Poultry Worker Safety Stats and Facts



FACTS

Health hazards in poultry working environments are categorised as accidental, physical, chemical, and biological.

1. **Accidental**. Sprains and strains due to slip and fall while carrying heavy loads.

   - Eye and skin irritation resulting from contact with disinfectants, vaccines and medicines.
   - Burns from exposure to hot surfaces (e.g. beak-trimmers).

2. **Physical.** Exposure to high levels of noise.

   - Long-time exposure to heat and cold due to outdoor work.
   - Musculo-skeletal problems resulting from lifting and moving of animals, feed bins (bags), egg collection.

3. **Chemical**. Respiratory problems resulting from exposure to dust, which is composed of feathers, dander, micro-organisms, etc.

   - Respiratory, skin, and eye diseases due to exposure to gases including NH3, H2S, CO2, CO, and CH4.
   - Exposure to disinfectants, detergents, formaldehyde and pesticides.

4. **Biological**. Zoonotic infections. These diseases are transmitted between birds and humans.

   - Antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

STATS

- The meat and poultry industry’s commitment to improving worker and workplace safety is reflected in the significant and consistent decline in illness and injury rates among its 500,000 workers for the past two decades.
- The rate at which injuries and illnesses occur among poultry processing workers in the U.S. has reached its lowest level, and according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics, this level is below the rate found in food manufacturing in general.
- The rate of injury and illness in the poultry processing sector was 6.6 per 100 full-time workers, down from 7.4.
- Musculoskeletal disorders are common among employees at a poultry processing plant. At the time of our evaluation, 81% of the jobs we evaluated were above

the limits of hand activity and force where controls are recommended and 34% of participants met our case definition for carpal tunnel syndrome, which likely results from the repetitive and forceful nature of the work.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of the total 3,620 occupational injury and illness cases requiring days away from work that were reported among workers in the poultry processing industry, 33% (1,190 cases) were MSDs.