



We Can Make These Work Areas Safe

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Taxi Drivers' Workplace Violence and Occupational Risks

It is well documented that taxi drivers work in the most dangerous vocation in the world. Here I endeavor to present some of the reasons why they are at such a high risk and some of the myriad of statistical information that supports these conclusions.

There are numerous factors that contribute to the dangers of being a taxi driver. Without a clear understanding of the problems there cannot be appropriate solutions to counteract the horrific crimes that are perpetrated against taxi drivers on a daily basis.

1. Taxi drivers work alone.
2. The majority of payments are made in cash, which is carried on their person.
3. Many industry members work at night when the greatest majority of crimes occur.
4. Most patrons they service are unknown to them.
5. The calls they respond to are often in high crime areas.
6. The required routes they often are asked to take are through industrial or isolated areas.
7. Cities strictly mandate that the driver must service all clientele, giving the driver few options.

Studies show the seriousness of what the taxi driver faces each and every shift. These studies consistently show that as an occupation/industry, ours is among the highest for job related assaults and homicides. Taxi drivers are among those most often robbed and that is the motive for more than half of the work related homicides (80%) and non-fatal assaults (60%).

Taxi drivers are 20 times more likely to face vocational violence than any other occupation and are 40 to 60 times more likely to be murdered in their workplace. They are five times more likely to be murdered on the job than an on duty police officer and have a one in three chance of having at least one criminal act committed against them annually. Taxi drivers during their careers have an 85% chance of facing some sort of workplace victimization; 70% will be victims of crime; 35% will be robbed and 15% will have a weapon used against them.

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Taxi drivers are among those with the highest rates of nonfatal assaults: 183.8 per 1,000 exceeded only by private security guards 217.8 per 1,000 and police officers 306.0 per 1,000. Approximately 80% of all taxi drivers experience transportation fraud (fare jumping) annually. Drivers on a yearly basis face a 75% chance of verbal abuse; 64% chance of damage to their taxi and 61% chance of facing a physical assault.

Taxi-L, which is an international website that openly discusses taxi issues, has done extensive research on the number of taxi drivers who have been murdered on the job worldwide. Their studies as of February 2008, show that since 1887 1,729 drivers worldwide have lost their lives while on duty. In Canada, 170 drivers have lost their lives while on duty from 1917 through 2007 and it is feared there are many others that have yet to be discovered. The investigation in Canada and throughout the world continues.

It is also important to note that estimates show that less than 20% of all crimes that are committed against taxi driver are reported. The taxi industry in general has lost faith in their police departments and judicial systems. They feel that the appropriate laws and resources are not forthcoming to ensure a safe work environment. They feel that they are viewed as second-class citizens. Even if the criminal is apprehended, history has shown the court does not apply serious enough penalties to curb criminal acts in their taxis. So, to lose time and earnings to report the crimes and go to court is in the industry's opinion, a total waste of time.

The statistical information was gathered from many international sources and does confirm that the plights of taxi drivers worldwide are very similar in nature and occurs on a daily basis. Knowing and now proving the difficulties that face the taxi driver each and every shift, it is imperative that jurisdictions worldwide mandate and implement taxi driver safety programs and that the police and courts support these initiatives through better investigations and stiffer penalties therefore sending a crystal clear message that workplace violence against taxi drivers will no longer be tolerated.

I remain,



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