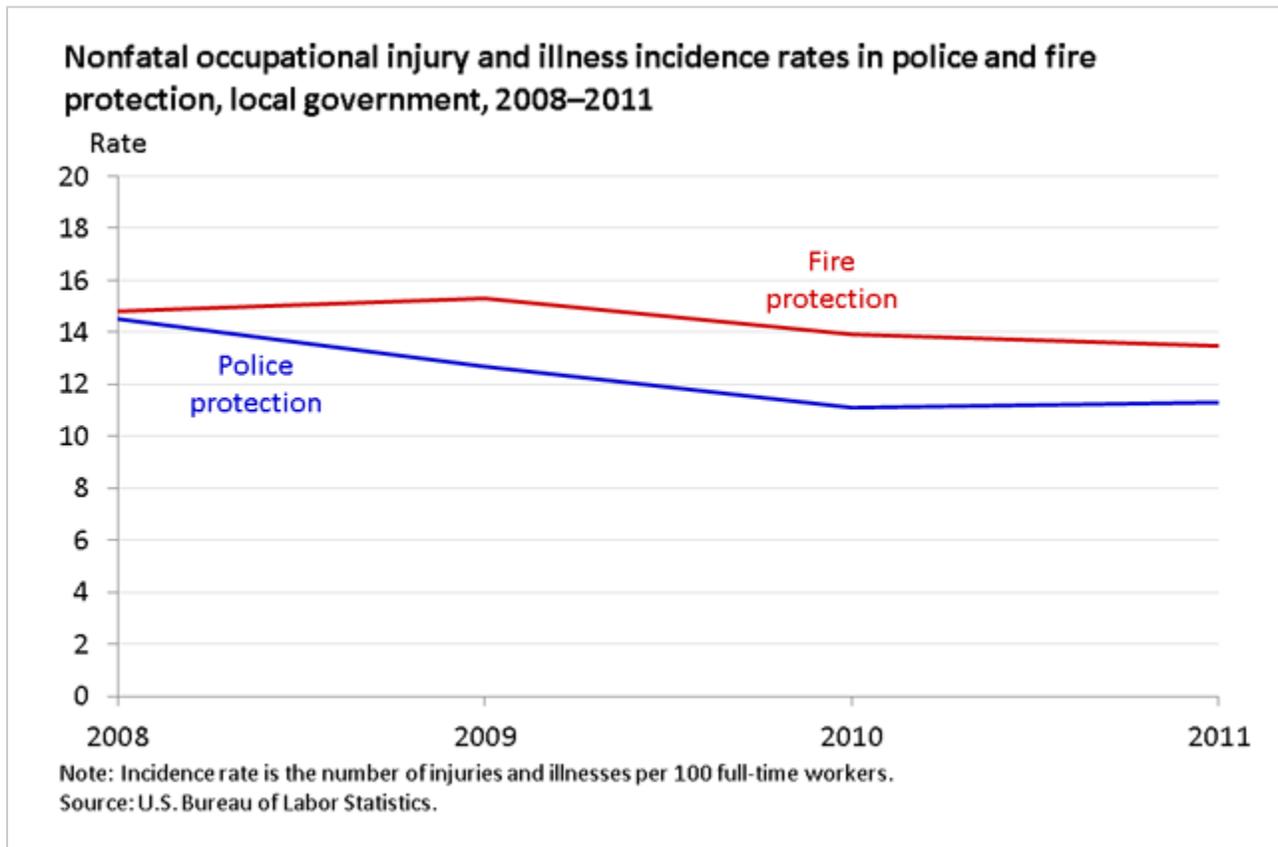
Police had a higher incidence rate than elementary and secondary school workers in local government

Nearly 4 in 10 nonfatal injury and illness cases (249,300 total cases) reported among the 13.6 million local government workers nationally occurred among elementary and secondary school workers in 2011, resulting in an incidence rate of 5.0 cases per 100 full-time workers in this industry. Although a much smaller number of cases were reported in fire protection (23,800 cases) and in police protection (47,000 cases), the *rate* of injuries and illnesses was much higher for these workers—13.5 cases per 100 full-time workers in fire protection and 11.3 cases in police protection. Many of the same broad-level industries are represented in state government and local government. However, it is important to note that comparisons of estimates in the same industries across state government, local government, and private industry should be done cautiously, because industry makeup may contribute significantly to differences in estimates across these different worker populations.



