



National Small Business Poll

NEIB National

Volume 2, Issue 1
2002

Small Business Poll

Workplace Safety

NFIB National Small Business Poll

The *National Small Business Poll* is a series of regularly published survey reports based on data collected from national samples of small-business employers. Eight reports are produced annually with the initial volume published in 2001. The *Poll* is designed to address small-business-oriented topics about which little is known but interest is high. Each survey report treats different subject matter.

The survey reports in this series generally contain three sections. The first section is a brief Executive Summary outlining a small number of themes or salient points from the survey. The second is a longer, generally descriptive, exposition of results. This section is not intended to be a thorough analysis of the data collected nor to explore a group of formal hypotheses. Rather, it is intended to textually describe that which appears subsequently in tabular form. The third section consists of a single series of tables. The tables display each question posed in the survey broken-out by employee size of firm.

Current individual reports are publicly accessible on the NFIB Web site (www.nfib.com) without charge. Published (printed) reports can be obtained at \$15 per copy or by subscription (\$100 annually) by writing the *National Small Business Poll*, NFIB Research Foundation, 1201 "F" Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20004. The micro-data and supporting documentation are also available for those wishing to conduct further analysis. Academic researchers using these data for public informational purposes, e.g., published articles or public presentations, and NFIB members can obtain them for \$20 per set. The charge for others is \$1,000 per set. It must be emphasized that these data sets do NOT contain information that reveals the identity of any respondent. Custom cross-tabulations will be conducted at cost only for NFIB members on a time available basis. Individuals wishing to obtain a data set(s) should write the *Poll* at the above address identifying the prospective use of the set and the specific set desired.

NFIB National
Small Business
Poll



Workplace Safety

Volume 2, Issue 1
2002
ISSN - 1534-8326

William J. Dennis, Jr.
NFIB Research Foundation
Series Editor



1201 "F" Street NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20004
nfib.com



550 California Street
11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
wellsfargo.com

National Small Business Poll



Workplace Safety

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Workplace Safety	2
Tables	9
Data Collection Methods	19

Executive Summary

- The owner is the person primarily responsible for workplace safety in three of four small businesses. Designated employees are responsible 14 percent of the time. As businesses grow larger, primary responsibility for safety shifts from employers to designated employees.
- Forty-three (43) percent of small-business owners believe the greatest potential threat of an employee work-related injury or fatality lies with workplace accidents. But 38 percent believe it lies with traffic accidents, and 4 percent workplace violence. Fourteen (14) percent volunteer that none of the three presents potential danger. Owners of larger firms are more likely to cite workplace accidents as are owners of firms in more dangerous industries (excepting transportation).
- Work-related driving is common among small-business employees. About five of eight small firms employ people who drive as part of their jobs. Fifty-seven (57) percent of owners screen applicants for jobs with driving responsibilities for prior moving traffic violations, drunk driving convictions, etc. Sixteen (16) percent conduct driver's training or send employees to places that do.
- Seventy (70) percent of small businesses offer free entry to their public areas; 23 percent screen people through various methods. Sixteen (16) percent use security cameras to protect employees while 47 percent say that they check the background of job applicants for violent behavior.
- Seventy-seven (77) percent of small-business owners including 90 percent of those employing 10 or more people personally conduct or have someone else conduct periodic safety inspections. Well over 90 percent conduct them in the manufacturing and construction industries, industries statistically among the most dangerous. Inspections occur least frequently in firms located in comparatively safe industries.
- Twelve (12) percent of small businesses have an employee safety committee; 55 percent have written safety rules; 60 percent provide safety information during a new employee's orientation. Larger, small firms are substantially more likely to have each of the three than smaller, small firms.
- Nineteen (19) percent of owners report taking some type of safety training or seminar during the last 12 months. Of those not participating, 32 percent say that they would be "highly likely" to attend a half-day program if they received a "break" on their workers' compensation insurance.
- Twelve (12) percent requested at least one on-site safety consultation in the last five years. Consultations most frequently were given by private engineering or consulting firms, or insurance companies. The most common reason for a request was a routine safety inspection and the second most common to ensure regulatory compliance.
- Twenty-six (26) percent of all small employers and 53 percent of those employing 20 or more people say that they received an OSHA or a state OSHA inspection in the last five years.
- Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) may be engaged by OSHA as an intermediary to assist small employers with their workplace safety problems. Twelve (12) percent report direct experience with an SBDC and over half say that they have heard the program.

Workplace Safety

The incidence of workplace accidents has been falling steadily. There are many reasons for this positive trend including a shift in employment from more dangerous to less dangerous industries, expensive workers' compensation insurance including associated rising medical and rehabilitation costs that together create financial pressures to improve workplace safety, and greater concern with safety among employers and employees. Still, 5.3 million recordable cases of non-fatal workplace injuries and 5,300 work-related fatalities occurred in the year 2000. (All statistics presented appear on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site at www.bls.gov/iif/.) The very smallest and the very largest businesses statistically remained the safest places to work on an industry by industry basis. The incidence of workplace injuries ranged from 2.1 per 100 full-time, full-year employees in establishments with 1-10 people to 7.5 per 100 in establishments with 50 to 249 people, and back to 5.7 in establishments employing more than 1,000. Nonetheless, many work-related accidents and fatalities involve small-business employees. Further, small-business employees are not the only ones affected. Self-employed people, i.e., small-business owners and their families, are about twice as likely to suffer a workplace accident or fatality as a wage and salary worker (1993 data). Cost and potential injury to employees (often friends), family, and self therefore means that this issue of the *National Small Business Poll* addresses a continuing problem in the small-business workplace, safety.

