

# Police and security officer experiences of occupational violence and injury in Australia

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## ABSTRACT

*This study employed national workers' compensation data to examine and compare the nature and prevalence of work-related injuries and occupational violence experienced by Australian security officers and police between 2000 and 2008. The study found that while security officers' work-related injuries overall occurred at half the rate of police officers', the rates of occupational violence were about equal and followed the same trend over time — rising during*

*the mid 2000s and then declining steadily. However, injuries to security officers appeared more serious than those experienced by police. Security officers were twice as likely to sustain a head injury and, on average, lost about six weeks more work than police. Compared with all other Australian occupations, security and police were in the top three highest claiming occupations for work-related injuries and deaths from occupational violence, with security officers at number one in both instances. The findings add to the very limited literature on injuries and violence experienced by police and security officers. However, the findings also show the need for more research on the specific situational factors involved in injuries and on what works in prevention.*

## BACKGROUND

One review of workplace violence data reported that 'the jobs at highest risk of "client-initiated" violence in the US, Britain, and Australia are: police, security and prison guards, fire service, teachers, health care and social security workers' (Mayhew, 2003, p. 3). However, there is considerable

variability in estimates for police and security officers, and published research is heavily biased towards United States (US) sources and to homicides rather than workplace violence or injuries more broadly. Available reports nonetheless consistently place police and security officers in the six highest occupations for work-related homicide, often in the top three. They also typically show that security officers are the victims of work-related homicide at a lower rate than police officers. For example, a review of four papers that compared US rates of work-related homicides for ‘security guards’ and ‘police/detectives’ consistently showed lower rates of work-related homicide for security guards, who on average suffered 40 per cent fewer homicides than police (Kraus, Blander, & McArthur, 1995). See Table 1.

Specific findings from other studies in the field included the following:

- In California, Kraus (1987) found the homicide rate for security guards was 16.5 per 100,000 employed persons, while police suffered homicides at a rate of 20.8 per 100,000 employed persons.
- A comparison of the rates of homicide across a number of law enforcement categories in the US showed that guards were killed at about half the rate of police (Castillo & Jenkins, 1994).
- Warchol (1998) found that victimisation rates for work-related homicide or non-

fatal violence in the US were 117 per 1,000 security officers and 306 per 1,000 police officers.

- In Britain, Budd (1999) reported that 10.6 per cent of ‘security guards and related occupations’ were victims of violence while working compared with 28.4 per cent of police officers.
- In the US, Sygnatur and Toscano (2000) found that ‘police/detectives’ had the second highest fatality rate after taxicab drivers and chauffeurs, at 4.4 persons per 100,000 workers, with security guards following closely at 4.1 persons per 100,000 workers.
- Also in the US, Duhart (2001) found that 87 per 1,000 security workers and 261 per 1,000 police officers were the victims of a work-related injury.

There are a number of obvious dangers in policing and security work which make sense of high rates of injuries and deaths. Officers from both groups have frequent contact with people who may be engaged in criminal activity or who may be mentally unstable, aggressive, under the influence of drugs and alcohol, or injured. This contact exposes officers to bodily fluids; physical injury due to manual handling, accidents or assaults; stress; fatigue; and psychological injury, among other things (eg, Guthrie, 2009; National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, 2003; WorkCoverNSW, 2007). Motor vehicle accidents also pose a high risk, especially for police engaged in patrols, vehicle stops and high speed pursuits (Allard & Prenzler, 2009).

Research on the causes and prevention of work-related deaths and injuries is more developed for police than for security officers. Typically, research shows that two-thirds to three-quarters of police deaths are the result of accidents rather than attacks, and upwards of three-quarters of accidents are attributable to motor vehicle accidents (Allard & Prenzler, 2009). However, despite

**Table 1: Rates of work-related homicides per 100,000 employed persons, four US studies**

	<i>Study 1</i>	<i>Study 2</i>	<i>Study 3</i>	<i>Study 4</i>
Security guards	3.6	16.5	11.0	17.2
Police/detectives	9.0	20.8	25.7	25.2

