



December 2020

WORKFORCE SEGMENTATION AND INSIGHT PROGRAMME

Forestry

What we have learned

For New Zealand forestry workers, the top three most important factors for safe and healthy work were: staying healthy and safe while at work (66%), having a good work/life balance (62%) and taking pride in doing a good job (57%). Staying healthy and safe at work was a high priority for 80% of forestry employers, as well. Here's what else we now know:

Employer attitudes towards safety

66%	had a 'mature' attitude (care for others/protect me or mine). ¹	Forestry employers were among the most attuned to the health and safety of their workers. They had the highest 'care for others' maturity score of any industry, at 42%.
29%	were 'all talk, little walk' when it came to health and safety.	Some 93% stated they were fully aware of their health and safety obligations as an employer.
78%	talked about health and safety regularly at staff meetings.	However, 34% talked a bigger safety game than they managed to action, or are passive about health and safety.
51%	stated they understood how to comply with health and safety regulations.	About two-thirds of forestry employers said they had a noticeboard, website or other source of reliable, up-to date health and safety information for staff.

Worker engagement in safety

91%	always had a say in decisions that affect their health and safety.	New Zealand forestry workers enjoyed the highest levels of effective participation in safety decisions of any sector. Some 53% of them were strong achievers of safe practices, and 32% actively encouraged their fellow workers to act safely on the job.
53%	were either 'advocates' or 'attainers' when it came to safety engagement.	Some 93% were confident in their knowledge and ability to avoid long-term health problems from work.
97%	were confident they had the right knowledge and skills to keep safe at work.	Around 91% said their boss would support them if they suggested stopping work because of a potential hazard. Having a boss that acknowledges workers who make an awesome contribution was a reality for 86%.
98%	had the confidence to speak up and say no, if asked to do something risky at work.	Despite these positives, 23% of workers reported that sometimes they would not let health and safety requirements get in the way of 'getting the job done'.

¹ Mature safety culture means being active in all facets of health and safety, accepting health and safety legislation, viewing health and safety as an evolving concept, more engaged workers and good two-way communication between workers and employers.

Physical harm or injury (last 12 months)

20%	of workers reported experiencing 'serious physical harm or injury' on the job.	Other work-related physical health problems reported by workers included sprains, strains and dislocations (25%), short-term breathing problems (9%) and skin conditions (10%). Some 38% of workers said they often/always turned up at work when sick or injured (employers report this figure at 56%), and 24% usually work when over-tired.
35%	of workers reported experiencing 'non-serious physical harm or injury' at work.	
11%	of workers said they had suffered loss of hearing from exposure to noise.	

Psychological harm (last 12 months)

55%	of workers reported suffering from work-related stress.	Forestry workers reported less work-related psychological harm in the last 12 months than the average across all industries, but it is unclear why.
26%	of workers reported experiencing work-related depression or anxiety.	By comparison, in the last 12 months across all industries around 60% of workers reported experiencing damaging work-related stress, 35% said they had suffered work-related depression or anxiety, and 15% of them stated that they had been bullied or harassed at work.
10%	of workers reported they had been bullied or harassed at work.	

Workplace exposures

85%	of workers said they were exposed to physical hazards at work.	Two-thirds of workers said they spent most of their work hours outdoors (65%). Just under half reported working at heights (45%).
68%	of workers said they were exposed to chemical hazards at work.	The majority of workers reported exposure to risks including tools that vibrate (57%), temperature extremes (62%), ultraviolet radiation (64%) and toxic chemicals or substances (54%).
67%	of workers said they were exposed to loud noise at work.	Hours can be long, with 26% of forestry workers reporting working more than 50 hours a week.

Safety practices

97%	of workers said they used personal protective equipment when it should be used 'always' or 'most of the time'.	Notable perception gaps about safety practices existed between forestry employers and workers. While 96% of forestry employers said that machinery or equipment was well maintained 'always' or 'most of the time', only 90% of workers agreed. Where 89% of employers said machinery or equipment was fully checked before use 'always' or 'most of the time', 84% of workers agreed.
89%	of workers stated safety devices were fitted to machinery when they should be 'always' or 'most of the time'.	A significant perception gap also existed around machines and equipment being used as instructed in the manual, without modifications or shortcuts (91% of employers said this happened 'always' or 'most of the time' versus 82% of workers).
76%	of workers said measures to prevent harm from awkward or repetitive body movement, or long periods of standing are in place 'always' or 'most of the time'.	Lastly, 97% of employers said they acted straight away when a potential hazard was identified 'always' or 'most of the time', while 94% of workers agreed that this happened.