Waste statistics in Great Britain, 2021

Data up to March 2021
Annual statistics
Published 16th December 2021
## Table of Contents

**Key statistics**
- Ill health 4
- Fatal injuries 5
- Non-fatal injuries 6

**Introduction** 7

**Work-related ill health**
- All illness 9

**Workplace injuries**
- Fatal injuries 10
- Non-fatal injuries 11

**Impact of health and safety failings**
- Enforcement 17

**Annex 1: Sources and definitions** 18

**Annex 2: Links to detailed tables** 20

**National Statistics** 21
Key statistics

Ill health

5,000 workers suffering from work-related ill health (new or long-standing) each year averaged over the nine-year period 2011/12, 2013/14-2020/21.

Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2011/12, 2013/14-2020/21. A nine-year period is used to enable a combined percentage of musculoskeletal disorders and Stress, depression or anxiety to be shown. Due to the low number of sample cases on which estimates are based, the percentages have been omitted from the chart.
Fatal injuries


Source: RIDDOR

Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21. Accident kinds are shown that account for 10% or more of injuries.
Non-fatal injuries

4,000 Workers sustain non-fatal injuries at work each year averaged over the seven year period 2014/15-2020/21.

Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2014/15-2020/21 (latest 7 years)

Slips, trips or falls on same level 31%

Injured while handling, lifting or carrying 27%

Struck by moving, including flying or falling, object 11%

Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21. RIDDOR is used here as the LFS is not able to provide a breakdown to this level of detail. Accident kinds are shown that account for 10% or more of injuries.
Introduction

This report provides a profile of workplace health and safety for workers in the Waste sector.

For this report, the waste sector has been defined with reference to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)\(^1\), an internationally agreed classification of industries, and includes the following activities: waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; and materials recovery (SIC 38).

Some activities associated with waste fall outside of this definition of the waste sector. Most notably the wholesale of waste and scrap\(^2\) (including collecting, sorting, separating and stripping of used goods) is an industry that is often associated with the waste sector, but within the Standard Industrial Classification is classified in the wholesale and retail trade sector. The wholesale of waste and scrap industry is small relative to the waste sector: statistics show the contribution of the wholesale of waste and scrap to the totality of work-related illness and injury in the combined sector (including both waste and wholesale of waste and scrap) to be small. Further, the rate of illness and injury is broadly similar for the combined industry group and the waste sector on its own. Therefore, statistics in this report are presented for the waste sector only (SIC 38) and do not include wholesale of waste and scrap.

The Waste sector (as defined by SIC 38) accounts for around 0.3% of the workforce\(^3\) in Great Britain. This report considers the current health and safety situation for the waste sector, with a focus on the scale and profile of work-related illness and injury in workers in the sector.

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1 The sector is defined as SIC 38 in section E of the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification. See [www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/ukstandardindustrialclassificationofeconomicactivities/uksic2007](http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/ukstandardindustrialclassificationofeconomicactivities/uksic2007) for more detail.

2 Wholesale of waste and scrap industry is defined as class 46.77 within the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification

3 Annual Population Survey, 2020
Work-related ill health

All illness

In Waste:

• There were an estimated 5,000 work-related ill health cases annually (new or long-standing)
• Around three-quarters of these were suffering from musculoskeletal disorders or stress, depression or anxiety
• The remaining workers were suffering from other types of illness, such as skin or respiratory conditions

Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2011/12, 2013/14-2020/21 (latest 9 years)

Waste compared with other selected industries

• Around 4.0% of workers in Waste suffered from work-related ill health annually (new or long-standing cases)

Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2014/15-2020/21 (latest 7 years)

95% confidence intervals are shown on the chart

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4 Selected manual type industries are generally those with either a higher rate of work-related ill health or workplace injury compared to the rate for all industries.
Workplace injuries

Fatal injuries

In Waste:

- There were 3 fatal injuries to workers in 2020/21.
- This is in comparison with the annual average number of 8 fatalities for 2016/17-2020/21, though statistically speaking numbers are small and prone to annual fluctuations.
- 30% of deaths over the same five-year period were classified as Contact with moving machinery.

