

Workers in transport prone to twice as many traffic-related accidents

Published on:

14 September 2008

Work-related accidents occur more than twice as often among workers in transport occupations (7.7%) compared with the average (2.9%). Bus drivers as well as truck drivers are among the top 10 high risk occupations concerning dangerous work and occupational accidents. Recent findings from the National Survey on Working Conditions enable a closer investigation into traffic-related occupational accidents.

The National Survey on Working Conditions (Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden, NEA) from 2007 reveals that about 4% of all occupational accidents are traffic related. The NEA is a yearly survey of about 25,000 employees that covers topics regarding quality of work, health and occupational accidents. Data were collected by means of paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI) and computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). Participants were free to choose whether they completed the paper questionnaire or accessed the questionnaire on the internet. In 2007, 22,759 employees participated, which constitutes a response rate of 33%.

About

Country: Netherlands

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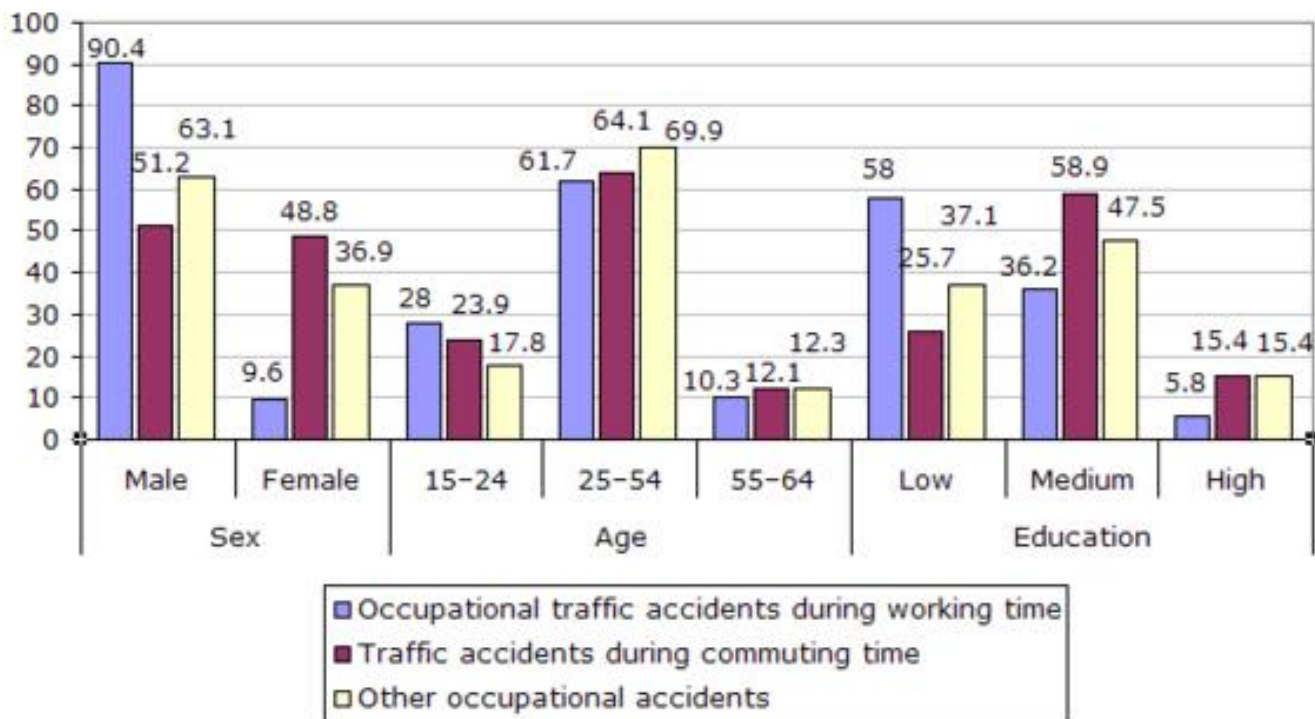
Institution: TNO Work and Employment

Traffic accidents during working and commuting time

In 2007, employees in the Netherlands reported 1,535 occupational accidents. Some 45 of the reported occupational accidents were traffic accidents, representing 3% of all reported occupational accidents.

Figure 1 shows that occupational accidents occur almost twice as often among male workers (63.1%) than female workers (36.9%), whereas occupational traffic accidents occur almost nine times as often among male workers (90.4%) than female workers (9.6%). Occupational accidents occur most often among workers aged between 25 and 54 years and among workers with a low and medium level of education. Among highly educated workers, occupational traffic accidents occur relatively less often (5.8%) than other occupational accidents (15.4%). Conversely, low-educated workers report occupational traffic accidents relatively more often (58%) than other occupational accidents (37.1%).

