Executive Summary
SafeShield Project Officer Injury Survey

Survey Objectives

A primary objective of law enforcement executives is to provide their officers with the proper equipment necessary to protect and defend themselves while performing their duties. This shared commitment among law enforcement executives is strongly embraced by the State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP) Division of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). While great strides have been made to provide law enforcement officers with less-lethal force alternatives and first responder protective gear, protecting line officers in their daily job functions has received little attention.

Facing the problem of duty injuries, SACOP attempted to determine the types of injuries officers sustain, and the severity and frequency of those injuries. The survey is the first step in identifying the areas of an officer's job that cause the greatest numbers of injuries and death; and in determining which can be reduced by technology. This executive summary addresses the results of the initial survey.

Methodology

The survey was distributed electronically to all state associations of chiefs of police. Each association distributed the survey to their membership through whatever means was at their disposal. Dr. Stephen K. Keiser of DuPont Consulting Solutions conducted the survey, which was made available online at http://surveymonkey.com.

The survey consisted of 27 questions, to which a total of 698 respondents replied. Of the 698 respondents, 369 reported at least one officer duty-related injury in 2002. Those respondents reported over 2,800 injuries and more than 24,000 lost workdays. This averages to almost 8 injuries (7.7) and more than 65 (66.4) lost workdays per agency. The data presented in this final report focuses on the 369 departments that reported injuries.

Key Findings

The survey and results can be found in the appendices of this report (pages 4-14). The survey uncovered several key findings.

Key Finding #1: The law enforcement community has a financial incentive to investigate changes to uniforms, equipment, policy, and training that might decrease the instances of on-duty injuries.

- Of the 698 respondents, 369 reported at least one officer duty-related injury in 2002. Those agencies reported over 2,800 injuries and more than 24,000 lost workdays.
- The agencies that report at least one officer duty-related injury in 2002, averaged almost 8 injuries (7.7) and more than 65 (66.4) lost workdays per agency.

Key Finding #2: A cultural/attitudinal shift towards zero tolerance for injuries will be necessary before any changes to training, policy, uniforms, or equipment will have an impact.

- Currently, the law enforcement community believes that the majority of injuries are unpreventable. Fifty-four percent of respondents estimated that very few incidents (5% or less) were preventable.
- Only twenty-seven percent of respondents felt that 25% of the incidents were preventable.

Key Finding #3: The types of injuries sustained and the conditions under which they occurred, suggest that improvements in uniform design, equipment, training, and policy could prevent or mitigate the severity of many of the injuries.

- Sprains were the most frequent class of injuries reported, accounting for 47% of all officer injuries.
- Broken bones accounted for 21% of the lost workdays, but only 5% of the injuries.
- More than half (51.9%) of the respondents reported that most injuries occur between the hours of 6 pm and midnight.

Next Steps

The survey information provides a useful picture of the various types of duty related dangers and injuries officers are exposed to on a daily basis. This information can assist in determining where technology solutions exist, where they are lacking, and how they can be used to improve officer safety. The information also enables the project advisory group to start identifying potential partners in this project. In addition to IACP Committees and Sections, those private sector industry leaders that demonstrate expertise and responsiveness in the field of officer safety will be considered for partnership in this project.

Specific next steps include:

- Conduct line officer focus groups to further clarify and understand the implications of the findings and validate the direction of potential improvements.
- Determine if additional questionnaires or research are needed to begin project recommendations.
- Develop a comprehensive project plan to address the tangible (uniform technology) and intangible (officer mindset for injury prevention) solutions to be made to prevent officer injury/illness.
- Identify specific stakeholders to include in the plan implementation. This will likely include representatives from the law enforcement, local government and corporate communities.

