

***Public Attitudes towards and
Experiences with Workplace Safety***

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Introduction

Workplace safety has been largely neglected both by policy makers and by those measuring public attitudes and the experiences of workers. This report examines 1) support for workplace safety measures, 2) public attention to workplace safety, 3) worries about workplace homicides, 4) miscellaneous other workplace safety issues, and 5) workers assessment of safety in their workplace, including experiences of injuries and related problems such as on-the job stress, exhaustion, and dangerous working conditions.

Support for Workplace Safety Measures

Workplace safety has been a high priority. As Table 1 shows, of seven labor standards “workplace safety regulations” were ranked first in both 2008 and 2010 with 85-89% considering them to be “very important.” This topped such other standards as family and maternity leave, minimum wage, paid sick days, overtime pay, maximum hours limits, and the right to join a union. Similarly, in 2005, more people favored Congressional action on enacting workplace health and safety rules than on 10 other issues with 84% backing legislation (Table 2). However, back in 2001, a narrower question asking about 27 health-related measures found that support for “a law to protect workers from repetitive stress injury by requiring employers to redesign work space” ranked 25th (Table 3). But even in this case, 55% considered it extremely or very important for the government to pass the measure. In addition, parents of employed adolescents are also strongly supportive of measures to enhance workplace safety for teenage workers (Runyan et al., 2009).

The picture is mixed on the political implications of the workplace-safety issue. Workplace safety has been consistently rated as politically important, but not necessarily as a top priority. In 2002, 52% said that the overturning of “new safety and environmental rules” by the “Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration” raised serious or very serious doubts,” but it was the last of seven actions evaluated (Table 4). (The mixing of safety and environmental measures also makes the item ambiguous.) Similarly, in 2002, 52% said they would have serious or very serious doubts about a “Republican candidate for Congress” who “supported rolling back government regulations on workplace safety and instead supported a plan to make many of these regulations voluntary and self-enforcing by businesses.” But this had the lowest level of doubt of 12 positions asked about (Table 5). Also in 2002, 59% indicated that they were more likely to vote for a Congressional candidate who backed “workplace health and safety rules to reduce carpal tunnel and other repetitive-stress injuries” while only 20% were less likely to support such a candidate (Table 6). This placed it fifth of 12 candidate positions considered.

Public Attention to Workplace Safety

Media coverage of workplace safety issues has been sporadic and evaluations of public attention to the issue even rarer. In 2001, the controversy over the repeal by Republicans in Congress of the Clinton administration’s repetitive stress injuries prevention measures was followed very closely by only 10% of the public, putting it ninth of 10 events covered (Table 7). At that time 70% of the public were unaware of the action that Congress had taken and only 20% knew that Congress had blocked the enactment of the measures.¹

However, mining disasters do garner much more public attention. In 2006, a West Virginia, coal mine accident that killed 12 was followed very closely by 47%, making it the top news story of the week (Table 8A). About half considered the media coverage to be responsible and half as irresponsible. In 2007, a Utah, coal mining accident captured the most public attention for two weeks with 32-36% following developments very closely (Table 8B). Almost two-thirds thought the amount of media coverage was about right. In 2010, another West Virginia, mining accident again attracted considerable public interest. Over a two-week period 26-33% followed events very closely. Initially, the story ranked second in public attention behind only health-care reform, but after the miners were confirmed to have died, attention slipped to fourth place (Table 8C).

Thus, except for very brief periods immediately after mining disasters, the public has paid little attention to workplace safety issues.

Worries about Co-worker Homicides

¹ Similarly, knowledge about a ballot initiative to repeal ergonomic safety regulations in King County, Washington in 2003, was quite limited (Wells et al., 2009).

When asked about worries over various types of criminal victimization, concern about “being assaulted or killed by a co-worker or other employee where you work” consistently ranks last with only 4-9% worrying either frequently or occasionally (Tables 9 and 10). This is not surprising given that almost 40% of people are not currently employed (and thus are not at risk) and that workplace murders are rare. Homicides at work account for only 10% of workplace fatalities and most of these were not inflicted by a co-worker (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010b).

Other Workplace Safety Items

A substantial majority (83%) believe that the federal government needs to monitor “business issues such as financial fraud, environmental pollution, and workplace safety” at some or all of the time (Table 11). A plurality of 46% agrees that “older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers” (Table 11).