Potential Safety Problems

The owner is the person primarily responsible for safety in three of four small businesses (Q#10). However, the person in charge of safety is tied to size of firm. In 80 percent of businesses with fewer than 10 employees, the owner assumes responsibility for the safety function; only nine percent assign it to an employee. When firms reach 20 employees in size, the proportions change dramatically. Forty-six (46) percent of owners still retain the function in these larger, small firms. But 42 percent assign it to an

employee(s). A relatively large number, eight percent, do not know who is in charge or refused to answer. It is likely that no specific assignment has been made in these cases. But on balance the owner is the central figure on safety issues in a smaller enterprise just as he or she is on most other matters.

Small-business owners typically believe that their firms are in relatively safe industries. Fifty-five (55) percent classify themselves as operating in a relatively safe industry with another 33 percent saying that they are in industries with an "about average" danger

level (Q#1). Just 11 percent categorize themselves as in relatively dangerous industries. Across the population, this evaluation is generally correct. The financial services and the services industries are statistically the safest industries and they constitute approximately 45 percent of small employers. Retail and wholesale trade are in the middle and constitute between 25 and 30 percent of the population. But construction, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture (including forestry and fisheries) are the most dangerous representing between one-fifth and one-quarter of all small firms. With just one in ten feeling that they operate in dangerous industries, many appear to be in relatively dangerous industries and do not recognize it. However, there are differences between the relative safety of individual firms and their broad industry groups. There are even sub-industry differences within broad industries. Still, if small-business owners err in their assessments, it is in the belief that the industry in which they operate is somewhat safer than it actually is.

Small-business owners are divided over the greatest potential on-the-job dangers to their employees. Forty-three (43) percent believe workplace accidents present the greatest danger while 38 percent cite traffic accidents (Q#2). Comparatively few (4 percent) identify workplace violence. Workplace accidents, traffic accidents and violence in the workplace constitute the three most prevalent sources of work-related injury and fatalities. Fourteen (14) percent volunteer that none of the three present the greatest potential danger to their employees. The intent of this response is initially not clear. But cross-tabulated by the relative danger of the industry in which the owner's business is located, it seems obvious that these respondents mean that they feel their business holds little potential danger for their employees.

Owners of businesses employing 10 or more people are significantly more likely to identify workplace accidents than other possible problems; those employing fewer than 10 are somewhat more likely to identify traffic accidents. The smallest employers are also more likely to feel that there is no greatest potential danger. Owners of firms in the transportation/communications sector, wholesale, financial services, and serv-

ices are all more likely to cite traffic accidents than workplace accidents.

a. Driving On-The-Job

About five of eight small businesses employ people who drive a vehicle as part of their jobs (Q#3). Among these firms, the average number of employees who drive as a job responsibility is five with a median of three. Approximately 45 percent of all employees in these firms drive on-the-job. Across the entire small-business population, about one-third of employees drive for an average of just above three per firm and a median of one per firm. Those data imply that about one-third of all employees are exposed to job-related vehicular accidents in a driving capacity. There are two important associated points: not all people traveling on work-related business drive. Some may be transported by a driver employed by the business, others by public conveyance, etc. That raises the number of employees exposed to vehicular accidents. The second point is that not all drivers are on public roads. Some may restrict driving responsibilities to land owned by the firm. Others may drive specialty vehicles not for use on public roads, e.g., a snow-mobile at a ski lodge. That tends to lower vehicular accidents on public roads, but not necessarily job-related vehicular accidents per se. The survey contains no data on either of these two points. It also contains no data on the intensity of driving responsibilities. For example, an over-the-road truck driver would have more intense driving responsibilities than a banker who occasionally visits a commercial customer.

Of those small businesses that do employ drivers, 57 percent of their owners screen applicants for jobs with driving responsibilities for prior moving traffic violations, drunk driving convictions, etc. (Q#3a); 41 percent do not. As a general rule, the more drivers in a firm the more likely an applicant's driving record will be checked. Note that over 70 percent of those employing 10 or more people investigate the record of applicants who will drive. The most frequent checks occur in transportation, retail, wholesale and construction with the former doing so almost universally. These also appear to be the industries where driving is most frequent and intense.

Fewer are actively engaged in driver training than checking driving records. Sixteen (16) percent indicate that they conduct driver training sessions or send their drivers to a place that does (Q#3b). The largest firms are the most likely to become involved, yet less than one-third of them do (30 percent). Small-business owners clearly expect potential drivers to bring driving skills with them.

b. Employee Security

Most small businesses provide customers free entry to public areas. Seventy (70) percent offer free entry while 23 percent require customers to pass a guard, receptionist's desk or locked door before entering (Q#4). Three percent indicate the question is inapplicable, probably meaning that these respondents visit customers, not the reverse. Another three percent volunteer that they do something else.