Executive Summary: SafeShield Project Officer Injury Survey
Report Staff

Commissioner Mark Whitman	Vice Chair, SACOP Division SafeShield Project Committee Chair
Elizabeth Currier	SACOP Manager
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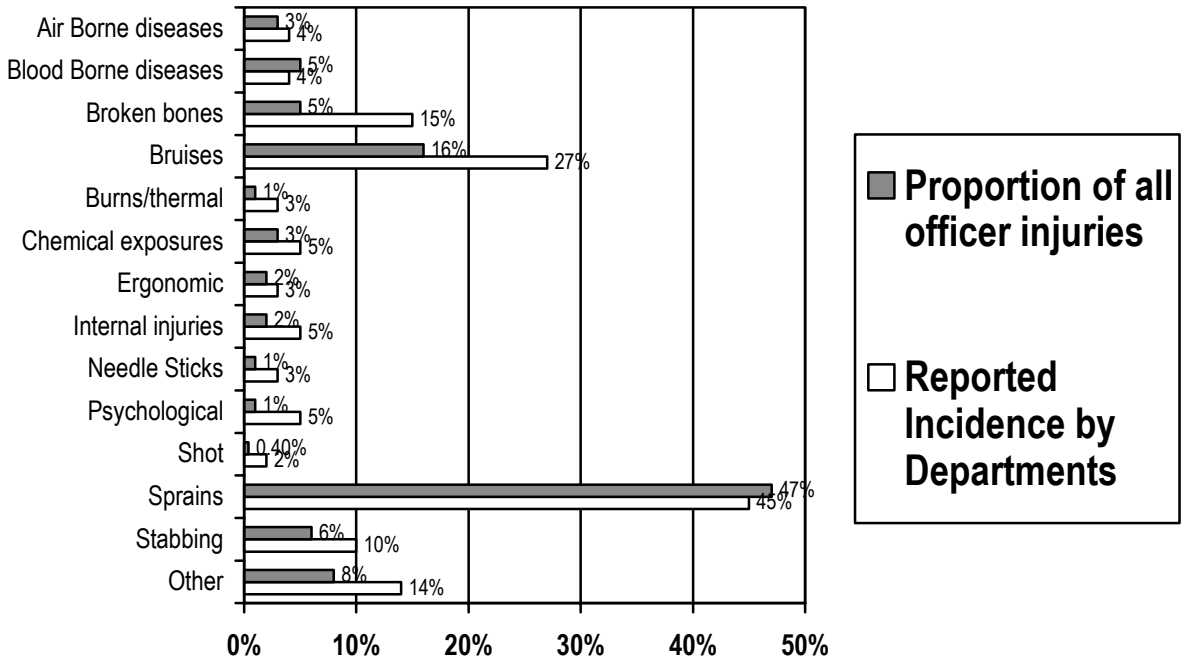
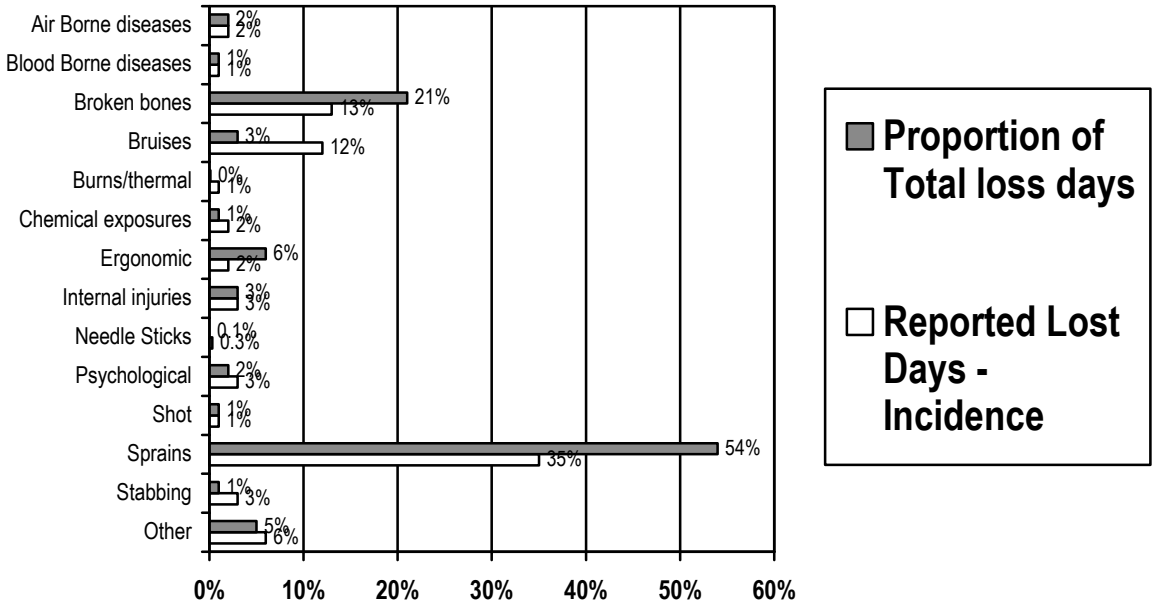
Patrizia Strupp	Research Intern
John Firman	Director, IACP Research Center
Marcy Walsh	ITT Night Vision Industries

