



Safety Climate Impacts Truck Driver Injuries

Work-related injury factors and safety climate perception in truck drivers

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Overview

Truck drivers are at higher risk for occupational injuries than most other workers in Washington State. Safety climate is the shared perception among workers of how their organization prioritizes safety. The purpose of this research was to study the relationship between safety climate and work-related injuries in truck drivers.

2,189 truck drivers participated in the study. Drivers were eligible if they worked in Washington and had a valid commercial driver license with a class B or C certification. Surveys were conducted in 2010 and 2012, and included demographic and job related variables.

Safety climate was measured using a short, six-question scale that covered coworker norms, safety feedback, management commitment to safety, and worker involvement in safety. Answers were used to create a composite safety perceptions score. Scores of ≥ 3.0 were considered a positive safety climate.

Key Findings

- 26% of truck drivers reported at least one work-related injury in the previous year.
- Factors associated with increased odds of a work-related injury in the previous 12 months were:
 - Primary driving assignment of less-than-truckload
 - Excessive daytime sleepiness
 - Regular pressure to work faster
- A positive safety perceptions score was found to be protective, with a 35% reduction in the odds of work-related injury per 1-pt increase in climate score.
- Drivers who had a positive safety perceptions score were more likely to file a workers' compensation claim when injured on the job than those with a poor safety perception score.

Impact

These findings highlight the importance of safety climate to truck driver safety & health. Efforts to reduce work-related injuries and promote worker health should take into account psychological safety climate, and the role of management in controlling essential work organization factors.

Employers may be able to use short safety climate assessment tools, such as the scale used in this study, to assess their organization, engage in training, and prioritize management commitment to safety.

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Research for Safe Work

The SHARP Program at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries partners with business and labor to develop sensible, effective solutions to identify and eliminate industry-wide hazards. Learn more at www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/

Find the article here:

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