*Note:*

Adapted from Kraus et al. (1995, p. 368)

the salience of fatal risks as a feature of police work, there is very little detailed research on this topic, especially in terms of prevention. Much of the literature on officer safety is focused on preventing non-fatal assaults, although this work does have implications of relevance to fatalities. Kaminski and Sorensen's (1995) study of assault-related injuries, for example, recommended correcting officers' misleading perceptions about risk and improving training in unarmed defensive tactics. Smith et al. (2009) found that both suspect and officer injuries were significantly reduced when officers deployed capsicum spray and stun guns rather than using direct physical force. The small number of available studies of police homicides also made some useful observations. For example, in a review article, Mayhew (2001) reported that police homicides frequently involved offenders with personality disorders and victims (police) who underestimated the risks they faced from offenders (relying too much on negotiation) or who breached procedures (such as failing to wait for back-up) (see also Chapman, 1997; Kurby, 2004).

In one of the few available long-range national studies on police deaths, Allard and Prenzler (2009) collected official data on all officer deaths in Australia from the establishment of police departments in the nineteenth century to 2007. Of the 643 cases identified, approximately three-quarters were found to be 'accidental' and one-quarter the result of an 'attack'. The researchers found that officer fatalities had been declining as a proportion of police numbers since the 1960s as a result of improvements in procedures and technology. At the same time, the research indicated that further reductions in fatalities were obtainable through stricter application of a wider range of prevention strategies. A focus on preventing police deaths would also most likely lead to reductions in injuries. Key recommendations included

curtailing speeding in police vehicles; keeping police off the carriageway at vehicle stops and roadblocks; and better risk management procedures in arrests, executing warrants, raids and sieges.

In Australia, there are few studies comparing injury and fatality rates between occupations, and very few studies involve police and security officers. An extensive literature search located only three papers that included direct comparisons between security officers and police officers. An early Australia-wide study was commissioned by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (1999a), drawing on the Deaths Data List of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the National Deaths Index of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Northern Territory Deaths Index, covering four years of work-related fatalities from 1989 to 1992. In the study period there were 15 work-related security guard deaths (12 per 100,000 security officers per year), four of which were murders (3.2 per 100,000 security officers per year). In comparison, there were 19 police deaths (11.3 per 100,000 police officers per year). Six of the 19 were murdered (3.0 per 100,000 police officers per year). This comparison highlighted that the risk of homicide was approximately equal for the two groups. The death rates were also just over twice the general workforce rate of 5.5 per 100,000. Second, a statistical release from WorkCover South Australia (WorkCoverSA, 2008) reported that the occupation of 'security officer' had the highest average payout for workers' compensation claims amongst WorkCover registered occupations for a seven-year period — AU\$15,027 on average per year compared with AU\$6,951 for police. Security officers, however, lodged far fewer claims than police over the period — 64.5 on average per year compared with 131.1 for police.

Finally, Chambers and Lord (2000) examined the frequency of gunshot wounds in an urban Sydney emergency room in 1998. In this study, nine security guards and seven police officers required medical attention during the observation period.

The international literature suggests that police are injured at higher rates than security officers and, in many cases, are fatally injured at twice the rate of security officers. The limited Australian research, on the other hand, indicates that rates of injuries and fatalities may be more equal, but that security officers may be injured more severely than police. Overall, available studies tend to lack detail about the nature and causes of injuries. Given the critical role of police and security officers in preventing crime, maintaining public order and providing emergency services, it is imperative that more work be done in the field, especially with a view to developing implications for prevention. Interest in comparing police and security officers has been influenced by the dramatic growth of the private security sector. This is one of the most significant features of the post World War Two policing environment. In a most recent review, Van Dijk (2008, p. 15) estimated that, in the mid 2000s, 'worldwide, more people are employed as a private security officer (348 per 100,000) than as a police officer (318 per 100,000)'. This situation has thrown up a complex set of social issues and challenges for researchers and policy-makers, including questions about the commonality of work and relations between the two groups. Currently, it appears that security is still largely focused on providing a preventive presence, while police have a more dominant role in arrests, investigations and prosecutions and in high level interdictions in crisis situations — a role which may account for higher injury rates and fatalities reported in the international literature. Nonetheless, it has been argued that private security is increasingly

taking on more traditional policing tasks (eg, Pastor, 2003; Prenzler, Earle & Sarre, 2009). At the very least, similarities in work profiles, including areas such as injuries, support a case for greater cooperation in domains such as training, regulation and the development of a common science of policing (Sarre & Prenzler, 2009).

