

# Occupational Health, 2012

Workplace environments and activities have an enormous impact on health. Work-related illnesses and injuries include any illness or injury incurred by an employee engaged in work-related activities while on or off the worksite.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, millions of workers are injured or fall ill every year due to hazards in their workplaces.<sup>2</sup> While research, interventions in the form of policies and changes in the work environment have made significant improvements in the safety of workplaces, shifting employment and work patterns present new challenges.<sup>1</sup>

From 2005 to 2010, a total of 115 Maine workers died as a result of workplace hazards. Maine's high proportion of workers in Farm, Forest and Fishing Industries puts a greater number of Maine workers at risk for fatal injuries on the job.<sup>2</sup>

Occupational health measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:<sup>3</sup>

- Deaths from work-related injuries
- Non-fatal work-related injuries

Additional measures related to occupational health can be found in several sections of the State Health Assessment, including Unintentional Injury, Respiratory Health and Environmental Health.

Significantly more men die due to work-related injuries than women. Occupations with the most number of work-related fatalities include Transportation & Material Moving, Farming, Forestry, and Fishing, and Managerial & Professional Specialties, while the service industry



has the highest number of work-related non-fatal injuries. It should be noted that these numbers are not rates, and may not take into account differences in the number of workers in these industries, nor do they reflect the cause of the injury.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Maine's worker fatalities are the result of transportation incidents across industries. The most common injury-causing events, in order, were overexertion in lifting and falling on floors or other surfaces.<sup>2</sup>

Healthy Maine 2020 also has objectives related to occupational health, including:<sup>1</sup>

- Reduce the rate of injury and illness cases involving days away from work due to overexertion
- Reduce the rate of injury and illness cases involving days away from work due to repetitive motion
- Reduce deaths from work-related injuries
- Reduce nonfatal work-related injuries

<sup>1</sup> Healthy People 2020, Occupational Safety and Health <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=30> (accessed 8/26/2013).

<sup>2</sup> Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Maine 2020. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/index.shtml> (accessed 8/26/2013).

<sup>3</sup> Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State Health Assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 3/19/2013).