Source: RIDDOR

Waste compared with other selected industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>8.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fatal injury rate (6.99 per 100,000 workers) is around 17 times the All Industry rate.

Source: RIDDOR, annual average 2016/17-2020/21
**Non-fatal injuries**

HSE’s preferred data source for non-fatal injuries is the Labour Force Survey (LFS)

In Waste:

- There were an estimated **4,000** workers each year who sustained an injury at work.

*Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2014/15-2020/21 (latest 7 years). Includes all injuries regardless of whether resulted in time off work.*

**Waste compared with other selected industries**

- Around 3.5% of workers in Waste sustained a workplace injury.

*Source: LFS, estimated annual average 2014/15-2020/21 (latest 7 years)*

95% confidence intervals are shown on the chart.
In Waste:

- There were 1,476 non-fatal injuries to employees reported by employers to RIDDOR in 2020/21\(^5\).
- 404 (27%) were specified injuries\(^6\) and 1,072 (73%) were over seven-day injuries.

*Source: RIDDOR, 2020/21p*

**Breakdown of non-fatal injuries by accident kind for the latest five years (2016/17-2020/21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accident Kind</th>
<th>Specified Injuries</th>
<th>Over 7 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injured while handling, lifting or carrying</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slips, trips or falls on same level</td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struck by moving, including flying or falling, object</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls from a height</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struck by moving vehicle</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike against something fixed or stationary</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with moving machinery</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21*

Of the non-fatal injuries reported by employers over the period 2016/17-2020/21:

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\(^5\) RIDDOR requires employers to report certain workplace non-fatal injuries, generally the more serious injuries. The LFS gives the best indication of the scale of workplace injury within the sector. RIDDOR provides additional information for non-fatal injuries but needs to be interpreted with care since it is known that non-fatal injuries are substantially under-reported. Possible variations in reporting rates both between industries and over time make such comparisons difficult. However, RIDDOR is often useful in providing analysis at a detailed level not available through the LFS, mainly around the type of accident itself.

\(^6\) Specified injuries are a defined list of injuries. The full list is at [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm)
• 44% were from public sector employers and 56% from private sector employers. The public sector is estimated to account for around 30% of employment in the sector.

• The proportion of reports from public and private sector employers varies between specified and over-7-day injuries, with the public sector accounting for 49% of over-7-day injuries compared to 28% of specified injuries. Differences in sickness absence practices between public and private sector may account for some of this variation. (Specified injuries are reportable regardless of absence from work).

• The kind of accidents reported by both public and private sector employers follows a broadly similar profile.


Breakdown of non-fatal injuries by employer type for the latest five years (2016/17-2020/21)

Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21
Breakdown of non-fatal specified injuries by accident kind and employer type for the latest five years (2016/17-2020/21)

- Slips, trips or falls on same level: 50% (Public sector 45%, Private sector 40%)
- Falls from a height: 11% (Public sector 9%, Private sector 13%)
- Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object: 8% (Public sector 6%, Private sector 10%)
- Struck by moving vehicle: 11% (Public sector 9%, Private sector 13%)
- Injured while handling, lifting or carrying: 7% (Public sector 6%, Private sector 9%)
- Strike against something fixed or stationary: 4% (Public sector 3%, Private sector 5%)

Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21
Breakdown of non-fatal over-7-day injuries by accident kind and employer type for the latest five years (2016/17-2020/21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accident Kind</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injured while handling, lifting or carrying</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slips, trips or falls on same level</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls from a height</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struck by moving vehicle</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike against something fixed or stationary</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RIDDOR, 2016/17-2020/21
Non-fatal injuries: Changes over time

In the recent years prior to the coronavirus pandemic the rate of employer reported injuries showed a downward trend. (though reporting to RIDDOR is known to be incomplete and may be distorting the trend). The rate fell further in 2020/21, though more sharply than previously seen.

