

Small business injury rates show why safety matters



Small businesses in Ontario have unique health and safety needs as well as obstacles that prevent them from meeting those needs.

Often small business owners don't believe they have the budget or the staff for an effective health and safety management system. But when you have only a few employees, the absence of even one injured or sick worker can be a problem.

All employers have a duty to protect their workers from injuries, diseases, disabilities, and death. Although a small business may employ just a few people, small businesses in Ontario account for a large number of workers, especially among IHSA's member firms.

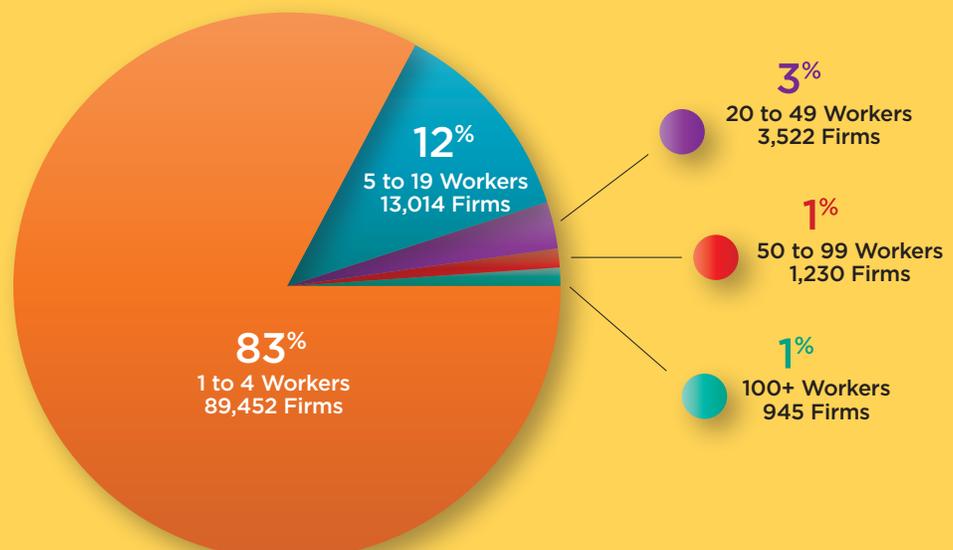
If your small business doesn't seem like a place where someone could be injured, you may get a little complacent and not think too much about safety. But inevitably incidents happen, and you should be prepared for them when they do.

Most of IHSA's member firms are small businesses, which are companies with fewer than 50 full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs). In fact, 95 per cent of our member firms have fewer than 20 FTEs. That amounts to more than 100,000 companies.

Sizes of IHSA Member Firms in 2018

NOTE: Firms with 0 insurable earnings (i.e., independent operators) have been excluded.

Source: WSIB/EIW 2018 Snapshot Current to March 2019



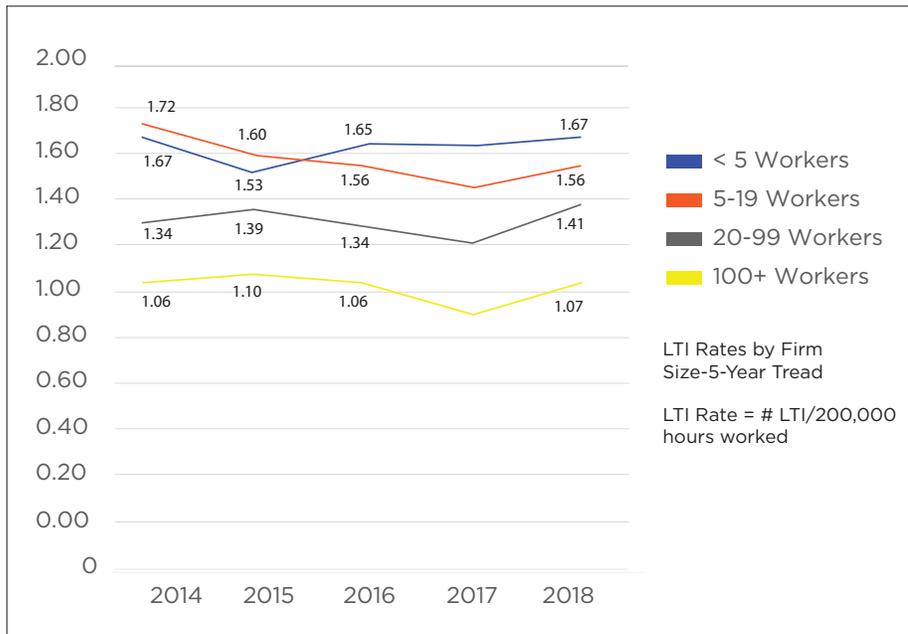
According to the Institute for Work and Health (IWH), small businesses employ over half of all Canadians working in the private sector. Research shows that workplace fatality rates tend to be higher in the sectors that are traditionally occupied by small companies.