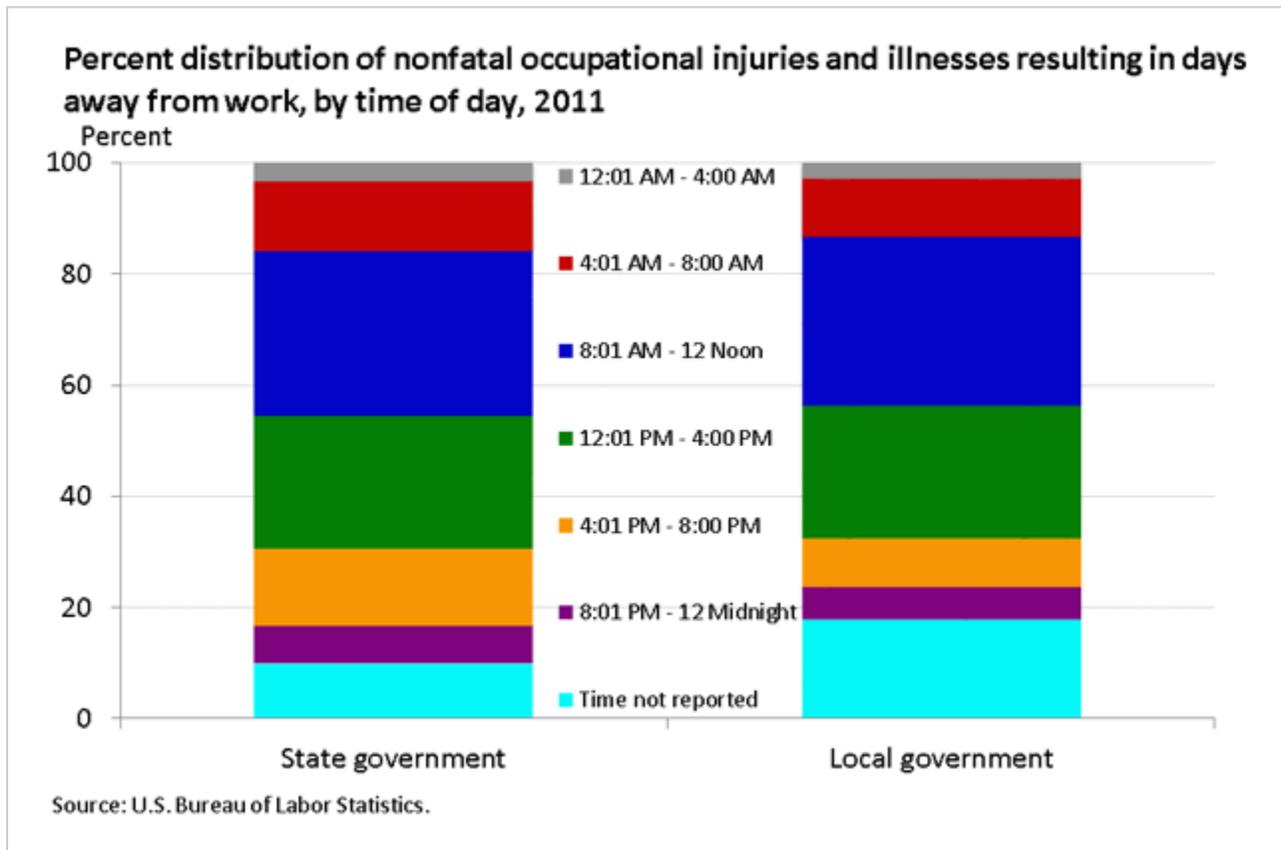
Police and firefighters experienced relatively high rates of nonfatal injuries and illnesses

When the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses was expanded to include state and local government in 2008, the incidence rates for police and fire protection were 14.5 and 14.8 cases per 100 full-time workers, respectively. In 2011, the incidence rate for police protection was 11.3 cases per 100 full-time workers and the rate for fire protection was 13.5 cases. Fire protection workers in local government were over 4 times more likely than all local government workers to suffer a workplace injury or illness that resulted in days away from work. Not surprisingly, local government employees in fire protection were twice as likely as all local government workers to experience respiratory illnesses.



Thirty percent of cases resulting in days away from work occurred between 8:01 a.m. and noon

In state and local government, 30 percent of the injury and illness cases that resulted in days away from work occurred between the hours of 8:01 a.m. and 12 noon. Protective services occupations had the highest number of cases in state and local government that occurred during these hours. Within protective services occupations, firefighters accounted for 27.9 percent of all cases involving days away from work in local government that occurred during these morning hours, and police officers accounted for 40.3 percent.



More

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The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) uses employer-reported data to estimate annual numbers and incidence rates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses in U.S. workplaces based on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) record-keeping criteria. Data for public sector establishments in states that do not participate in the survey are collected by BLS regional offices for use in tabulating national estimates. State-level estimates are not available separately for nonparticipating states, which in 2011 included Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, and South Dakota. State participation in the SOII may vary by year. For more information, visit the BLS Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities program website at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/>. Public sector establishments fall outside the scope of coverage mandated in the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. States operating their own safety and health programs pursuant to Section 18 of the OSH Act—which encourages states to develop and operate their own job safety and health programs—do require coverage of establishments in the public sector (state and local government).

Comparisons of estimates in which a difference is indicated (e.g., higher or lower, an increase or decrease) signifies a statistically significant change.

For additional reading on occupational injuries and illnesses involving state and local government workers, see the following articles from the *Monthly Labor Review*:

- [Stop, drop, and roll: workplace hazards of local government firefighters, 2009](#)
- [On guard against workplace hazards](#)
- [Nonfatal injuries and illnesses in State and local government workplaces in 2008](#)

Archived BLS news releases for nonfatal (OSHA recordable) injuries and illnesses

Industry incidence rates and counts:

2012 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

2011 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

Case and demographic characteristics:

2012 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

2011 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))