Worker Assessments of Workplace Safety

Workers have a divided evaluation of workplace safety in their workplace. On the one hand satisfaction with “the physical safety conditions of your workplace” is high. From 1999 to 2009 between 63-76% were completely satisfied with conditions and this ranked first or second among 15 job characteristics (Table 12). Moreover, satisfaction grew over time from 63% completely satisfied in 1999 to 76% in 2009. However, only 20-28% were completely satisfied with “the amount of on-the-job stress” and satisfaction regarding stress ranked last or next to last throughout the period (Table 12). The 2009 results underscore the difference between these two indicators with only about 5% of workers dissatisfied with physical safety conditions while 30% were not satisfied with job-related stress (Table 13). Stress of course is both directly a work-related detriment and a condition that contributes to other work-related illnesses and accidents.

The mixed pattern is also shown by a 2003 study. 41% of workers said that health and safety practices were better than a year ago, 45% thought they were the same, and 10% that they were worse (Table 14). Most (58%) said that they were “aware of the laws that protect my health and safety at the workplace”. But a substantial proportion agreed that “I know that some employers are not reporting workplace accidents and injuries” (27%), “I know that some workers are afraid to report workplace accidents and injuries” (26%), and “Employees at my workplace regularly ignore health and safety procedures” (18%).

The vast majority of workers give positive evaluations of their own workplaces. In 2002 and 2006, 90% said that “The safety of workers is a high priority with management where I work,” 88-89% agreed that “There are no significant compromises or shortcuts taken when workers’ safety is at stake,” 88% indicated that “Where I work, employees and management work together to ensure the safest possible working conditions,” and 91-92% said “The safety and health conditions where I work are good” (Table 14).

But despite these positive assessments, many workers report adverse conditions at work. Between 1989 and 2006, workers reported that they always or often came home exhausted from work (36-41%), did hard physical labor (22-24%), found their work stressful (31-38%), worked in dangerous conditions (13-16%), worked in unhealthy conditions (8%), or worked in physically unpleasant conditions (8%)(Table 15A). Specifically, in 2002 and 2006, 47% reported they had to do “repeated lifting, pushing, pulling, or bending” and 50-52% indicated their job regularly required them to “perform repetitive or forceful hand movements or involve awkward postures” (Table 15A). Dangerous workplace conditions are also common among adolescent employees (Runyan et al., 2007a; 2007b; Woolf, 2007).

The adverse workplace conditions and resulting injuries are most heavily concentrated among less educated workers in lower paying and less prestigious jobs (Table 15B). Difficult working conditions and workplace injuries are also more common among men than among women and for younger workers.

Such conditions and activities contribute to a large number of workplace accidents. Government statistics indicate that 4.6 million workplace injuries or illnesses and 5,214 fatal work injuries occurred in 2008 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b). While these government statistics do show fewer fatalities and a lower injury rate in recent years (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b; 2010b), incidence levels remain high. Other surveys in 2002 and 2006 indicate that 11-12% of workers are injured on the job every year and a 2003 study found that 37% had at some point had a workplace injury for which they needed to seek medical attention (Table 15A).

Conclusion

Workplace safety has been neglected on both the public-policy agenda and in public opinion polls. Except for a short interval following a mining accident, the public has paid little attention to the issue of workplace safety.

Yet the limited surveys that have explored the issue indicate that workplace health and safety are top concerns and the public supports measures to improve conditions. They also indicate a very mixed pattern regarding workers' own experiences. On the one hand, satisfaction with physical safety conditions is high and has grown over the last decade. Also, most workers are very positive about safety practices where they work. In contrast, satisfaction with job-related stress is very low. Likewise, exhaustion, dangerous working conditions, and other negative experiences at work are reported by many workers. Such conditions mean that workplace accidents are far from rare. About 11-12% of workers report an on-the-job injury during the last year and 37% have ever had a workplace accident that required medical treatment. Additionally, in recent years 5-6,000 workers die annually from work-related illnesses or injuries.

Despite these levels of injuries and deaths, workplace safety is too often ignored or accidents are taken for granted. Many seem to believe, as Rand Paul remarked about the British Petroleum oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, that "sometimes accidents happen" (Phillips, 2010). It is striking that a review of 174 survey questions asked about the oil spill between April and June, 2010 found that none inquired about the 11 workers killed by the blowout and destruction of the drilling platform. Survey questions about the event have instead focused on the "bigger picture" of the environmental consequences of the millions of gallons of oil contaminating the Gulf. Yet if optimal safety had been maintained, not only would the lives of the 11 workers been saved, but the whole environmental disaster would have been averted.

The lack of serious attention to the problem of workplace safety is underscored by the stark shortcomings in the existing regulatory system. Under the present regulatory set-up, it is impossible to come close to enforcing even the current safety standards. There are about 8.6 million workplaces and just around 2,400 federal and state inspectors (or about one inspector to monitor 3,500 establishments every year)(Estlund, 2005; McGarity, Steinzor, and Shultz, 2010; Weil and Pyles, 2005-06).