Appendix I: Survey Data Charts

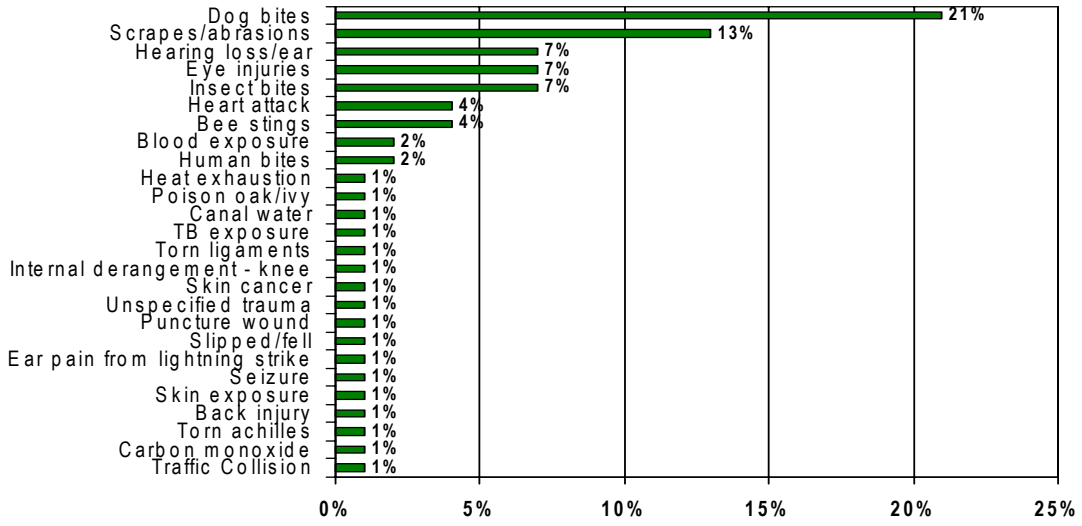
Types of Officer Injuries 2002



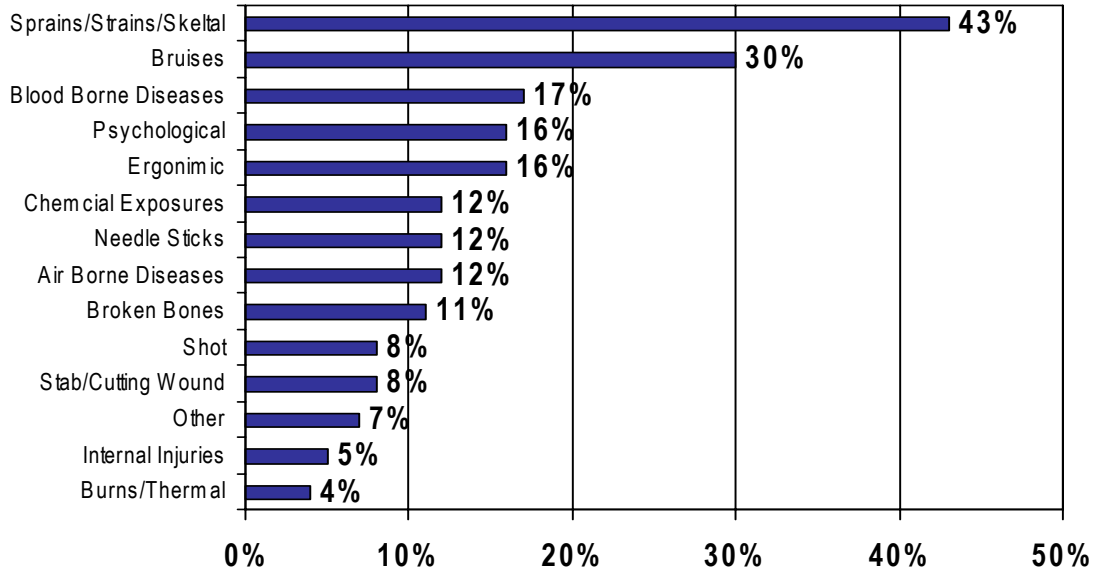
Percentage of Lost Days by Type of Injury in 2002