## METHOD

The following study was designed to improve the knowledge base about the nature and causes of injuries to security officers and police by examining available Australian data on the topic. An in-depth scoping exercise was conducted to identify relevant sources. This exercise explored data held by Australian State and federal government departments, injury surveillance units, and deaths and compensation-based agencies, by searching government websites, agency websites and by follow-up telephone enquiries. The *National Dataset on Compensation-Based Statistics*, maintained by Safe Work Australia (2011) (a federal government statutory agency established in 2009), was deemed to be the most appropriate for this research given that it contained detailed data in a consistent format over the longest time period. Permission to access a de-identified subset of the data was obtained from all jurisdictions prior to Safe Work Australia providing the dataset.

In consultation with a Safe Work Australia representative, the research team obtained de-identified claim-level data for eight years, from 2000–01 to 2007–08 by financial year. Coding changes precluded a longer observation period, while 2007–08 was the most recent complete year when the study commenced in 2010. The data included successful claims only. Rejected or pending claims were excluded from analysis. Security and police officers were identified by their industry and occupation

coding using the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations* (ASCO) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997). In light of the range of workers' compensation claim types, only relevant occurrences were included. Of the 11 major groupings of injury/disease classifications, only 'injury and poisoning' and 'mental disorders' were obtained. (Other major groups are disease based and not directly relevant to police or security work.)

Variables obtained from the dataset included demographic information (sex, age) and occurrence characteristics. The latter included 'type of injury', 'location of the injury', 'mechanism that caused the injury', 'severity indicator' and 'time lost due to injury/illness'. The coding for mechanism of injury/disease was used to identify whether or not the harm arose from workplace violence. Within this variable, two mechanisms were relevant: 'being assaulted by a person or persons' and 'exposure to workplace or occupational violence'. The former code relates to 'physical injuries arising from intentional assaults, including assaults with weapons', while the latter is used in cases where psychological injuries from a violent incident are more serious or debilitating than any physical injuries sustained (see National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, 1999b). To account for the different number of employees and different working hours across the two occupations, rates per 100,000 workers and per million hours worked were created based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' annual occupation estimates provided by Safe Work Australia. Over the eight years the average number of police recorded was 46,448, and for security officers the number was 45,603.

It is probable that the data used in this study underestimate injuries. This is primarily due to under-reporting. Recent efforts have identified several factors that decrease a

worker's likelihood of lodging a compensation claim. These include thinking the injury was too minor, uncertainty about eligibility or coverage, concern about future employability, and believing lodging a claim was not worth the effort (Safe Work Australia, 2009). Furthermore, it is likely that under-reporting is not equally distributed across different industries, occupations or over time. Despite these limitations, the available data provide consistency over time and are likely to be fairly accurate in relation to injuries other than minor injuries.

## FINDINGS

Table 2 shows that between 2000–01 and 2007–08 security officers and police in Australia made compensation claims for 17,231 work-related injuries. Police claimed at almost twice the rate of security officers. In both occupations, males were over-represented although the female rate was slightly higher for police (Table 3). Age at the time of injury was similar (Table 4).

Table 5 reports the causes or 'mechanism' of injuries experienced by security officers and police. Of a total 17,231 incidents, 2,878 or 16.7 per cent were caused by occupational violence. A higher proportion of security officers' claims (24.3 per cent) resulted from harm suffered from occupational violence compared with police (12.6

**Table 2: Work-related injuries by occupation**

	<i>n</i>	<i>/100,000 workers</i>	<i>/1,000,000 work hrs</i>
Security	5,996	1,643.52	9.31
Police	11,235	3,023.53	16.71
Total	17,231	2,339.86	13.09

**Table 3: Gender of claimants by occupation**

	<i>Male claims</i>			<i>Female claims</i>		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of total claims</i>	<i>Rate of claims per 1,000 employees</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of total claims</i>	<i>Rate of claims per 1,000 employees</i>
Security	5,271	87.9	17.0	725	12.0	13.3
Police	8,698	77.4	29.4	2,537	22.5	33.5

**Table 4: Age at the time of injury by occupation**

	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>
Security	37.28 (11.63)	36	30
Police	37.26 (8.60)	36	33

per cent). However, the rate of occupational violence was only slightly higher for security officers. This indicates that occupational violence occurred at similar rates for both occupations, but police tended to claim more frequently for injuries caused by ‘other mechanisms’.