Figure 1: Occupational and traffic accidents, by sex, age and education (%)



Source: NEA, 2007

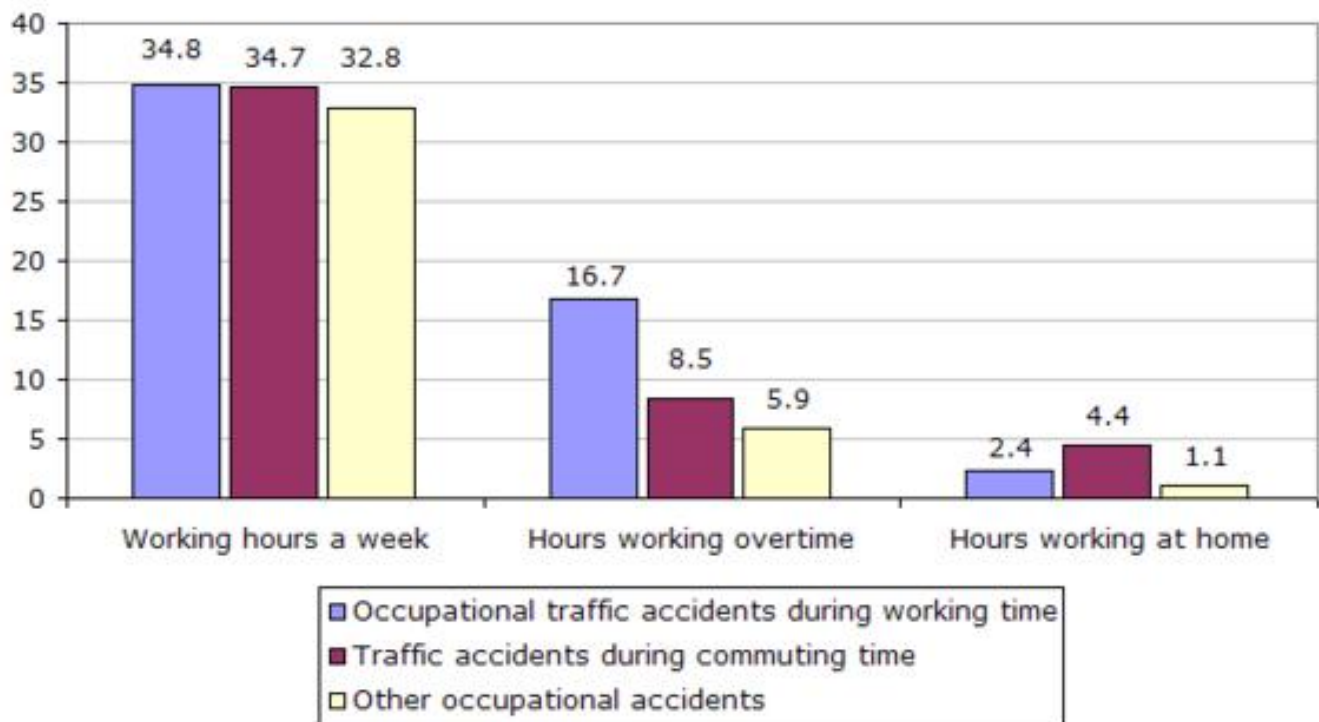
Occupational and traffic accidents, by sex, age and education (%)

Besides information on traffic accidents during working hours, the NEA also provides information on such accidents during commuting time. The latter are somewhat less prevalent than occupational traffic accidents. In 2007, 25 (2%) of all occupational accidents happened during commuting time. Traffic accidents during commuting time occur almost just as often among female workers (48.8%) as among male workers (51.2%). Such accidents occur most often among medium-educated workers and those aged 25–54 years.

Impact of working and employment conditions

Occupational traffic accidents are also related to employment and working conditions. For example, temporary workers in particular experience traffic accidents during working time more often (7%) than occupational accidents that are not traffic related (3%). Figure 2 reveals that the average number of working hours a week appears to be somewhat higher (34.8 hours) among employees who report an occupational traffic accident than among those who report another kind of occupational accident (32.8 hours). Among employees reporting an occupational traffic accident, the average number of hours working overtime appears to be substantially higher (16.7 hours a week) when compared with workers reporting another type of occupational accident (5.9 hours a week). Furthermore, workers reporting a traffic accident during commuting time tend to work more hours at home (4.4 hours a week) than is the case for workers reporting another form of occupational accident (1.1 hours a week). Differences according to gender, as well as according to working or employment conditions, with regard to traffic accidents may be related to the fact that traffic accidents tend to occur in specific economic sectors which may involve working long hours, working overtime and also working at home.