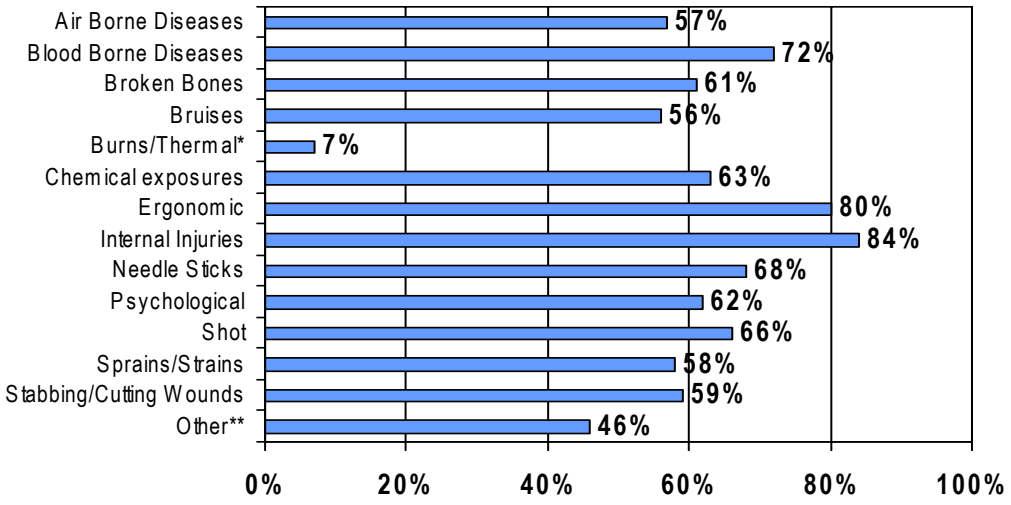
Other Injuries

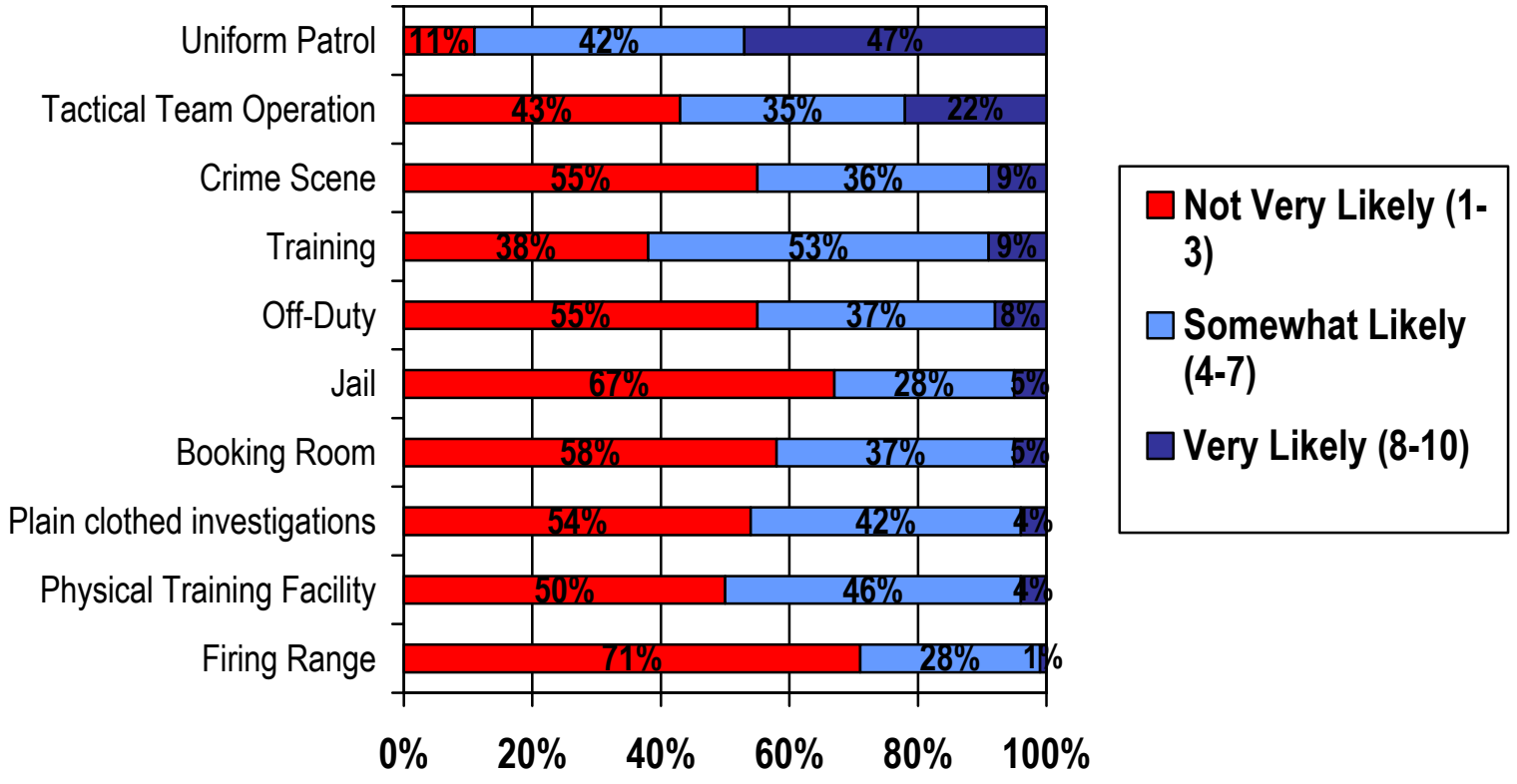


Increase in Injuries

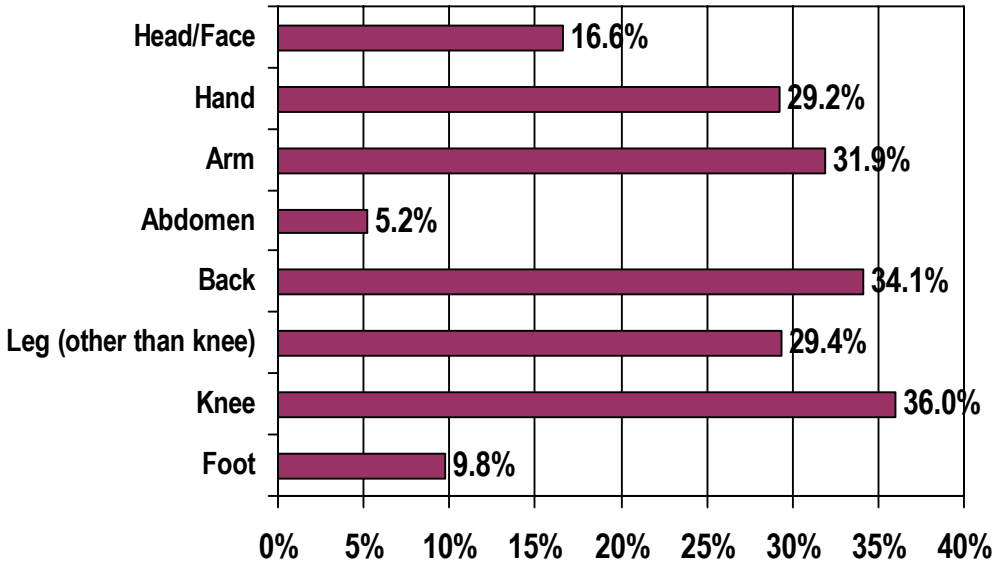