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Table 1

Importance of Various Labor Standards

The government sets various standards to protect workers' rights. How important do you consider the following measures. Would you say they are very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant for workers?

	% Very Important	
	2008	2010
Workplace safety regulations	89	85
Family and maternity leave	82	78
Minimum wage	77	70
Paid sick days	77	69
Time and a half pay for overtime work	77	69
Maximum hour limits	49	46
Right to join an union	48	43
	1494	1461

Source: NORC Paid Sick Days Surveys

Table 2

Support for Congressional Action

	% Congress should be active and pass legislation
Rules in the workplace that deal with health and safety issues	84
Environmental laws that involve restricting development to protect endangered species	80
Discrimination and affirmative action	76
The right to bear arms	69
Gun control	68
Sex and violence on television	58
Stem cell research	53
Parental consent before girls under age 18 can have an abortion	48
Steroids in baseball	37
Gay marriage	34
Issues of family illness and health, such as the Terri Schiavo case	22
	1002

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, March, 2005

Question Wording: Now I'm going to read you several issues. For each one, please tell me whether you think that Congress should be active and pass legislation and be directly involved in this area, or whether Congress should not be active and not pass legislation and should not be directly involved in this area?

Table 3

Attitudes towards Importance of Proposed Federal Laws

The Federal government passes various laws each year. For each of the following laws that the Federal government could pass, recognizing that the government can't pass them all, please tell me how much of a priority you think it is to pass each law within the next year. Your choices are an extremely important priority, a very important priority, important but a lower priority, not an important priority, or do you think that government should not pass the law at all? How much of a priority do you think it is for the government to pass...

a law to protect workers from repetitive stress injury by requiring employers to redesign work space within the next year

Extremely important	18%
Very important	37
Important	26
Not important	10
Should not pass	5
Don't know	4

1210

The Federal government passes various laws each year. For each of the following laws that the Federal government could pass, recognizing that the government can't pass them all, please tell me how much of a priority you think it is to pass each law within the next year. Your choices are an extremely important priority, a very important priority, important but a lower priority, not an important priority, or do you think that government should not pass the law at all?) How much of a priority do you think it is for the government to pass...

% extremely important

A law to increase medical research on diseases such as cancer, AIDS, and heart disease within the next year	53
A law to have the government do more to prevent the spread of new infectious diseases such as Ebola, Mad Cow Disease, and West Nile Virus within the next year	41
A law to ensure mandatory public reporting of medical errors by doctors and hospitals within the next year	40
A law to increase inspections of imported meat with the next year	39
A law to reduce drinking water contamination by such things as arsenic and lead within the next year	36
A law to increase the money spent on community health centers that serve the poor within the next year	35
A law to provide health insurance for most uninsured Americans within the next year	35
A law to increase the number of inspections at US food processing plants within the next year	35
A law to fund more research and professional training to improve the medical care people get at the end of their lives within the next year	34

Table 3 (continued)

A law to make health insurance plans provide the same coverage for mental health problems as they do for physical health problems within the next year	33
A law to provide a prescription drug benefit for those who receive Medicare within the next year	33
A law to ensure the privacy of medical records within the next year	33
A law to reduce teenage drinking within the next year	33
A law to address Medicare's financial problems within the next year	32
A law to reduce air pollution by lowering levels of such things as carbon dioxide within the next year	31
An anti-tobacco law to reduce teenage smoking within the next year	29
A law to provide more funding for long-term care services aimed at helping frail people to continue to live in their own homes and their communities within the next year	29
A law to ban late-term or partial birth abortions within the next year	27
A law to provide more funding for nursing homes with the next year	27
A law to allow the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate the content of tobacco products including cigarettes with the next year	24
A law to increase funding to provide better health statistics and data in order to improve government decision making on health within the next year	22
A law to enact a Patients' Bill of Rights, including the right to appeal denial of services and the right to sue within the next year	21
A law to increase taxes on cigarettes within the next year	21
A law to increase funding for drug treatment with the next year	20
A law to protect workers from repetitive stress injury by requiring employers to redesign work space within the year	18
A law to provide more funding for research about how to help people change their habits so they can be healthier in the future within the next year	15
A law to permit physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill patients within the next year	13
	1210

Source: Harvard School of Public Health/ICR, April-May, 2001

Table 4

Attitudes towards Public Policies of President Bush and Republicans in Congress

(Let me read you some statements about things the Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration have done in the last six month. For each statement, please tell me whether this description, if accurate, raises very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts or no real doubts in your own mind.) We have a crisis of corporate misconduct, but they have packed the federal oversight agencies, like the Food and Drug Administration and Securities and Exchange Commission, with people who worked for these companies. And now, the government has overturned more new safety and environmental rules than any administration in 20 years.... Does that raise very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your mind?

