Waste and Recycling Industry Sickness Absence Survey

Estimates suggest that sickness absence costs the UK economy around £15 billion annually and results in over 150 million lost working days. Research published in 2009 indicates particularly high rates of sickness absence across the waste and recycling industry. HSE has commissioned the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) to carry out a more extensive nationwide survey of sickness absence across the industry in 2010-12. The Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) forum are supporting this survey. The results of the survey will help identify work activities where rates of sickness absence are particularly high. HSE and the industry will be able to use the results to better target future initiatives to reduce the risk of work related sickness absence, associated suffering and business costs.

How you can help?
HSL are inviting all organisations (public, private and community) active within the waste and recycling industry to participate in the survey. Contributors are asked to collate their employee sickness absence data recorded over the course of a year and submit it to the study team. Survey protocols will make data submission as simple as possible. If you would like to participate in the survey or have any further questions please contact Steven Naylor at HSL (steven.naylor@hsl.gov.uk).

What are the benefits?
Contributors will be provided with a summary report describing sickness absence trends across their organisation for the reporting period. The detail contained in the sickness absence report can be tailored to suit the individual needs of the contributing organisation. Some indicative outputs that can be provided to contributors are detailed below. In addition to obtaining a detailed picture of sickness absence trends within your own organisation, it will be possible for contributors to benchmark their performance against the performance of similar organisations operating within the industry and the industry generally.
Results for Reporting Period April 2010 to March 2011

Comparison of Total Number of Days Absence Taken Annually Across Work Activities

- Office / admin (379): 215/379 (58.4%) [95% CI= 53.3-63.5]
- Cleaning (412): 61/412 (14.8%) [95% CI= 11.9-17.6]
- Material recycling facility (367): 21/367 (5.8%) [95% CI= 3.9-7.8]
- Civic amenity site (219): 15/219 (6.9%) [95% CI= 4.8-9.0]
- Skip / roll-on/off (244): 12/244 (4.9%) [95% CI= 3.0-6.8]
- Refuse collection vehicle (1251): 29/1251 (2.3%) [95% CI= 1.6-3.0]
- 0 days: 480/1277 (37.6%) [95% CI= 33.3-41.9]
- 1 to 3 days: 422/1277 (33.2%) [95% CI= 30.6-35.8]
- 4 to 6 days: 367/1277 (28.6%) [95% CI= 26.1-31.2]
- 7 to 10 days: 42/1277 (3.3%) [95% CI= 2.4-4.2]
- 11 to 16 days: 23/1277 (1.8%) [95% CI= 1.1-2.5]
- 17 to 25 days: 12/1277 (0.9%) [95% CI= 0.6-1.3]
- >25 days: 9/1277 (0.7%) [95% CI= 0.4-1.0]

Figures in brackets represent number of workers within work activity in the study base.

Average Number of Days Absence per Employee per Year for Different Work Types by Sector

- LGE - LA workers
- CBI - All workers
- CBI - Manual workers
- CIPD - All workers
- CIPD - Manual workers
- HSL - Waste sector workers

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Comparison of Contribution of Long Term Absence to Total Spells and Days of Absence Across Work Activities

Profile of Average Number of Days Absence per Employee per Year for Specific Categories of Ill Health Across Work Activities

*Figures from Confederation of British Industry 2010 Absence and Workplace Health Survey

Figures in brackets represent number of workers within work activity in the study base

Absence spells (Number long term/Total number) Absence days (Number for long term absences/Total number)

Profile of Average Number of Days Absence per Employee per Year for Specific Categories of Ill Health Across Work Activities

*Other category includes ear/no ear/throat, genito-urinary, other internal, pregnancy, heart/circulation