Mechanisms other than violence accounted for 75.7 per cent of injuries sustained by security officers and 87.3 per cent by police. For security officers, the leading

**Table 5: Mechanism of injury to security and police officers, by occupation**

	<i>Security officers</i>				<i>Police officers</i>			
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>/100,000 workers</i>	<i>/million work hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>/100,000 workers</i>	<i>/million work hrs</i>
Occupational violence	1,455	24.3	398.8	2.3	1,423	12.6	383.0	2.1
Other mechanism	4,541	75.7	1,244.7	7.1	9,812	87.3	2,640.6	14.6
Falls trips and slips	1,494	24.9	409.5	2.3	1,753	15.6	471.8	2.6
Hitting objects with a part of the body	232	3.9	63.6	0.4	339	3.0	91.2	0.5
Being hit by moving objects	651	10.9	178.4	1.0	709	6.3	190.8	1.1
Sound and pressure	31	0.5	8.5	0.0	99	0.9	26.6	0.1
Body stressing	1,313	21.9	359.9	2.0	2,639	23.5	710.2	3.9
Heat, radiation and electricity	13	0.2	3.6	0.0	28	0.2	7.5	0.0
Chemicals and other substances	26	0.4	7.1	0.0	80	0.7	21.5	0.1
Biological factors	15	0.3	4.1	0.0	110	1.0	29.6	0.2
Mental stress	211	3.5	57.8	0.3	2,498	22.2	672.3	3.7
Other and unspecified	481	8.0	131.8	0.7	1,272	11.3	342.3	1.9
Mechanism not listed	74	1.2	20.3	0.1	285	2.5	76.7	0.4
Total	5,996	100.0	1,643.5	9.3	11,235	100.0	3,023.5	16.7

causes were falls, trips and slips, body stressing (eg, 'muscle, ligament or tendon damage due to manual handling'), and being hit by moving objects (eg, 'being hit by a person accidentally'). For police officers, leading causes were body stressing; falls, trips and slips; and mental stress (eg, 'exposure to a traumatic event' and 'work pressure stresses'). The claim rate per 100,000 employees was substantially larger for police in injuries resulting from mental stress and body stressing.

Injuries to the limbs and torso (trunk) area dominated occupational violence claims by both security officers and police (Table 6). These injuries accounted for 46.0 per cent of security officers' claims, and 58.5 per cent of police officers' claims. Of

additional note is the fact that security officers were 2.5 times more likely than police to report head injuries in an occupational violence claim. While the rate of claims per 100,000 security officers also exceeded those of police for 'multiple locations' and 'unspecified' locations, the rate of police officers' injuries surpassed those of security officers for all other locations. Overall, however, the rates of injury for both occupations were similar across different locations.

Examining the amount of time lost as a result of injuries caused by occupational violence, security officers on average lost 237 hours more than police (see Table 7). This equates to almost six 40-hour working weeks. The average time lost due to injuries

**Table 6: Location of injury/disease due to occupational violence**

	<i>Security officers</i>				<i>Police officers</i>			
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>/100,000 workers</i>	<i>/million work hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>/100,000 workers</i>	<i>/million work hrs</i>
Head	484	33.3	132.67	0.75	193	13.6	51.94	0.29
Neck	28	1.9	7.67	0.04	44	3.1	11.84	0.07
Trunk	119	8.2	32.62	0.18	176	12.4	47.36	0.26
Upper limbs	419	28.8	114.85	0.65	469	33.0	126.22	0.70
Lower limbs	131	9.0	35.91	0.20	187	13.1	50.32	0.28
Multiple	124	8.5	33.99	0.19	98	6.9	26.37	0.15
Systemic	0	0.0	0.00	0.00	1	0.1	0.27	0.00
Non-physical	144	9.9	39.47	0.22	253	17.8	68.09	0.38
Unspecified	6	0.4	1.64	0.01	2	0.1	0.54	0.00
Total	1,455	100.0	398.82	2.26	1,423	100.0	382.95	2.12