Very serious doubts	21%
Serious doubts	31
Minor doubts	28
No real doubts	14
Don't know/refused	5
	1,000

Source: Greenburg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, June, 2002 (likely voters)

% Very Serious Doubts

They say we should no longer require the oil, chemical and energy industry to pay for cleaning up old toxic waste sites, instead shifting the clean-up costs to the taxpayers.	35
When recession was making it hard for people, they supported an economic package where 75% of the money went to the biggest corporations, including a 15-year retroactive tax cut of more than a billion dollars each for Ford and IBM and 254 million dollars for Enron, which had paid no taxes in 4 of the last 5 years.	32
They promised to prioritize a prescription drug benefit for all seniors, but instead, they passed a 2 trillion dollar tax cut, most for the wealthiest, which made a prescription drug benefit for most seniors unaffordable.	30
Enron's Ken Lay was Bush's biggest campaign contributor and was allowed to pick the head of the federal energy agency. That agency stood aside while Enron manipulated the California energy market, costing consumers there hundreds of million dollars and causing potential blackouts.	28
Instead of developing an energy plan for the whole country, they met secretly with the energy, oil and coal companies, and met with no consumer groups, and passed a plan with 33 billion dollars in new tax breaks for these companies.	26
Even after Enron, they passed a weak pension reform bill favored by industry that corrected few abuses and gave corporations new ways to give high executives special pension plans, not available to ordinary employees	22

Table 4 (continued)

We have a crisis of corporate misconduct, but they have packed the federal oversight agencies, like the Food and Drug Administration and Securities and Exchange Commission, with people who worked for these companies. And now, the government has overturned more new safety and environmental rules than any administration in 20 years.

21

Source: Greenburg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, June, 2002 (likely voters)

Table 5

Attitudes towards Positions of Republican Candidates for Congress

(Let me read you some statements about a Republican candidate for Congress and the votes he or she cast this year, For each statement, please tell me whether this description, if accurate, raises very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your mind.)... This candidate supported rolling back government regulations on workplace safety and instead supported a plan to make many of these regulations voluntary and self-enforcing by businesses.... Does that raise very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts in your own mind?

Very serious doubts	23%
Serious doubts	29
Minor doubts	24
No real doubts	14
Don't know/refused	10

1,000

Source: Greenburg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, May, 2002 (likely voters)

	% very serious doubts
This candidate is in favor of no longer requiring the oil, chemical, and energy industry to pay for the cleaning up of old toxic waste sites, instead shifting the clean-up costs to the taxpayers	42
This candidate voted to spend 2 trillion dollars out of the Social Security trust fund for other purposes, including using that money over the next 10 years to fund increased tax cuts for the wealthiest.	42
This candidate voted to spend 2 trillion dollars out of the Social Security trust fund for other purposes, including using that money over the next 10 years to fund increased tax cuts for the wealthiest and for increased military spending.	38
When the recession was making it hard for people, this candidate voted for an economic stimulus package where 75% of the money went to the biggest corporations, including a 15-year retroactive tax cut of more than a billion dollars each for Ford and IBM and 254 million dollars for Enron, which had paid no taxes in 4 of the last 5 years.	38
With health care costs rising, this candidate votes to cut Medicare, the health insurance program for seniors, by 300 billion dollars over the next 10 years.	38
When the recession was making it hard for people, this candidate voted for a huge tax cuts for the biggest corporations, including a 15-year retroactive tax cut of more than one billion dollars each for Ford and IBM and 254 million dollars for Enron. When did a working person ever get a 15-year retroactive tax cut?	38

Table 5 (continued)

This candidates promised to do something about the rising cost of prescription drugs, but then supported a proposal, backed by the drug companies, that provided coverage for only 6 percent of seniors.	34
This candidate voted for a federal budget that throws the country back into deficit spending every year for the next 10 years, which weakens us economically and prevents us from fixing our retirement system, as Baby Boomers are retiring.	34
Within one month of the 9-11 (September 11, 2001) attack (on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon), this candidate voted to bailout the airline industry and give a multi-billion dollar, 15-year retroactive tax cut for the biggest corporations, including Enron, but provided nothing for the employees who lost their jobs. Only six months later did he support a 13-week extension of unemployment benefits.	33
This candidate supported the Bush administration's energy policy which allowed energy companies to operate free of regulations and price controls. Enron used the loopholes to manipulate supplies and force energy shortages that cost the average California household 500 dollars in increased electric bills.	31
This candidate voted for a new federal budget that provides no increase in spending for education for the next 8 years.	30
This candidate supported rolling back government regulations on workplace safety and instead supported a plan to make many of these regulations voluntary and self-enforcing by businesses.	23

Source: Greenburg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, May, 2002 (likely voters)

Table 6

Voting for Congressional Candidates Taking Various Policy Positions

(I'm going to mention some positions that a candidate for Congress might take, and for each one please tell me whether that would make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would not make a difference either way.)...