Patrol Injuries vs. Other Duty Injuries

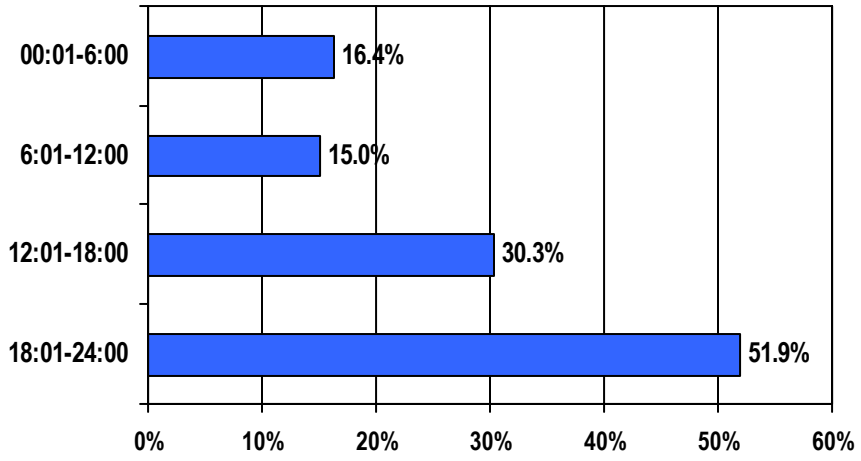




Body Parts Where Most Injuries Occur

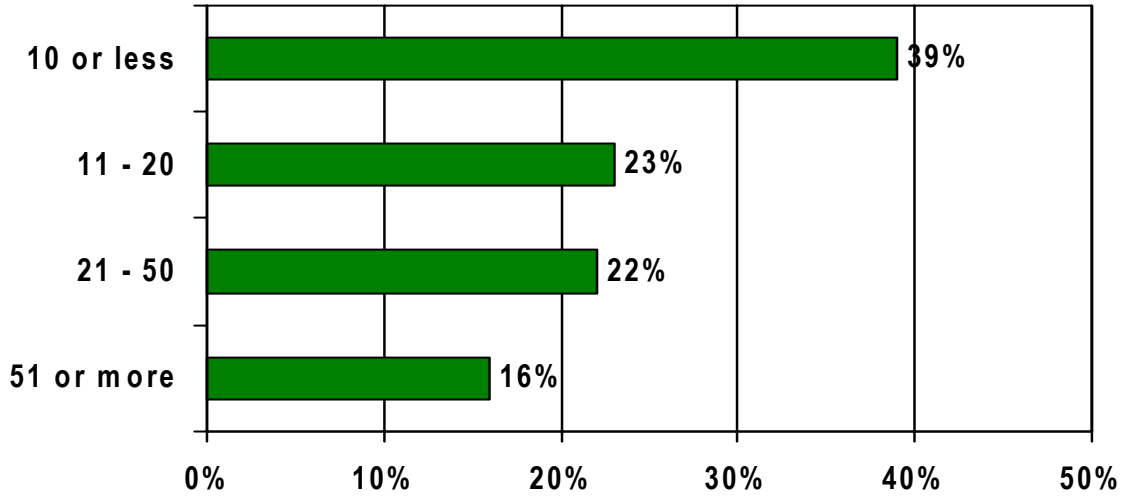


Time of Injuries