Small-business owners prefer customers to have free entry. Almost 79 percent say that they do *not* want people to pass some type of security screen when entering their firms (Q#4a). Most feel that way strongly. In contrast, just 12 percent want customers screened. The 11 percentage point discrepancy between those who screen customers and those who want to screen them is probably the result of building security policies. Those renting office space, particularly in a high-rise building with a common entry area, may find all entrants screened by the building's management regardless of individual business owner's preference.

Relatively few small-business owners use security cameras, one of many potential security devices intended to increase employee safety. Just 16 percent report use of cameras while 83 percent report non-use (Q#5). Those who feel workplace violence represents the greatest potential danger to their employees are about four times more likely to use them as are those who see the greatest potential dangers lying elsewhere. This response is appropriate given fears. About two-thirds of workplace violence resulting in fatalities occurs during robberies and cameras are one way to deter them.

Another means to shield employees from workplace violence is to check the backgrounds of potential employees for violent behavior. Almost half (47 percent) say

that they do (Q#6). However, conversations between potential employers and those who could best provide such information, e.g., former employers, are often curbed due to potential liability questions. The result is that small employers who want to protect their people by checking the prior behavior of job applicants have increasing difficulties doing that. But at this time it is an open question whether significantly more small-business owners would actually search for violence in a job applicant's background if others could be more forthcoming.

c. Workplace Accidents

Seventy-seven (77) percent of all small-business owners and 90 percent of those employing 10 or more people personally conduct or have someone else conduct periodic safety inspections of their workplaces (Q#7). Inspections are associated with perceived danger, the more dangerous the industry the more likely there will be inspections. For example, they are conducted in well over 90 percent of construction and manufacturing firms, but in just 71 percent of firms whose owners believe their enterprises are located in a relatively safe industry.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of the inspections in the smallest, small firms are conducted by the business owner (Q#7a). Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) are run by an outside expert, e.g., an engineering firm, a safety consultant. An employee conducts another one in ten (10 percent). The person who usually conducts these inspections changes substantially as firms grow larger. Once a firm reaches 20 employees, an outside expert becomes the most frequent inspection source (41 percent). An employee(s) becomes the second most frequent (32 percent) followed by owners (27 percent). One could explain the change as a shift from authority to expertise. But a more plausible explanation is that the source of relative technical expertise shifts as firms grow and the owner merely takes advantage of it.

Many consider an employee safety committee to be an effective means to reduce workplace accidents, a sentiment not necessarily shared by small-business owners. However, 12 percent have such an employee committee (Q#11). Again, a large difference appears by employee size of business. Just nine percent of those with

fewer than 10 employees have an employee safety committee contrasted with almost one-third (32 percent) who employ 20 to 249 people. Over one-third of those in manufacturing have such a committee, though the relationship is confounded by the fact that manufacturers are on average larger than other small firms.

Written safety rules are another measure often considered useful in maximizing workplace safety. Fifty-five (55) percent of small-businessmen and women say that they have written safety rules or policies (Q#12). The same employee size relationship appears as with employee safety committees. Half (48 percent) of the smallest size classification have them while 86 percent of the largest size classification do. Construction firms, among the smallest on average, are the most likely to have written safety policies followed by manufacturers, among the largest on average.

Finally, safety training or awareness may or may not be part of a new employee's job orientation. Raising the topic during a new employee's introduction to the firm not only transmits safety specific information to a new employee, but also conveys the idea that safety is important to the business. Sixty (60) percent of owners say that they provide safety information during orientation (Q#13). While there is also a firm size gap between those doing it and those not doing it, the gap is smaller than in implementation of other safety policies. The smaller gap is primarily attributable to the larger number of the smallest firms being involved. Fifty-seven (57) percent of the smallest include safety issues in their orientation while 78 percent of the largest do.

Greater Knowledge and Awareness of Workplace Safety

Most small-business owners have personally had no safety training over the last 12 months. Nineteen (19) percent report attending a seminar, conference session or training on workplace safety or reducing accidents (Q#8). Larger, small employers are almost twice as likely to have encountered some additional safety-specific information as have smaller, small employers. Since most small-business owners do not attend seminars, etc., regardless of subject matter, the frequency of interest dis-

played in workplace safety as evidenced by attendance at these gatherings seems quite high.

Assuming such sessions eventually translate into lower workplace injury rates, it is reasonable to ask what incentive would be required for other small-business owners to participate in them. One plausible answer is lower workers' compensation rates. Workers' compensation is an expensive form of insurance, particularly for businesses in dangerous industries. Thus, a financial incentive, i.e., lower insurance rates, might be sufficient to encourage more small-business owners to participate in safety training/awareness sessions. One survey question asked owners who had not attended a session in the last year about attendance at a half day workplace safety training program if their firm got a "break" on its workers' compensation insurance rates. Sixty (60) percent indicate that they would be "highly" or "somewhat" likely to attend (Q#8a) with the two responses split almost evenly. While the size of the rate break would have a bearing (four percent specifically say that their participation depended on the size of the break), a large majority embrace the concept even when not fully aware of important details. Those not inclined to attend the half-day session are emphatic that they are not interested. While six percent are "not too likely" to attend, 28 percent are "not at all likely" to do so.