Establish workplace health and safety rules to reduce carpal tunnel and other repetitive-stress injuries...

Much more likely	30%
Somewhat more likely	29
Somewhat less likely	10
Much less likely	10
Would not make a difference either way	12
Not sure	9
	900

	% More likely to vote for
Strengthen laws that protect employees' right to receive pay and retirement benefits they have earned when their employer files for bankruptcy.	82
Give regular employees the same protections and choices in their retirement plans that top executives have.	78
Provide prescription drug coverage to seniors on Medicare.	78
Raise the minimum wage to six dollars and fifteen cents an hour.	73
Establish workplace healthy and safety rules to reduce carpal tunnel and other repetitive-stress injuries.	59
Eliminate tax loopholes that allow major corporations to pay no income taxes.	59
Eliminate corporate tax breaks for CEO (Chief Executive Officer) compensation that is more than 50 times what the average employee makes	54
Eliminate 'golden parachutes' for CEOs who leave companies bankrupt or in serious economic trouble.	52
Eliminate tax breaks for companies that move overseas.	51
Prevent American companies from relocating to other countries so that they can avoid paying taxes.	50
Privatize Social Security, allowing workers to invest some of their payroll taxes in stocks, but also cutting guaranteed Social Security benefits	38
Give a two-hundred-and-fifty million-dollar tax refund to Enron	12

Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, August, 2002

Table 7

Media Coverage of Government Rules on Repetitive Stress Injuries in Workplace

I'm going to read you a list of some stories covered by new organizations in the last month or so. As I read each one, tell me if you happen to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. How closely did you follow...

Congressional action on the Clinton administration's workplace injury rules aimed at preventing repetitive stress injuries.

Very closely	10%
Fairly closely	16
Not too closely	24
Not at all closely	47
Don't know	2
	1082

Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates, March/April, 2001

	% Very Closely
The school shooting at a suburban San Diego school	42
Reports about decline of stock prices and the possibility of an economic slow-down	35
George W. Bush's tax-cut plan	33
A new government report about the financial future of Social Security and Medicare	30
A new government report on rising health care costs	23
The Supreme Court's decision upholding the Environmental Protection Agency's power to regulate air standards under the Clean Air Act.	15
The findings of a new study on the effects of estrogen replacement therapy on ovarian cancer.	13
President Bush's announcement regarding patient rights legislation now being considered by Congress	13
Congressional action on the Clinton administration's workplace injury rules aimed at preventing repetitive stress injuries.	10
The controversy over the price of AIDS drugs in South Africa	9

Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates, March/April, 2001

Table 7 (continued)

From what you may have seen or heard in the news in the last month, what action did Congress take on the workplace injury rules that were put in place at the end of the Clinton administration? They were repealed and will not go into effect. They were extended to cover additional repetitive stress injuries. They were revised and passed by the new Congress and will take effect in October.

They were repealed and will not go into effect.	20%
They were extended to cover additional repetitive stress injuries.	5
They were revised and passed by the new Congress and will take effect in October.	6
Don't know	70
	1082

Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates, March/April, 2001

Table 8

Media Coverage of Mining Accidents

A. 2006 Coal Mine

Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.

The death of 12 miners in a West Virginia coal mine.

Very closely	47%
Fairly closely	33
Not too closely	11
Not at all closely	8
Don't know	1

1503

Source: Pew Research Center/Princeton Survey Research Associates, January 4-8, 2006

	% Very closely
The death of 12 miners in a West Virginia coal mine	47
News about the current situation in Iraq	40
President Bush authorizing wiretaps on Americans suspected of having terrorist ties	32
Floods in California	20
Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff admitting be bribed members of Congress	18
The nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court	14

Source: Pew Research Center/Princeton Survey Research Associates, January 4-8, 2006

Thinking for a moment about the recent coal mine explosion in West Virginia in which 12 miners died and one survived, do you feel the news media have acted responsibly or irresponsibly in its coverage of the West Virginia mine explosion?

Responsibly	46%
Irresponsibly	47
No opinion	7

1003

Source: Gallup Poll, January 6-8, 2006

Table 8 (continued)

B. 2007 Coal Mine

As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.

The six trapped Utah coal miners

	August 10-13	August, 17-20
Very closely	36%	32%
Fairly closely	35	38
Not too closely	14	18
Not at all closely	15	12
Don't know	*	*
	1020	1025

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, August 10-13, 2007 & August 17-20, 2007

Which one of the (news) stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following more closely?