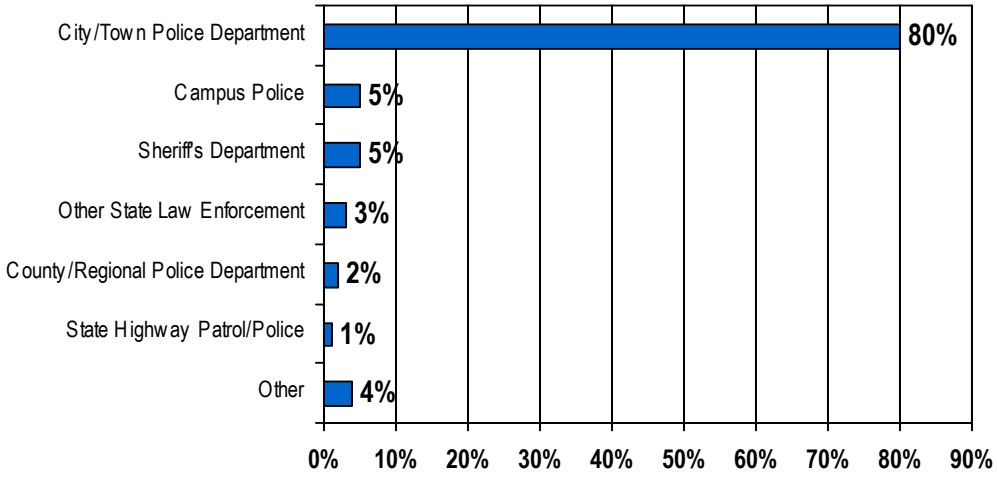


Departmental Characteristics

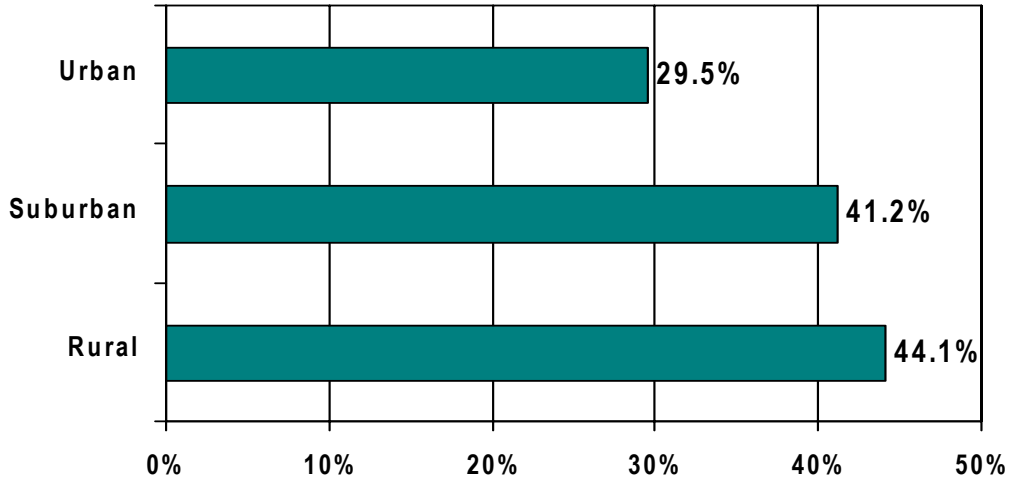
Number of Officers in Responding Agencies



Type of Police Department (City/Town)