That finding corresponds with IHSA's injury trend data as shown in the chart below. In the five years from 2014 to 2018, IHSA member firms with less than 20 employees had the highest rates of lost-time injuries (LTIs).

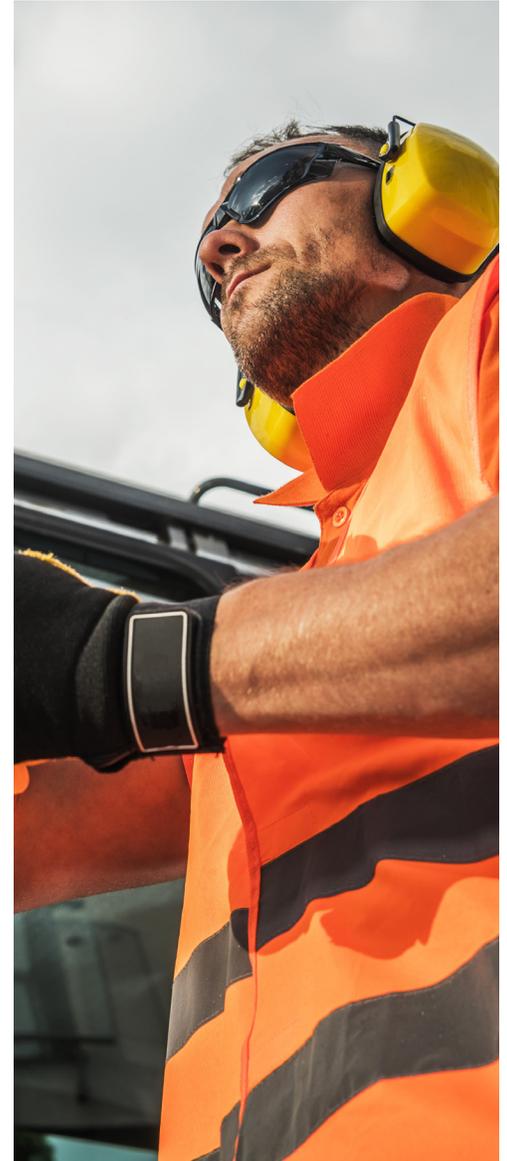
All businesses, no matter how small they are, need to maintain a safe workplace and follow either provincial or federal regulations, depending on the kind of work they do.

That means they need to

- Develop, implement, and keep up-to-date any appropriate safe work procedures.
- Provide training, information, and orientation to all employees.



Source: WSIB/EIW



How IHSA can help

If you are a **one-person business**, then you are an independent operator. That means it's your responsibility to take care of yourself because, without you, there is no business.

If you have **two to five employees**, it is your responsibility to take reasonable precautions to protect your workers from injury or illness on the job.

If you have **more than five employees**, you may need to start formalizing some of your processes. You may have workers at different jobsites, which means you can't be with them all the time.

This is when training becomes even more important so that everyone understands how to get the job done safely. Companies with more than five employees also need a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) as well as a written health and safety policy and a program to implement that policy.

To learn how IHSA can help when you are starting to build a health and safety program for your small business, visit our **Small Business** resource page at ihsa.ca/smallbusiness.aspx. Here you will find sample checklists, training solutions, and a variety of information you can use as a general starting point for building safety into your work.

For more comprehensive resources, visit our **Policy and Program Templates** section. In addition, part 1 of our **Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Certification** program is a good place for your HSR to start their training. IHSA's downloadable *Guideline for Health and Safety Representatives (W002)* can also provide some basic information on their duties and responsibilities.