	August 10-13	August, 17-20
The six trapped Utah coal miners	28%	34%
News about the current situation and events in Iraq	16	16
Safety issues involving toys and other products from China	--	11
News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election	11	10
Recent major ups and downs in the US stock market	--	9
Reports about the condition of the US economy	9	--
The hot weather this summer and its impact on the country	8	--
Barry Bonds breaking the all time home run record	7	--
Karl Rove's resignation from his position in the White House	--	2
Some other story	15	11
Don't know	6	7
	1020	1025

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, August 10-13, 2007 & August 17-20, 2007

Now thinking about the trapped Utah coal miners...do you think news organizations are giving too much, too little, or the right amount of coverage to this story?

Too much	16%
Too little	14
Right amount	63
Don't know	7
	1020

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, August 10-13, 2007

Table 8 (continued)

C. Coal Mine 2010

Which one of the (news) stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following more closely?

News about the new health care reform law	33%
A deadly explosion in a coal mine in West Virginia	24
Reports about the condition of the US economy	10
Tiger Woods plays in the Masters golf tournament	9
President Obama changing US nuclear weapons policies and signing a nuclear weapons treaty with Russia	7
The current situation and events in Afghanistan	3
Some other story	7
Don't know	8
	1012

Source: Pew Research Center, April 9-12, 2010

Which one of the (news) stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following more closely?

News about the new health care reform law	33%
A volcano in Iceland spreading ash over much of Europe, forcing the cancellation of many flights	21
Reports about the condition of the US economy	18
Concerns about the safety of US mines after a deadly explosion in a West Virginia coal mine	9
Anti-government protests on April 15 th	3
News about the nuclear summit in Washington DC	3
Some other story	7
Don't know	8
	1008

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, April 16-19, 2010

Table 8 (continued)

As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.

Concerns about the safety of US mines after a deadly explosion in a West Virginia coal mine

Very closely	26%
Fairly closely	35
Not too closely	23
Not at all closely	16
Don't know	*

1008

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, April, 16-19, 2010

A deadly explosion in a coal mine in West Virginia

Very closely	33%
Fairly closely	36
Not too closely	18
Not at all closely	13
Don't know	*

1012

Source: Pew Research Center/Opinion Research Corporation, April 9-12, 2010

Table 9

Worries about Victimizations

% Worry Frequently + Occasionally

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Being a victim of terrorism	--	47	40	38	39	38	44	36	31	35
Your home being burglarized when you are not there	48	40	45	48	41	45	50	47	46	46
Having your car stolen or broken into	48	41	44	45	41	42	47	44	43	47
Having a school-aged child of yours physically harmed while attending school	34	31	29	35	30	29	40	34	31	31
Your home being burglarized when you are there	31	22	27	30	24	24	33	29	28	33
Getting mugged	30	23	26	28	27	28	33	29	29	31
Being attacked while driving your car	29	21	--	26	23	22	26	24	21	23
Being raped or sexually assaulted ^a	23	19	18	23	20	19	21	19	19	19
Getting murdered	18	13	17	18	16	15	20	19	17	19
Being the victim of a hate crime	16	13	--	17	16	17	18	18	16	17
Being assaulted or killed by a co-worker or other employee where you work	7	7	6	9	5	6	8	6	6	4
	1012	1011	1002	1017	1012	1012	1001	1010	1011	1013

Source: Gallup Poll

Question Wording: How often do you, yourself, worry about the following things – frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?

^aAfter 2000 “Being sexually assaulted”.

Table 10

Worries about Being Killed/Assaulted at Work

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Worried about...										
Being assaulted or killed by a co-worker or other employee where you work										
Frequently	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Occasionally	6	5	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	3
Rarely	18	18	18	20	16	18	17	18	20	17
Never	62	62	61	56	67	64	61	62	59	61
Does Not Apply	12	13	14	15	12	12	14	15	15	17
No Opinion	1	*	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Source: Gallup Poll

Question Wording: How often do you, yourself, worry about the following things – frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?

Table 11

Miscellaneous Workplace Safety Questions

(And, thinking for a moment about those who run the federal government, I'd like to read you a series of statements. After I read each one, please tell me whether you think this statement applies to the federal government...all of the time, some of the time, none of the time.)...Is needed to monitor business issues such as financial fraud, environmental pollution, and workplace safety

All of the time	32%
Some of the time	51
None of the time	14
Don't know/Refused	3
	1200

Source: FD America for Allstate, January, 2010

I'm going to read you a series of statements referring to the majority of older people, meaning more than half of people age 65 or older. Please tell me if you think the statement is true or false. Feel free to tell me if you are unsure about any of the items.

Older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers.

In your opinion, is this statement true or false?

