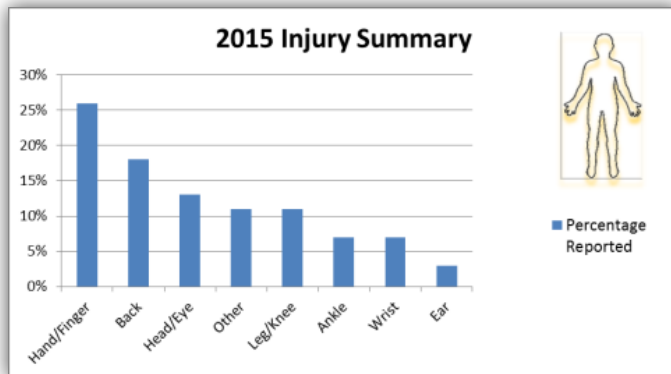


NEWEA Safety Committee
Wastewater Facility Safety Survey Results for 2015 Work Year

Early in 2016, the NEWEA Safety Committee emailed its annual Wastewater Facility Safety Survey for the 2015 work year to facilities throughout the six New England states. The purpose of the annual survey is to:

- Collect regional incident and injury statistics and publish them for use by all wastewater professionals to benchmark their safety programs,
- Identify those areas and activities where injuries are occurring so that facility managers can better focus their safety efforts, and
- Gather information regarding the status of safety programs at wastewater treatment facilities throughout New England.

For the 2014 work year, 34% of those facilities returning surveys reported at least one incident. For 2015, that rate increased to 41%. There were a total of 62 injuries reported, with 28 of those causing lost workdays – meaning **almost half of all incidents reported were severe enough that the employee incurred lost workdays**. Those 28 injuries resulted in 925 total lost workdays.



The body part most frequently injured in 2015 was the **hand**. The majority of those injuries were lacerations caused by “struck against” injuries (e.g. cleaning pump or machine, repairing hose, opening hatchway, etc.).

Back injuries were the second most common and the majority of those were strains and sprains injuries (e.g. slipping on ice, improper lifting technique, improper material handling, etc.).

Machine guarding and safety gloves are common ways to approach hand safety hazards such as using tools, operating equipment, handling rough materials

and chemicals, and stacking and storing objects. In addition to these safeguards, make sure you also take a moment to think about the task you need to perform and the potential hazards involved. What if the knife slips while I am stripping this wire? Will I cut myself? What if the screwdriver slips off this stubborn screw I’m trying to remove from this box in my hand? Will I punch the screwdriver through the palm of my hand? What if there’s a little bit of chemical left in the line I’m working on? Will my hands be burned? By analyzing the potential hazards you could face, you will be better prepared to choose the appropriate means to protect yourself.

In addition to providing incident information, many of the survey respondents also expressed common concerns regarding their biggest safety challenges. The list below represents the **top concerns**:

- Avoiding complacency during daily job tasks
- Employees slipping, tripping or falling
- Keeping up-to-date with required training (money, resources and time)
- Confined spaces (identification and procedures)

This information helps us to understand where the majority of our losses and challenges are coming from, and may allow us to plan resources for these areas in the future. The Safety Committee is pleased to have provided this information and we hope that members find it useful. As expected, the survey highlighted the fact that accidents are a reality in our facilities, and that additional efforts are needed to improve our safety programs and protect our personnel. The vast majority of these incidents are preventable. We would like to once again thank all of the facilities that returned 2015 work year surveys and we strongly encourage all facilities to return the 2016 work year survey (watch for it in the spring of 2017) in order to help us increase the value of its results.

Respectfully Submitted,
NEWEA Safety Committee