**Table 7: Lost time in hours due to occupational violence**

	<i>Occupational violence</i>				<i>Other mechanism</i>			
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Min-Max</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Min-Max</i>
Security	823.9 (1795.0)	190	40	0–19849.0	887.1 (1849.6)	210	0	0–17274.3
Police	586.9 (1191.7)	152	0	1–11848.8	814.2 (1696.2)	207.8	38	0–69000.0

caused by other mechanisms also exceeded that of the average police officer but to a much lesser extent. The median cost for all claims was higher for police: AU\$9,900 for police and \$6,900 for security officers. However, Safe Work Australia informed the researchers that this is probably due to the better funding of the police compensation scheme. The median costs for workplace violence were similar: AU\$9,900 for police and \$6,800 for security officers.

Table 8 shows that the rate of workplace violence leading to injury claims fluctuated over the observation period for both occupations: trending upwards in the early 2000s, peaking around the middle of the period and then declining. Claims due to occupational violence as a percentage of all incidents almost doubled amongst security officers, from a low of 15.2 per cent in 2001 to a high of 29.7 per cent in 2005. For police officers, for the most part this figure varied between 10.7 per cent and 15.3 per cent over the observation period. For five of the eight years, security officers suffered injuries from occupational violence at higher rates than police officers, including the last three years of the study. Rates per million work hours were higher for security

officers for five of the eight years. In the 2007–08 financial year, occupational violence claims by security officers reached 371 per 100,000 employees, compared with 356 claims per 100,000 for police. Rates of occupational violence were nonetheless similar across the observation period.

When examining injuries from violence across occupations in a different subset of the data, security and police presented as two of the five occupations which most frequently made claims — standing at first and third respectively in the most recent statistics for 2007–08 (Table 9). In terms of overall numbers of work-related fatalities for the full eight years, the highest ranked occupation was truck drivers ( $n = 395$ ). Police ranked 12th ( $n = 32$ ), while guards and security officers ranked 22nd ( $n = 17$ ). The highest ranked for fatal incidents of work-related violence, however, was guards and security officers ( $n = 5$ ), followed by automobile drivers ( $n = 4$ ), then police ( $n = 2$ ). These figures were obtained from a dataset classified by ‘occupation’, which is slightly larger than the dataset organised by ‘industry’ then occupation. Using the latter dataset, in the eight-year study period claims were lodged for the deaths of 14

**Table 8: Occupational violence over time**

	<i>Security officers</i>					<i>Police officers</i>				
	<i>n</i>	<i>n non-violence claims</i>	<i>% violence</i>	<i>Violence /100,000 workers</i>	<i>Violence /million work hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n non-violence claims</i>	<i>% violence</i>	<i>Violence /100,000 workers</i>	<i>Violence /million work hrs</i>
2000/01	109	564	16.2	265.70	1.5	149	1,238	10.7	317.1	1.7
2001/02	116	647	15.2	273.47	1.6	109	1,278	7.9	236.2	1.3
2002/03	197	578	25.4	434.87	2.5	158	1,256	11.2	346.6	1.8
2003/04	190	599	24.0	415.07	2.3	204	1,207	14.5	493.2	2.7
2004/05	219	598	26.8	497.94	2.8	234	1,295	15.3	483.4	2.8
2005/06	229	542	29.7	478.64	2.7	211	1,267	14.3	433.7	2.4
2006/07	215	530	28.8	430.72	2.5	197	1,174	14.4	400.1	2.3
2007/08	180	483	27.2	370.61	2.0	161	1,097	12.8	356.3	2.1
Total	1,455	4,541	24.3	398.82	2.3	1,423	9,812	12.7	382.9	2.1

**Table 9: Five highest-claiming occupations for work-related violence, 2007–08**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Rate per 1,000 employees</i>
1	Guards and security officers	6.62
2	Prison officers	4.88
3	Police officers	4.69
4	Other professionals	4.59
5	Welfare associate professionals	4.00