True	46%
False	39
Don't know	15
	1594

Source: FGI Integrated Marketing, March, 2004

Table 12

Satisfaction with Job Characteristics of Current Employed, 1999-2009

	% Completely Satisfied									
	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Your relations with co-workers	67	64	66	68	74	69	67	74	69	69
The physical safety conditions of your workplace	63	65	69	69	73	68	67	73	73	76
The flexibility of your hours	56	57	63	61	62	62	60	68	61	65
The amount of vacation time you receive	50	52	50	53	52	47	54	55	51	56
Your job security	48	54	55	48	54	52	55	56	55	50
Your boss or immediate supervisor	47	51	56	54	60	50	55	60	53	56
The amount of work that is required of you	46	47	51	50	53	49	52	54	50	54
The opportunity you have to learn and grow	43	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
The recognition you receive at work for your work accomplishments	38	39	46	41	48	41	47	47	45	50
The family and medical leave benefits your employer provides	38	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
The health insurance benefits your employer offers	33	36	36	34	39	27	31	36	40	43
Your chances for promotion	32	32	35	35	40	28	37	39	35	40
The retirement plan your employer offers	31	31	29	35	36	27	31	32	34	35
The amount of money you earn	23	24	27	28	28	25	31	29	28	26
The amount of on-the-job stress in your job	21	22	20	26	27	27	22	32	27	28
	1,028	1,013	1,007	1,003	1,017	1,001	1,007	1,019	1,009	1,010

Source: Gallup Polls

Question Wording: Now I'll read a list of job characteristics. For each, please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your current job in this regard. Are you completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or completely dissatisfied with...?

Table 13

Satisfaction with Physical Safety and On-the-Job Stress, 1999-2009

	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 ^a	2008	2009
Physical safety conditions of your workplace										
Completely Satisfied	63%	65%	69%	69%	73%	68%	67%	73%	73%	76%
Somewhat Satisfied	28	25	23	23	19	22	23	19	21	19
Somewhat Dissatisfied	5	6	5	5	5	8	6	8	3	3
Completely Dissatisfied	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	--	2	2
No Opinion	1	1	1	1	*	*	1	--	1	*
The amount of on-the-job stress in your work										
Completely Satisfied	21%	22%	20%	26%	27%	27%	22%	32%	27%	28%
Somewhat Satisfied	44	40	46	36	37	36	43	43	42	41
Somewhat Dissatisfied	22	23	18	23	24	25	22	23	21	21
Completely Dissatisfied	12	13	13	11	10	10	9	--	7	9
No Opinion	1	2	3	4	2	2	4	2	3	1

Source: Gallup Polls

Question Wording: Now I'll read a list of job characteristics. For each, please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your current job in this regard. Are you completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or completely dissatisfied?

^aIn 2007 source combined the two dissatisfied categories together and omitted the No Opinion category.

Table 14

Evaluations of Workplace Safety by Workers

Asked of the Currently Employed:

How would you compare the health and safety practices in your workplace compared to one year ago? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where '1' means much worse and '5' means much better.

5 - Much better	19%
4	22
3	45
2	5
1 - Much worse	5
Don't know	4
	579

Source: IPSOS Reid, July, 2003

Please review the following statements and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each by using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 5 means 'strongly agree'.

I know that some employers are not reporting workplace accidents or injuries.

5 - Strongly agree	16%
4	11
3	18
2	13
1 - Strongly disagree	39
Don't know	4

I know that some workers are afraid to report workplace accidents or injuries.

5 - Strongly agree	15%
4	11
3	18
2	14
1 - Strongly disagree	40
Don't know	1

Employees at my workplace regularly ignore health and safety procedures.

5 - Strongly agree	10%
4	8
3	16
2	16
1 - Strongly disagree	47
Don't know	2

Table 14 (continued)

I am aware of the laws that protect my health and safety in the workplace.

5 – Strongly agree	34%
4	24
3	22
2	11
1 – Strongly disagree	9
Don't know	-
	579

Source: IPSOS Reid, July, 2003

Some companies have organized workplace decision-making in ways to get more employee input and involvement. Are you personally involved in any group, team committee, or task force that addresses issues such as product quality, cost cutting, productivity, health and safety, or other workplace issues?

Yes	31%
No	68
Don't know	2
	1734

Source: NORC's General Social Survey, 2006.

Now I'm going to read you a list of statements that might or might not describe your main job. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of these statements.

The safety of workers is a high priority with management where I work.

	2002	2006
Strongly agree	44%	45%
Agree	46	45
Disagree	7	7
Strongly disagree	2	1
Don't know	1	2
	1796	1734

There are no significant compromises or shortcuts taken when worker safety is at stake.

