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OSHA® FactSheet

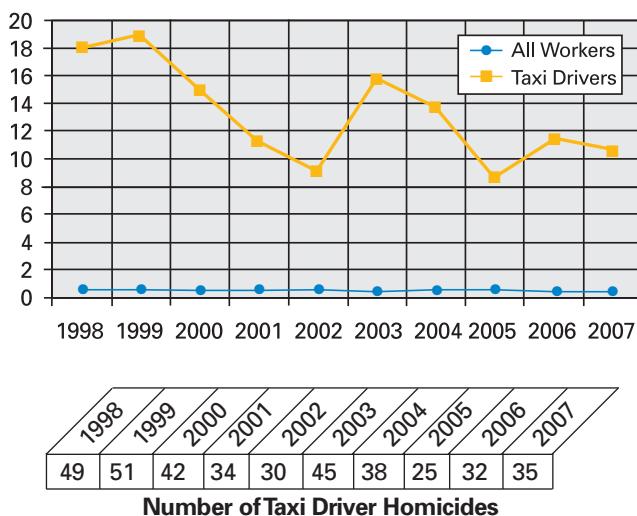
Preventing Violence against Taxi and For-Hire Drivers

Taxi drivers are over 20 times more likely to be murdered on the job than other workers. By recognizing the hazards that lead to violent incidents and using proven prevention and control measures, employers and drivers can create safer working conditions.

For-hire and taxi driver homicides

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) data indicates that annual homicide rates for taxi drivers (and chauffeurs) from 1998 to 2007 ranged from 9 per 100,000 workers, to 19. During that period the rate for all workers was at or below 0.5 per 100,000 workers. In other words, taxi drivers' homicide rates were between 21 and 33 times higher than the national average for all workers.

Workers' Homicide Rates 1998 - 2007



Risks that may lead to violence

Taxi drivers face many of the same risk factors as other workers in potentially violent occupations. These include working:

- With cash (making them targets for robbery);
- Alone and in isolated areas;
- At night and in poorly lit settings;
- In high-crime areas;
- With people under the influence of alcohol.

Reducing the Risks

Reducing risks requires employers and/or taxi drivers to assess their potential hazards and

consider physical and procedural methods for reducing them. Generally, physical or "engineering" controls should be considered first since they create physical barriers between drivers and the hazards. Procedural methods require changes in behavior, such as not accepting cash, to reduce risks.

Physical Controls

Potential physical controls include:

- Barriers – such as bullet-resistant glass – between drivers and passengers prevent robberies, injuries and death.
- Security cameras record activities within the vehicle, discouraging violent behavior, and aiding in identifying passengers, if an assault does occur.
- Silent alarms (such as an external light) and/or radio communication allow drivers to safely request help.
- Vehicle tracking devices, such as global positioning satellite (GPS) systems, allow drivers in distress to be located.
- Improved lighting inside the taxi allows the driver to be aware of passenger behavior.

Procedural Controls

Procedural controls include:

- Establishing police protocols – including authorizing police stops.
- Promoting the use of credit card payments to limit the amount of cash in the taxi and thereby discourage robberies.
- Providing safety training to teach drivers, dispatchers and company owners about protective measures.

Employer Responsibilities

OSHA citations can only be issued for violations of standards, regulations, and the General Duty Clause. Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act, the "General Duty Clause," provides that "Each em-

ployer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees" [29 U.S.C. 654(a)(1)].

Employers are required by law to communicate to workers their rights under the OSH Act. Posters containing these and other rights are available free of charge from OSHA's area offices or can be downloaded from OSHA's website—www.osha.gov.

Taxi companies that only use the services of drivers who are independent contractors are not subject to OSH Act coverage. It should be noted however, that the suggested safety measures listed here are likely to help reduce the risks for independent contractors to the same extent as employees.

Worker Rights

Section 11(c)(1) of the OSH Act provides: "No person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this Act or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceedings or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of himself or others of any right afforded by this Act" [29 U.S.C. 660(c)].

Conclusion

Employers are responsible for taking measures to protect the health and safety of their workers. In addition, it is the duty of taxi drivers to follow proper safety procedures. OSHA has recommended these safety controls to help reduce work-related violence. Employers, dispatchers and drivers can use a combination of the suggested controls, which apply to their individual work situations.

This fact sheet is not a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations. It contains recommendations as well as descriptions of mandatory safety and health standards. The recommendations are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards and regulations promulgated by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. In addition, the Act's General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), requires employers to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more complete information:



Occupational
Safety and Health
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U.S. Department of Labor

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