If the "boss" has not attended a safety session in the last 12 months, perhaps he sent an employee. But only about one in 20 (six percent) had done so (Q#9); 94 percent had not. The response varies substantially by firm size with 22 percent of larger, small firms sending an employee compared to just three percent from smaller, small firms. These numbers are not surprising given that the owner is usually the individual primarily responsible for safety in the business (Q#10). Yet, owners are almost as amenable to sending an employee to a half-day safety session – on the proviso of a cut in workers' compensation premiums – as they are to attending themselves. Fifty-six (56) percent say that they would be "highly" likely or "somewhat" likely to send an employee under these circumstances (Q#9a). Again, positive responses split

almost equally between those “highly” and “somewhat” likely. Again, owners “not at all likely” outnumbered those “not too likely” by a 4-1 margin.

a. On-Site Consultations

Many consider on-site consultations to be one of the most effective ways to identify (and presumably subsequently rectify) any safety deficiencies in a business. The practical problem with on-site consultation from the small business standpoint is cost. On-site consultation is relatively expensive. Not only is there the cost of a trained professional, but the smallest employer may consume almost as much of a consultant’s time as a business several times larger. Further, public programs reach comparatively few. The result is private and policy dilemmas over the relative value and the means of obtaining outside safety advice.

Twelve (12) percent of small-business owners say that they have requested an on-site safety consultation for their business from an “outside source” within the last five years (Q#19). About one-third (35 percent) of owners with firms employing 20 or more people have made such a request compared to eight percent employing fewer than 10. The most frequent requests have come from owners in the relatively dangerous manufacturing and construction industries.

Engineering/consulting firms or similar private businesses received consultation requests most often (35 percent) (Q#19a). Insurance companies received requests with second most frequency (33 percent) followed by a government safety agency (16 percent), e.g., OSHA Consultation Program. Five percent requested an on-site consultation from a non-profit organization such as an industry trade association and another five percent sought help from multiple sources.

Among those who have not requested an on-site consultation, the perception of the organization that would provide the most useful information was very different. Forty-one (41) percent select an insurance company (Q#14c), not notably different from the choice of those who actually made one. But the second most popular choice (24 percent) among those who have not had an on-site consultation within the last five years is a non-profit organization. The iden-

tical percentage (16) select a government safety agency, but only 8 percent opt for a private consulting firm of some type. While the survey did not address financing the provision of consulting services, it appears that respondents considered the financial implications in their answers.

Reasons given for the consultation request among owners who made one varied. The most frequent reason was a routine safety check (26 percent) (Q#14b). The second most frequently cited reason was to ensure compliance (presumably with OSHA or the state equivalent) or to bring their compliance efforts up-to-date (15 percent). Other reasons given were: to reduce insurance costs (7 percent), to comply with an insurer or financier’s request (7 percent), the service was marketed to them (5 percent), and to help educate employees (5 percent). Yet, patterns or clusters of reason were difficult to discern as they often appeared highly firm/owner specific.

The threat of an OSHA inspection is always in the background. While relatively few identify an inspection as the reason for requesting a voluntary on-site consultation, it has no doubt entered the minds of many who requested one (as well as many of those who have not). But the threat of an inspection is not real in most cases. There is less than a 2 percent chance of any business being inspected by either federal or a state OSHA (calculated from data in DOL press release February 4, 2002). Inspections are confined to businesses (establishments) that are in dangerous industries, with a history of accidents, or the subject of employee complaints. Still, one in four (26 percent) small-business owners report an OSHA (including state OSHA) inspection in the last five years (Q#17). Over half of those with 20 or more employees report one. Industry differences appear in these data, but not nearly to the degree expected. Manufacturing and construction enterprises were inspected only twice as often as service businesses. This discrepancy is very difficult to explain. The most likely candidate is owner confusion with inspectors from agencies having a lower profile than OSHA. If this speculation is accurate, OSHA’s legacy make its newer, cooperative and consulting approach more difficult to implement.

b. Public Initiatives to Increase Workplace Safety In Small Businesses

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) plans to increase emphasis on cooperative modes of activity to improve small business workplace safety. One initiative attempts to place greater and more usable information in the hands of small-business owners. While technology is the preferred manner of information transfer, technology is often not a realistic option when attempting to reach many in the target audience. Intermediaries are required.

Perhaps the primary intermediary will be the nation's network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). There are now over 1,000 locations operating throughout the country. While it is not clear that they have any particular expertise in safety-related matters, their primary function would be providing a location, hiring expertise, coordinating, and promoting. As a result, it is important to know how many owners are familiar with the Centers and how well they are received.

The data are mixed on these questions. Approximately 12 percent of small employers throughout the country have asked for help from an SBDC in the last five years or have attended a function sponsored by one, e.g., a training seminar (Q#20); 87 percent say they have not. Firm size appears to matter very little in prior participation. However, industry does. Owners of small service and manufacturing businesses are more likely to have participated while those in construction and agriculture (including forestry and fisheries) are much less likely to have. The overwhelming majority (82 percent) of those who have had experience with an SBDC say that they were satisfied with the value of what was received from the organization (Q#15a). However, 55 percent say they were "somewhat" satisfied compared to 28 percent who were "very" satisfied and 10 percent were "not at all" satisfied. These data clearly present a rough impression rather than a rigorous analysis and their meaning are very much in the eye of the beholder.