	2002	2006
Strongly agree	42%	42%
Agree	46	45
Disagree	8	8
Strongly disagree	2	2
Don't know	1	2
	1796	1734

Table 14 (continued)

Where I work, employees and management work together to ensure the safest possible working conditions.

	2002	2006
Strongly agree	38%	38%
Agree	50	50
Disagree	9	8
Strongly disagree	2	2
Don't know	1	3
	1796	1734

The safety and health conditions where I work are good.

	2002	2006
Strongly agree	37%	40%
Agree	54	52
Disagree	7	5
Strongly disagree	1	1
Don't know	*	1
	1796	1734

Source: NORC's General Social Survey, 2006.

Table 15A

Working Conditions and Workplace Injuries

Now some more questions about your working conditions. Please circle one code for each item to show how often it applies to your work. How often...

Do you come home from work exhausted?

	1989	1998	2006
Always	6%	9%	14%
Often	30	32	25
Sometimes	49	48	47
Hardly ever	12	9	12
Never	3	2	3
Can't choose	*	*	*
	898	865	1018

Do you have to do hard physical work?

	1989	1998	2006
Always	8%	9%	13%
Often	15	13	11
Sometimes	27	25	23
Hardly ever	28	25	23
Never	22	28	30
Can't choose	*	*	*
	898	865	1018

Do you find your work stressful?

	1989	1998	2002	2006
Always	9%	11%	9%	13%
Often	29	27	22	21
Sometimes	44	46	43	42
Hardly ever	12	11	19	17
Never	5	5	8	7
Can't choose	*	*	*	*
	898	865	1796	2747

Do you work in dangerous conditions?

	1989	1998	2006
Always	4%	6%	8%
Often	9	7	8
Sometimes	21	18	16
Hardly ever	21	27	21
Never	44	43	47
Can't choose	*	*	*
	898	865	1018

Table 15A (continued)

Do you work in unhealthy conditions?

	1989
Always	3%
Often	5
Sometimes	19
Hardly ever	25
Never	48
Can't choose	1
	898

Do you work in physically unpleasant conditions?

	1989
Always	2%
Often	6
Sometimes	21
Hardly ever	25
Never	46
Can't choose	1
	898

Source: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center

Does your job require you to do repeated lifting, pushing, pulling, or bending?

	2002	2006
Yes	47%	47%
No	53	53
	1796	1734

Does your job regularly require you to perform repetitive or forceful hand movements or involve awkward postures?

	2002	2006
Yes	52%	50%
No	48	50
	1796	1734

Source: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center

Table 15A (continued)

In the past 12 months, how many times have you been injured on the job?

	2002	2006
None	89%	88%
1	7	8
2	2	2
3	1	1
4+	1	1
Don't know	*	*
	1796	1734

Source: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center

Asked of currently employed:

Have you personally ever had an accident or injury at work that you needed to seek medical attention?

Yes 37%

579

Source: IPSOS Reid, July, 2003

Table 15B

Selected Working Conditions and Workplace Injuries by Socio-demographics

(% Reporting)

	Always + Often				
	Hard Physical Work	Dangerous Conditions	Injured 1+ Last Year	Heavy Lifting	Repetitive Hand Movements
Men	31.6	23.1	13.8	57.0	54.5
Women	15.5	9.2	10.1	35.2	45.1
18-29	28.0	14.5	14.3	55.9	51.1
30-39	26.5	20.9	14.4	48.1	50.4
49-49	24.2	17.5	10.8	44.9	52.1
59-64	20.0	13.9	8.9	41.5	48.2
65+	3.8	0.0	8.7	26.1	34.8
LT High Sch.	35.7	30.5	17.4	72.8	60.9
High School	29.9	17.0	15.5	58.7	61.8
Associate	18.7	17.4	11.7	45.5	46.7
Bachelor	7.2	8.8	5.3	25.5	33.1
Grad. Degree	10.6	6.9	3.8	15.4	21.3
Low Job Pres.	35.5	14.2	20.7	76.4	71.3
Low-Medium	33.5	22.1	14.1	58.0	59.8
Medium	21.2	15.3	11.9	43.8	50.0
Medium-High	20.2	14.0	11.0	41.4	44.5
High Job Pres.	7.1	11.6	4.4	21.3	28.2
LT \$15,000	30.4	14.3	16.1	73.2	62.5
\$15-29,999	33.6	15.2	17.1	58.0	59.5
\$30-49,999	26.9	19.0	14.2	51.3	56.6
\$50-74,999	20.1	14.6	13.2	49.0	50.6
\$75,109,999	17.5	20.1	12.0	41.9	44.2
\$110,000+	15.7	7.5	5.5	29.7	38.5

Source: General Social Survey, 2006; See Table 15A for wordings and sample sizes.