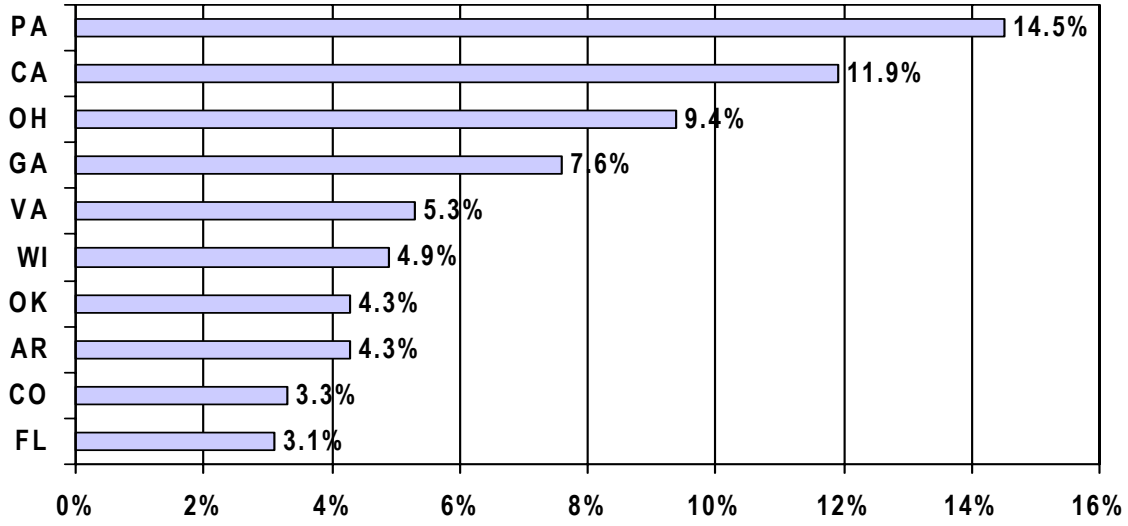


Area of Service



Survey Participants

Responses to the survey came from 28 states. 69% of the responses came from ten states.