If so relatively few small employers have had no experience with an SBDC, it is possible that large numbers are not familiar with the organizations. Minimal recognition would challenge their use as an intermedi-

ary. However, 44 percent of those who have had no experience with an SBDC say that they have heard of them (Q#20b). This suggests that somewhat over half of all small-business owners are aware of Small Business Development Centers.

OSHA is making another effort with the Voluntary Protection Partnership/Program (VPP). VPPs essentially are a cooperative activity among OSHA, business owners and employees to establish a strong and mutually agreeable workplace safety program within a firm. The firm is then exempted from the routine inspection program for a specified period. But few small employers have heard of the program and even fewer participate. One-half of one percent (about one in 200) of small-business owners say that they participate in VPPs. Of those who don't participate, just over 4 percent have ever heard of the program meaning that only 5 percent of the entire population are even aware of its existence.

Final Comments

Workplace safety dredges up images of heavy industrial work sites with belching blast furnaces prepared to singe Lilliputian-size employees or unshielded spinning cogs waiting to grab a loose sleeve. But those images are no longer the American workplace. The workplace and its dangers have changed dramatically over the years, even though many employees still work in comparatively dangerous environments. Perhaps the more notable change (other than the decline in injuries), at least as it impacts small business, is a gradual shift away from absolute concern over workplace accidents to highway accidents and workplace violence. While a plurality of small-business owners feel that workplace accidents still pose the greatest danger to their employees, almost as many now identify traffic accidents as the principal threat. Add workplace violence, another untraditional source of concern, and small employers about equally feel that the safety of their employees are endangered by traditional and non-traditional sources. Owners who fear traditional sources more also operate in relatively high risk industries (except transportation). The opposite is also true. The greatest potential to improve workplace safety in small businesses therefore still lies

in preventing workplace accidents, though significant potential to increase employee safety lies elsewhere.

A substantial fall-out from these changing priorities is the need to expand the focus of workplace safety initiatives. While attention to hazards on the firm's premises is still highly relevant for a large share of the nation's small businesses, attention to highway safety will be more relevant to others. (Some obviously find both particularly relevant.) Business safety programs, training materials, consultants, etc., therefore need to ensure that the firm's potential problems are being addressed, not the potential problems of some other small business. This need to broaden the focus makes an already difficult communications problem even more so.

The key to greater safety remains the owner. He or she is still the individual who customarily handles safety related matters, as well as hiring, training, and capital outlays. Several strategies can be employed to encourage owners to take additional and/or regularized safety measures. The first, and easiest part, involves content, i.e., message. Appeals can be made to self-interest. Safer workplaces translate directly into cost savings such as lower workers' compensation rates or less employee time lost; small employers and their families are more likely to be injured or killed than any individual employee. Altruism is also influential. While this survey did not examine moral imperatives, a previous study conducted by NFIB in association with the Insurance Research Council indicate that concern for others is the single strongest motivation for safety actions.

The more challenging issue is to gain small-business owner attention, particularly the attention of those who operate in relatively safe industries and who have not experienced workplace accidents. These people have a "million and one" problems tugging at them and naturally attend to the most pressing. The dilemma is how to push, or as the case may be, keep safety toward the top even when there appears to be no immediate need.

Workplace Safety

(Please review notes at the table's end.)

	Employee Size of Firm			
	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-249 emp	All Firms
1. Compared to other industries, is your industry a relatively dangerous industry to work in, a relatively safe industry to work in, or about average?				
1. Relatively dangerous	11.6%	10.2%	9.0%	11.2%
2. Relatively safe	54.8	54.5	57.7	55.1
3. About average	32.8	35.2	33.3	33.1
4. (DK/Refuse)	0.8	—	—	0.7
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

2. Which presents the greatest potential on-the-job danger to your employees?

1. Workplace accidents	40.6%	52.9%	54.5%	43.3%
2. Traffic accidents	38.9	34.5	35.1	38.0
3. Violence in the workplace	4.0	2.3	1.3	3.5
4. (None of them)	15.1	10.3	9.1	14.0
5. (Combination)	1.1	—	—	0.9
6. (DK/Refuse)	0.3	—	—	0.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

3. How many of your employees drive a vehicle as part of their job?

1. None	41.6%	23.1%	21.8%	37.6%
2. One	17.1	12.6	3.8	15.3
3. Two	15.1	10.3	6.4	13.7
4. 3-5	20.5	18.4	16.7	19.9
5. 6-10	4.8	21.8	14.1	8.6
6. 10 or more	1.0	12.6	35.9	5.7
7. (DK/Refuse)	—	1.1	1.3	0.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

3a. Do you screen applicants for jobs with driving responsibilities for prior moving traffic violations, drunk driving convictions, etc.? (If one or more in Q#3.)

1. Yes	52.6%	71.6%	70.5%	57.3%
2. No	44.7	28.4	29.5	40.6
3. (DK/Refuse)	2.7	—	—	2.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	200	151	154	505

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

3b. Do you conduct driver safety training sessions for your drivers or send them to a place that does?

1. Yes	13.3%	17.9%	30.0%	16.0%
2. No	85.6	82.1	70.0	83.2
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.0	—	—	0.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	200	151	154	505

4. Do your customers have free entry into your business or must they pass a guard, receptionist desk, or locked door before they enter?