Source: RIDDOR, 2014/15-2020/21
Impact of health and safety failings

Enforcement

Provisional figures for 2020/21 show a total of 191 notices issued by HSE inspectors in Waste:

- 73% were improvement notices and;
- 27% were prohibition notices.

There were 7 prosecution cases led by HSE or, in Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal\(^7\) where a verdict was reached in 2020/21, resulting in:

- 6 (86%) with a conviction for at least one offence;
- £1.4 million in total fines averaging around £232,000 per conviction.

Source: HSE Enforcement Data

HSE and local authorities are responsible for enforcing health and safety legislation. For the most serious offences, inspectors may serve improvement notices and prohibition notices and they may prosecute (or in Scotland, report to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) with a view to prosecution).

\(^7\) Cases refer to a prosecution against a single defendant. The defendant may be an individual person or a company. There may be one or more breach of health and safety legislation (offences) in each case.
Annex 1: Sources and definitions

The Labour Force Survey (LFS): The LFS is a national survey run by the Office for National Statistics of currently around 37,000 households each quarter. HSE commissions annual questions in the LFS to gain a view of self-reported work related illness and workplace injury based on individuals’ perceptions. The analysis and interpretation of these data are the sole responsibility of HSE.

• Self-reported work-related illness: People who have conditions which they think have been caused or made worse by their current or past work, as estimated from the LFS. Estimated total cases include long-standing as well as new cases. New cases consist of those who first became aware of their illness in the last 12 months.

• Self-reported injuries: Workplace injuries sustained as a result of a non-road traffic accident, as estimated by the LFS.

RIDDOR: The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, under which fatal and defined non-fat al injuries to workers and members of the public are reported by employers. Certain types of work-related injury are not reportable under RIDDOR, hence excluded from these figures. Particular exclusions include fatalities and injuries to the armed forces and injuries from work-related road collisions.

HSE Enforcement data: The main enforcing authorities are HSE and local authorities. In Scotland, HSE and local authorities investigate potential offences but cannot institute legal proceedings and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) makes the final decision whether to institute legal proceedings and which offences are taken. Enforcement notices cover improvement, prohibition and deferred prohibition. Offences prosecuted refer to individual breaches of health and safety legislation; a prosecution case may include more than one offence. Where prosecution statistics are allocated against a particular year, unless otherwise stated, the year relates to the date of final hearing with a known outcome. They exclude those cases not completed, for example adjourned.

Rate per 100,000: The number of annual workplace injuries or cases of work-related ill health per 100,000 employees or workers.
95% confidence interval: The range of values within which we are 95% confident contains the true value, in the absence of bias. This reflects the potential error that results from surveying a sample rather than the entire population.

Statistical significance: A difference between two sample estimates is described as 'statistically significant' if there is a less than 5% chance that it is due to sampling error alone.

For more information, see www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.pdf.
Annex 2: Links to detailed tables

The data in this report can be found in the following tables:

**Work-related illness**
- Ifsillwaste_7yr: [www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/lfsillwaste_7yr.xlsx](http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/lfsillwaste_7yr.xlsx)

**Workplace injuries**
- Lfsinjwaste_7yr: [www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/lfsinjwaste_7yr.xlsx](http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/lfsinjwaste_7yr.xlsx)

**RIDIND**
- [www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/ridind.xlsx](http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/ridind.xlsx)

**RIDWASTE**

**Enforcement**

**Notices**

**Prosecutions**

Other tables can be found at: [www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/tables/index.htm)
National Statistics

National Statistics status means that statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. They are produced in compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and awarded National Statistics status following assessment and compliance checks by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). The last compliance check of these statistics was in 2013.

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An account of how the figures are used for statistical purposes can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/sources.htm.

For information regarding the quality guidelines used for statistics within HSE see www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/about/quality-guidelines.htm.

A revisions policy and log can be seen at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/about/revisions/

Additional data tables can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/.

General enquiries: sam.wilkinson@hse.gov.uk

Journalists/media enquiries only: www.hse.gov.uk/contact/contact.htm
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Published by the Health and Safety Executive [12/21].