Figure 2: Occupational and traffic accidents, by working hours



Source: NEA, 2007

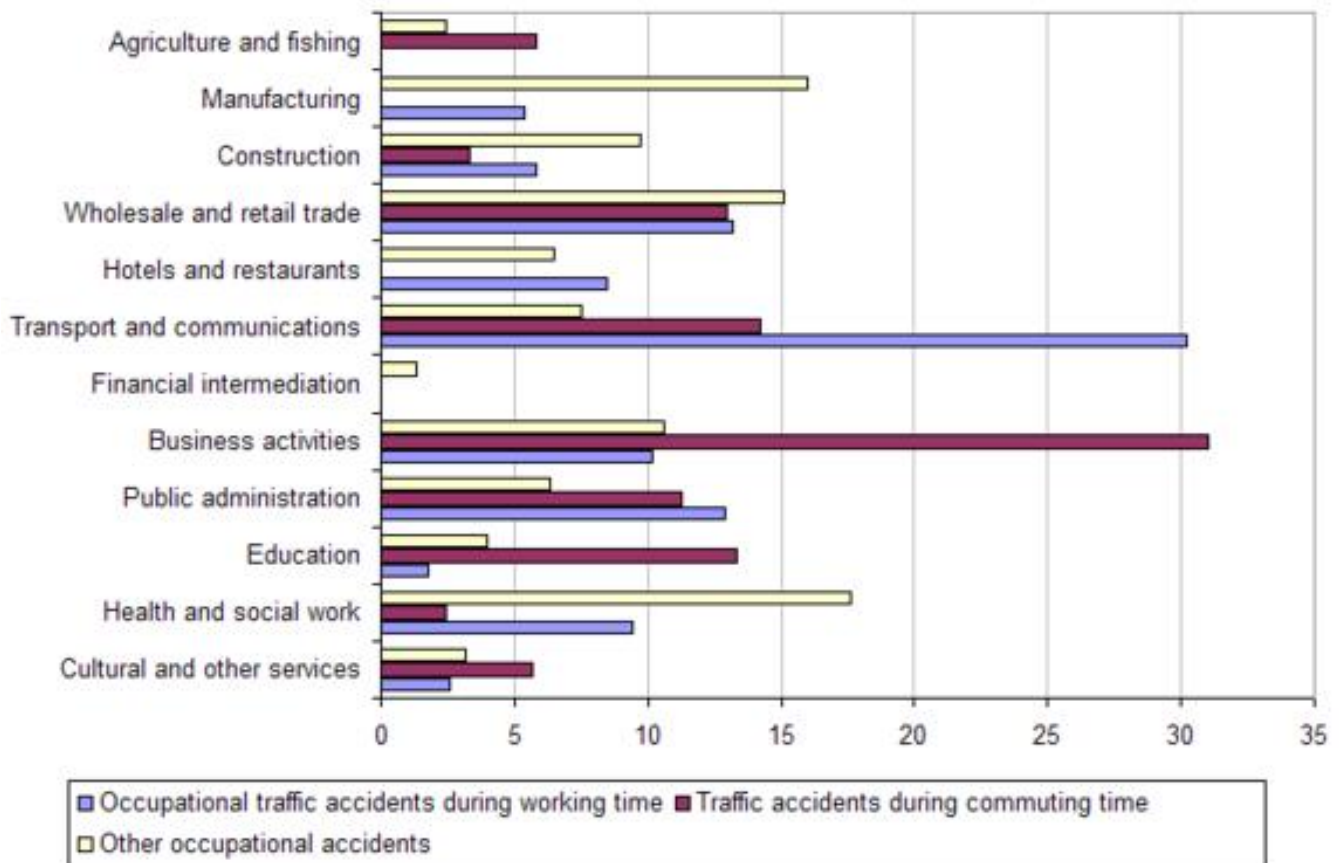
Occupational and traffic accidents, by working hours

Occupational and sectoral differences

Work-related accidents occur more than twice as often among workers in transport occupations (7.7%) compared with the average (2.9%). In fact, bus drivers as well as truck drivers are among the top 10 high risk occupations concerning dangerous work and occupational accidents – see also a recent information update from Belgium regarding truck drivers ([BE0801029I](#)).

Figure 3 provides an overview of the prevalence of occupational accidents and traffic accidents in different economic sectors. Most occupational traffic accidents during working time occur in the transport sector (30%). Men are highly represented in this sector and workers in this field report working substantially more hours a week than average. This may partly explain the relatively high prevalence of occupational traffic accidents among male workers and among people working relatively many hours a week. Traffic accidents during commuting time occur most often in the business activities sector (31%).

Figure 3: Occupational and traffic accidents, by sector (%)



Source: NEA, 2007

Occupational and traffic accidents, by sector (%)

Conclusion

Recent data from the NEA have provided information on the prevalence of traffic-related occupational accidents in the Netherlands. Results show that occupational traffic accidents are mostly prevalent among male workers, young to middle-aged employees, and those with a medium level of education. Furthermore, employees working more hours a week, as well as more hours of overtime, than the average appear to report substantially more occupational traffic accidents. Differences in the prevalence of occupational traffic accidents in relation to working conditions and gender may be due to the sector of economic activity. Most work-related traffic accidents occur in the transport and communications sector, in which male workers are highly represented and in which employees report working more hours a week than average. The high prevalence of such accidents in this sector may partly be due to the fact that the risk of a traffic accident occurring can be increased due to fatigue and long working hours (Jettinghoff et al, 2003).

Reference

Jettinghoff, K., Houtman I.L.D. and Evers, M., Causes of fatigue in freight transport drivers (summary available in English), Hoofddorp, TNO Arbeid, 2003.

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