*Note:*

'Registered developmental disability nurses' and 'Company secretaries' had higher claims rates but are not included because of standard error rates above 50 per cent

security officers (3.8 per 100,000 security officers) and 27 police officers (7.3 per 100,000 police). The rates indicate that police officers were almost twice as likely to suffer a fatal injury at work. In terms of causality, the majority of police deaths ( $n = 15$ ) were caused by vehicle accidents. When fatalities caused by vehicle accidents are removed, however, security and police officers suffered the same number of work-related deaths ( $n = 12$ ). Six of the fatalities were caused by occupational violence: four security officers and two police officers. These figures are too small to calculate rates, and indicate that fatalities caused by occupational violence are rare events.

## DISCUSSION

This study compared the frequency and type of injuries sustained by Australian security officers and police as evidenced in successful workers' compensation claims. The findings indicate that rates of occupational violence amongst security officers and police were comparable, and that this trend was relatively stable over eight years. The findings support those of the earlier National Occupational Health and Safety

Commission (1999a) study, which used data from 1989 to 1992, as outlined in the background section of this paper. The findings are perhaps unsurprising considering similar risk profiles for the two occupations in close encounters with stressed and aggressive persons when dealing with problems of crime and disorder. The results, however, are different from the international (largely US-based) literature, which indicates that security officers consistently suffer injuries and violent attacks at a lesser rate than police officers. It is possible that Australian security officers have a more direct engagement with the public, in crowd control work for example. However, the available data are unable to explain this divergence. Similarly, it is difficult to explain the rises and falls in rates of injuries from the data, although it is possible that enlarged regulation of the Australian security industry — including better selection and training — and slowly improving police safety procedures might help account for the downward trend (Allard & Prenzler, 2009; Sarre & Prenzler, 2009).

Despite the similarity in rates of occupational violence, the nature of the injuries suffered by police and security officers differed considerably. Australian security officers were more likely to sustain serious non-fatal injuries than police, as evidenced by the high rates of head injuries and substantial differences in the amount of time lost as a result of an incident. This finding is not dissimilar from the figures in the WorkCoverSA (2008) study. The South Australian research revealed that although security officers have fewer claims than police their claims are for more serious injuries. Again, it is difficult to say why this is the case but one possible explanation is a more prominent role for security officers in crowd control duties that involve direct confrontation with the public.

The data tell us very little about the situational factors leading to injuries and

deaths which could be modified to reduce the incidence of these problems. Some clues are provided in relation to the salience of falls, trips and slips; body stressing; being hit by moving objects; and mental stress (the latter particularly applied to police). Improved training and procedures, and better debriefing and counselling, might be of assistance here. The literature on police injuries indicates that methods to reduce body contact, through the deployment of capsicum spray or stun guns for example, can significantly reduce injuries (eg, Smith et al., 2009). This can be extended to correcting officer underestimates of risk and improving skills in unarmed defensive tactics, including through maintenance of skills (Kaminski & Sorensen, 1995). Greater use of body armour and a generally much more cautious approach to raids, sieges and traffic stops is likely to reduce fatalities in policing, but more work is needed in applied research in these areas (Allard & Prenzler, 2009).

A common finding in research is that more research needs to be done. In the case of this study of police and security officer injuries, it is clear that the high rates of injuries and fatalities experienced by both groups point to the urgent need for better prevention oriented research. This should include studies that better capture situational variables which might be modified to reduce injuries. Examples include coroner reports, but purpose built studies using detailed surveys or systematic observations might be required. Research should also include intervention studies that trial innovative approaches to injury reduction (eg, Smith et al., 2009).

## CONCLUSION

This research adds a new dimension to the work previously done on occupational injuries and violence experienced by police and security officers. The findings show greater similarities than normally reported.

However, this research also supports the general finding that both occupations are subject to relatively high rates of occupational violence and work-related fatalities. The study therefore has important implications for those seeking to prevent injuries and violence in the workplace. Awareness of the risks goes no small way towards enhancing policy-making in the field. Police and security officers provide an essential service in protecting people from crime and violence. However, provision of this service comes at a high cost, as evidenced in this study, and it is important therefore that greater efforts are put into protecting the welfare of officers engaged in the common tasks of crime prevention, order maintenance and law enforcement.

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