1. Free entry	70.8%	70.9%	61.0%	69.9%
2. Guard/receptionist desk/ locked door	20.6	27.9	37.7	23.1
3. (Other)	3.5	—	1.3	2.9
4. (Not Applicable)	3.0	1.2	—	2.5
5. (DK/Refuse)	2.0	—	—	1.7
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

4a. Do you want or not want people to pass a security screen before entering your business? Do you feel that way strongly?

1. Screen strongly	7.2%	9.2%	11.5%	7.8%
2. Screen, not strongly	3.0	4.6	7.7	3.7
3. Not screen, not strongly	12.7	16.1	15.4	13.4
4. Not screen, strongly	66.3	63.2	59.0	65.2
5. (Not Applicable)	3.5	3.4	2.6	6.6
6. (DK/Refuse)	7.3	3.4	3.9	3.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

5. Do you use security cameras to increase employee safety?

1. Yes	14.3%	21.8%	24.4%	16.1%
2. No	84.8	78.2	75.6	83.1
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.9	—	—	0.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Employee Size of Firm
 1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

6. Do you check the background of potential employees to determine if they have a history of violent behavior?

1. Yes	45.4%	51.7%	56.4%	47.2%
2. No	51.7	48.3	41.0	50.3
3. (DK/Refuse)	2.9	—	2.6	1.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	167	118	82	367

7. Do you personally conduct or do you have someone else conduct periodic safety inspections of your workplace(s)?

1. Yes	73.4%	89.7%	91.0%	77.0%
2. No	25.1	10.3	7.7	21.8
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.4	—	1.3	1.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

7a. Who conducts those inspections? (If “yes” in Q#7.)

1. You personally	66.0%	51.9%	26.8%	59.7%
2. An employee(s)	9.7	23.4	32.4	14.1
3. An outside expert	23.8	23.4	40.8	25.7
4. (DK/Refuse)	0.4	1.3	—	0.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	254	177	184	615

8. Within the last 12 months, have you personally attended a seminar, conference session, or training on workplace safety or reducing accidents?

1. Yes	16.6%	25.0%	30.8%	18.9%
2. No	83.4	75.0	69.2	81.1
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

8a. Would you be highly likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to attend a half-day seminar on workplace safety if your firm got a break on its workers' compensation premiums? (If "no" in Q#8.)

1. Highly likely	29.3%	37.5%	48.1%	31.7%
2. Somewhat likely	28.4	32.8	22.2	28.3
3. Not too likely	6.3	4.7	7.4	6.2
4. Not at all likely	30.9	17.2	16.7	28.3
5. (Depends on the break)	3.2	6.3	3.7	3.6
6. (DK/Refuse)	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	291	149	139	579

9. Within the last 12 months, have you sent an employee to attend a seminar, conference session, or training on workplace safety, reducing accidents, etc.?

1. Yes	3.4%	9.1%	22.2%	5.6%
2. No	96.4	90.9	77.8	94.3
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.2	—	—	0.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	291	149	139	579

9a. Would you be highly likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely to send an employee to a half-day seminar on workplace safety if your firm got a break on its workers' compensation premiums? (If "no" in Q#9.)

1. Highly likely	25.8%	37.3%	51.2%	28.7%
2. Somewhat likely	26.8	32.2	20.9	26.9
3. Not too likely	8.3	6.8	7.0	8.0
4. Not at all likely	35.4	20.3	16.3	32.6
5. (Depends on the break)	2.4	3.4	2.3	2.5
6. (DK/Refuse)	1.4	—	2.3	1.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	280	135	110	525

10. Are you or is a designated employee primarily responsible for safety in your business?

1. Me	80.0%	67.0%	46.2%	75.3%
2. An employee	9.4	26.1	42.3	14.4
3. (Someone else)	2.9	2.3	3.8	2.9
4. (DK/Refuse)	7.8	4.5	7.7	7.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

11. Do you have an employee safety committee in your business?

1. Yes	8.6%	20.7%	32.1%	12.2%
2. No	91.0	79.3	66.7	87.3
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.5	—	1.3	0.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

12. Do you have written safety rules or policies?

1. Yes	48.3%	75.9%	85.7%	54.9%
2. No	51.6	24.1	14.3	45.0
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.2	—	—	0.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

13. Is safety training or safety awareness part of a new employee's job orientation?

1. Yes	55.6%	75.0%	78.2%	59.9%
2. No	42.9	25.0	21.8	38.8
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.6	—	—	1.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

14. In the last five years, have you requested from an outside source an on-site safety consultation for your business?

1. Yes	8.3%	20.7%	34.6%	12.2%
2. No	90.8	79.3	64.1	86.9
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.0	—	1.3	0.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

14a. Did you request the on-site safety consultation from: (If yes in Q#14.)

1. An insurance company			28.0%	33.3%
2. A government safety agency			20.0	16.1
3. An engineering, consulting or similar private business			32.0	35.3
4. A non-profit organization such as a trade association			8.0	5.4
5. (More than one)			8.0	5.4
6. (DK/Refuse)			4.0	4.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	31	41	67	139

14b. Why did you request the on-site safety consultation? (Open)

1. Routine safety check			23.1%	26.3%
2. Reduce insurance costs			7.7	7.4
3. Ensure compliance/up-to-date			19.2	15.8
4. Insurer/financier request			3.8	7.4
5. Was marketed to us			—	5.3
6. Educate employees			7.7	5.3
7. Free/Part of a package			3.8	4.2
8. (Other)			34.7	26.2
9. (DK/Refuse)			—	2.1
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	31	41	67	139

14c. If you were to request an on-site visit or otherwise obtain personalized workplace safety information for your business, from whom would you probably obtain the most useful information: (If no in Q#14.)

1. An insurance company	40.2%	41.2%	50.0%	41.0%
2. A government safety agency	16.6	13.2	15.4	16.2
3. An engineering, consulting or similar private business	8.1	5.9	7.7	7.9
4. A non-profit organization such as a trade association	23.4	30.9	17.3	23.7
5. (More than one)	5.7	2.9	3.8	5.3
6. (DK/Refuse)	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	320	159	134	613

15. Within the last five years, have you asked for help from a Small Business Development Center for any reason or attended a function sponsored by one?

1. Yes	11.6%	15.1%	15.4%	12.3%
2. No	87.6	83.7	84.6	86.9
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.8	1.2	—	0.8
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Employee Size of Firm
 1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

15a. Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the value of what you received from the SBDC? (If “yes” in Q#15.)

1. Very satisfied	27.8%
2. Somewhat satisfied	54.6
3. Not too satisfied	7.2
4. Not at all satisfied	10.3
5. (DK/Refuse)	—

Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	43	29	30	102

15b. Have you ever heard of Small Business Development Centers? (If “no” in Q#15.)

1. Yes	44.0%	47.3%	42.4%	44.2%
2. No	55.5	51.4	56.1	55.1
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.5	1.4	1.5	0.7

Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	308	171	171	650

16. Do you participate in a Voluntary Protection Partnership, also called a VPP?

1. Yes	0.6%	—%	—%	0.5%
2. No	97.9	100.0	98.7	98.2
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.4	—	1.3	1.3

Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

16a. Have you every heard of a Voluntary Protection Partnership? (If no in Q#16.)

1. Yes	4.6%	2.3%	5.1%	4.4%
2. No	95.2	97.7	94.9	95.4
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.2	—	—	0.1

Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	348	199	200	747

17. Within the last five years, has your business been inspected by OSHA or its state equivalent?

1. Yes	21.7%	36.4%	52.6%	26.3%
2. No	76.1	60.2	44.9	71.3
3. (DK/Refuse)	2.2	3.4	2.6	2.4

Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Demographics

D1. Is your primary business activity:

1. Construction?	10.3%	14.9%	6.4%	10.4%
2. Manufacturing?	7.1	13.8	17.9	8.9
3. Wholesale?	7.5	8.0	5.1	7.3
4. Retail?	21.7	23.0	25.6	23.3
5. Transportation?	2.4	2.3	5.1	2.6
6. Communication?	1.0	2.3	2.6	1.3
7. Financial Services?	7.5	3.4	3.8	8.7
8. Services?	34.0	29.9	29.6	33.1
A. Non-professional, e.g., lodging, auto repair, garages, recreation	(19.6)	(23.1)	(20.8)	(20.1)
B. Professional, e.g., health, legal, education, engineering	(35.5)	(38.5)	(37.5)	(36.0)
C. Business, e.g., advertising, mail, employment agencies, computer services, security, equipment rental	(18.2)	(11.5)	(12.5)	(17.0)
D. Personal, e.g., laundries, beauty shop, photography, funeral services, child care	(18.7)	(15.4)	(12.5)	(17.8)
E. (Other/D/K)	(7.9)	(11.5)	(16.7)	(9.1)
9. Agriculture, forestry, fishing?	8.6	2.3	3.8	7.4
10. (Other)	—	—	—	—
11. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

D2. Over the last two years, have your real volume sales:

1. Increased by 30 percent or more?	13.6%	14.9%	18.2%	14.2%
2. Increased by 20 to 29 percent?	13.8	14.9	14.3	14.0
3. Increased by 10 to 19 percent?	21.6	24.1	20.8	21.8
4. Changed less than 10 percent one way or the other?	26.8	26.4	26.0	26.7
5. Decreased by 10 percent or more?	16.8	13.8	15.6	16.4
6. (DK/Refuse)	7.5	5.8	5.2	7.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

D3. Is this business operated primarily from the home, including any associated structures such as a garage or a barn?

1. Yes	29.8%	5.7%	2.6%	24.6%
2. No	69.7	93.1	97.4	74.9
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.5	1.1	—	0.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

D4. How long have you owned or operated this business?

1. < 6 years	24.2%	21.2%	14.3%	22.9%
2. 6-10 years	22.4	15.3	18.2	21.2
3. 11-20 years	27.6	31.8	26.0	27.9
4. 21-30 years	16.6	15.3	20.8	16.8
5. 31 years+	8.3	15.3	18.2	10.0
6. (DK/Refuse)	1.0	1.2	2.6	1.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	202	752

D5. What is your highest level of formal education?

1. Did not complete high school	2.9%	1.1%	3.8%	2.8%
2. High school diploma/GED	22.3	21.8	15.4	21.5
3. Some college or an associates degree	24.5	23.0	17.9	23.7
4. Vocational or technical school degree	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.6
5. College diploma	29.3	33.3	39.7	30.7
6. Advanced or professional degree	17.6	16.1	17.9	17.5
7. (DK/Refuse)	0.8	2.3	2.6	1.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	350	200	202	752

D6. Please tell me your age.

1. <25	0.5%	— %	1.3%	0.5%
2. 25-34	8.7	6.8	7.7	8.4
3. 35-44	25.5	20.5	17.9	24.2
4. 45-54	31.4	34.1	35.9	32.1
5. 55-64	23.0	28.4	21.8	23.5
6. 65+	7.9	8.0	12.8	8.4
7. (DK/Refuse)	3.0	2.3	2.6	2.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

	Employee Size of Firm			
	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-249 emp	All Firms
D7. What is the zip code of your business?				
1. East (zips 010-219)	18.5%	16.1%	15.4%	17.9%
2. South (zips 220-427)	19.1	21.8	24.4	19.9
3. Mid-West (zips 430-567, 600-658)	23.4	23.0	20.5	23.1
4. Central (zips 570-599, 660-898)	19.3	25.3	21.8	20.2
5. West (zips 900-999)	19.7	13.8	17.9	18.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	351	200	201	752

D8. Sex

Male	81.0%	86.2%	87.2%	82.1%
Female	19.0	13.8	12.8	17.9
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	350	200	202	752

Table Notes

1. All percentages appearing are based on **weighted** data.
2. All "Ns" appearing are based on **unweighted** data.
3. Data are not presented where there are fewer than 50 unweighted cases.
4. ()s around an answer indicate a volunteered response.

WARNING — When reviewing the table, care should be taken to distinguish between the percentage of the population and the percentage of those asked a particular question. Not every respondent was asked every question. All percentages appearing on the table use the number asked the question as the denominator.

Data Collection Methods

The data for this survey report were collected for the NFIB Research Foundation by the executive interviewing group of The Gallup Organization. The interviews for this edition of the *Poll* were conducted between February 11 - March 13, 2002 from a sample of small employers. “Small employer” was defined for purposes of this survey as a business owner employing no fewer than one individual in addition to the owner(s) and no more than 249.

The sampling frame used for the survey was drawn at the Foundation’s direction from the files of the Dun & Bradstreet Corporation, an imperfect file but the best currently available for public use. A random stratified sample design was employed to compensate for the highly skewed dis-

tribution of small-business owners by employee size of firm (Table A1). Almost 60 percent of employers in the United States employ just one to four people meaning that a random sample would yield comparatively few larger small employers to interview. Since size within the small-business population is often an important differentiating variable, it is important that an adequate number of interviews be conducted among those employing more than 10 people. The interview quotas established to achieve these added interviews from larger, small-business owners were arbitrary but adequate to allow independent examination of the 10-19 and 20-249 employee size classes as well as the 1-9 employee size group.

Table A1

Sample Composition Under Varying Scenarios

Employee Size of Firm	Expected from Random Sample*		Obtained from Stratified Random Sample			
	Interviews Expected	Percent Distribution	Interview Quotas	Percent Distribution	Completed Interviews	Percent Distribution
1-9	593	79	350	47	351	47
10-19	82	11	200	27	200	27
20-249	75	10	200	27	201	27
All Firms	750	100	750	101	752	101

*Sample universe developed from special runs supplied to the NFIB Research Foundation by the Bureau of the Census (1997 data).

Previous Publications in This Series

- Volume 1, Issue 1 *The Changing Search
for Employees*
- Issue 2 *The Use and Value of Web Sites*
- Issue 3 *The Cash Flow Problem*
- Issue 4 *Adjusting to Cost Increases*
- Issue 5 *Coping with Regulation*
- Issue 6 *Success, Satisfaction and Growth*
- Issue 7 *Getting Paid*
- Issue 8 *Privacy*

The Sponsors

The **NFIB Research Foundation** is a small-business-oriented research and information organization affiliated with the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's largest small and independent business advocacy organization. Located in Washington, DC, the Foundation's primary purpose is to explore the policy related problems small-business owners encounter. Its periodic reports include *Small Business Economic Trends*, *Small Business Problems and Priorities*, and now the *National Small Business Poll*. The Foundation also publishes ad hoc reports on issues of concern to small-business owners. Included are analyses of selected proposed regulations using its Regulatory Impact Model (RIM). The Foundation's functions were recently transferred from the NFIB Education Foundation.

Wells Fargo provides capital and financial services to more than 1.5 million businesses with annual sales up to \$10 million in the 50 United States and Canada. As a leading financial services provider to the small-business market, Wells Fargo is the largest small-business lender in the nation of loans up to \$100,000. Through its targeted loan programs alone, Wells Fargo has lent more than \$9 billion to African-American-, Latino-, and women-owned businesses.

Wells Fargo & Company is a \$280 billion diversified financial services company providing banking, insurance, investments, mortgage and consumer finance through more than 5,400 stores, over 6,000 ATMs, the Internet (<http://www.wellsfargo.com>) and other distribution channels across North America.



1201 "F" Street NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20004
nfib.com



550 California Street
11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
wellsfargo.com