Appendix II. Project Survey

1. In 2002, how many officer duty related injuries or illnesses in your department resulted in lost work time?

2. In 2002, how many days of work time were lost due to officer duty related injuries or illnesses?

3. In 2002, how many officers sustained duty related injuries or illnesses due to each of the following types of:

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

4. In 2002, how many days of work time were lost due to one of the following types of duty related injuries or illnesses?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

5. In 2002, what % of each type of duty related injuries or illnesses were due to officer's being a direct or indirect crime victim?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

6. In 2002, what percentage of each type of duty related injury/illness happened during Uniform Patrol?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

7. In 2002, what percentage of each type of duty related injury/illness happened during Plainclothes Investigations?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

8. In 2002, what percentage of each type of duty related injury/illness happened during Tactical Team Operations?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

9. In 2002, what percentage of each type of duty related injury/illness happened during Training?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

10. In 2002, what percentage of each type of injury/illness happened at a Physical Training Facility?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

11. In 2002, what percentage of each type of injury/illness happened at a Firing Range?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

12. In 2002, what percentage of each type of injury/illness happened at a Jail?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

13. In 2002, what percentage of each type of injury/illness happened at a Booking Room?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

14. In 2002, what percentage of each type of injury/illness happened at a Crime Scene?

Air Borne Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Borne Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

15. Is this type of duty related injury/illness on the increase? (Yes/No)

Air Born Diseases	Internal Injuries
Blood Born Diseases	Needle Sticks
Broken Bones	Psychological
Bruises	Shot
Burns/Thermal	Sprains/Strains/Skeletal
Chemical Exposures	Stab/Cutting Wound
Ergonomic	Other (please specify)

16. Do most of these injuries/illnesses occur between?

00:01-06:00
06:01-12:00
12:01-18:00
18:01-24:00

17. Where on the body do most of these injuries occur?

Head/Face	Back
Hand	Leg (other than the knee)
Arm	Knee
Abdomen	Foot

18. In your opinion, how likely are officers in your department to sustain duty related injuries or illnesses in each of the following situations or locations? Use a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all likely and 10 being extremely likely.

    Uniform patrol
    Plainclothes investigations
    Tactical team operations
    Training
    Off-duty
    Physical training facility
    Firing range
    Jail
    Booking Room
    Crime Scene

19. Thinking of the types of duty-related injuries or illnesses that occur most frequently in your department, please describe a recent incident involving these types of injuries/illnesses. Please describe the event and circumstances leading to the injury/illness. DO NOT IDENTIFY SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS BY NAME.

20. In hindsight, what, if anything, could have been done to have prevented the injury/illness?

21. Thinking of all safety incidents in your department, what percent would you say are preventable?

22. Do you have any other comments about duty-related injuries or illnesses in your department.

This information about your department will help us understand differences among departments.

23. Please identify your state of jurisdiction.

24. How many sworn officers currently in your agency?

25. What best describes your department?

City/town police department
County/regional police department
Sheriff's department
State Highway Patrol/Police
Other State Law Enforcement Agency including Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Conservation Officer, Capital Police & Airport Police
Federal Agency
Campus Police
Indian Country Police
Other (please specify)

26. How would you best categorize the type of area that your department serves? Please check all that apply.

Urban
Suburban
Rural

27. We would like to interview a small random sample of Chiefs of Police to get more information on their needs and thoughts with regard to safety. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up phone discussion about police safety? We would schedule it ahead of time with you. If you are willing to help us out, please provide:

Name:
Phone number:
E-mail address:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE