

# Six Key Findings

## Psychosocial hazards in construction businesses



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## Report Overview

This report contains the key findings from a study of the psychosocial hazards in New Zealand construction workplaces. The research was led by SaferMe, supported by CHASNZ, Civil Contractors NZ & ACC.

More than

30,000

Datapoints about  
Psychosocial Hazards in  
Construction Businesses

More than

50

Construction businesses  
engaged from around the  
country

Over

200

Peer-reviewed studies and  
journal articles reviewed to  
validate methods & findings

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SaferMe Founder, Clint van Marrewijk



“The data shows the psychosocial problems, but also gives us a window to look at the solutions. This rich data-set will help us drive improvement to psychosocial hazards, which is what this is about.”



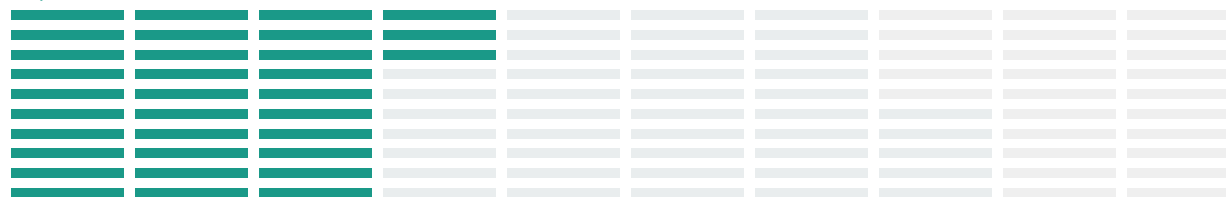
# Key Findings



# Harassment, bullying & abuse

Over half of participants reported some verbal abuse received in the past year, with over a third of participants reporting escalation to threats of physical harm or violence. A small proportion reported having been physically assaulted at work in the past year, with several workers reporting frequent abuse.

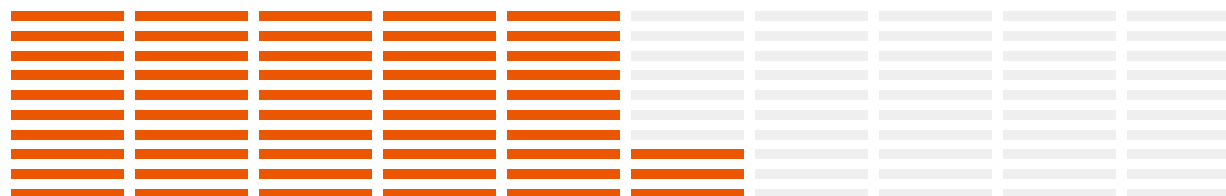
Physical violence threats at work - Past 12 months



33%

Threatened with physical violence

Verbal abuse at work - Past 12 months



53%

Abused verbally

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## Stress & fatigue worsen musculoskeletal pains

We found that increased workload alongside greater fatigue and stress levels explained over half the observed variance in reported musculoskeletal pain. This finding aligns with results from previous studies.

### What this means:

Increased levels of stress + fatigue is likely responsible for higher levels of MSD (musculoskeletal disorder) in the construction industry.



## These three things can reduce stress

Job satisfaction and peer support had notable effects on stress in regression analysis. While most workers reported low-to-moderate level of stress, those with high levels of stress reported lower peer & supervisor support, lower job-satisfaction, low decision autonomy compared with workers with low stress.

### What this means

This provides evidence for the preventative effects of greater social support from peers and supervisors, decision autonomy & work clarity, and job satisfaction.

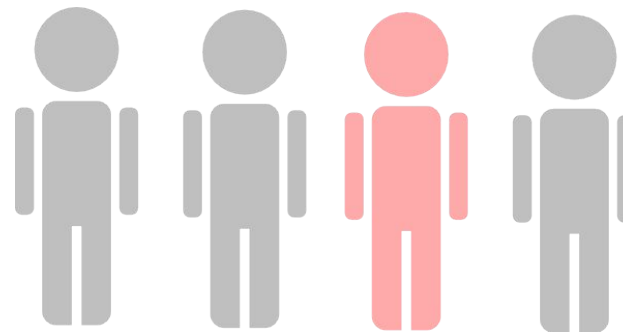


## One in four avoid reporting injuries

24% of workers have sustained an injury or developed pain from work, but had not completed an incident report.

Why aren't we reporting incidents? Common answers:

- The incident was considered too 'minor' to report.
- It didn't warrant the amount of time and effort required to complete the paperwork.
- Reporting an incident might delay a project.
- A superior would likely dismiss it as being chronic and not the result of a specific incident or acute injury.






One in four workers have failed to report a safety incident / injury in the past year.



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## Health and Safety managers are suffering

On a range of metrics, health & safety professionals are suffering more than others in the construction industry.

-  High workload demands
-  High workplace bullying
-  Lower levels of supervisor support
-  Below average job satisfaction
-  Poor role clarity
-  Disconnected from workplace culture

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## Beware bored or unengaged staff

Many workers reported modest cognitive demands, and high levels of repetition. In the extremes, this combination of factors was related to lower job satisfaction, higher fatigue, higher perceived job demands, lower job security and lower peer support.

While outside the original scope of this study, such a scenario may lead to decreased motivation, increased turnover, and reduced productivity, which can negatively impact both employees and employer.

Higher risk of

Staff churn

More likely to suffer

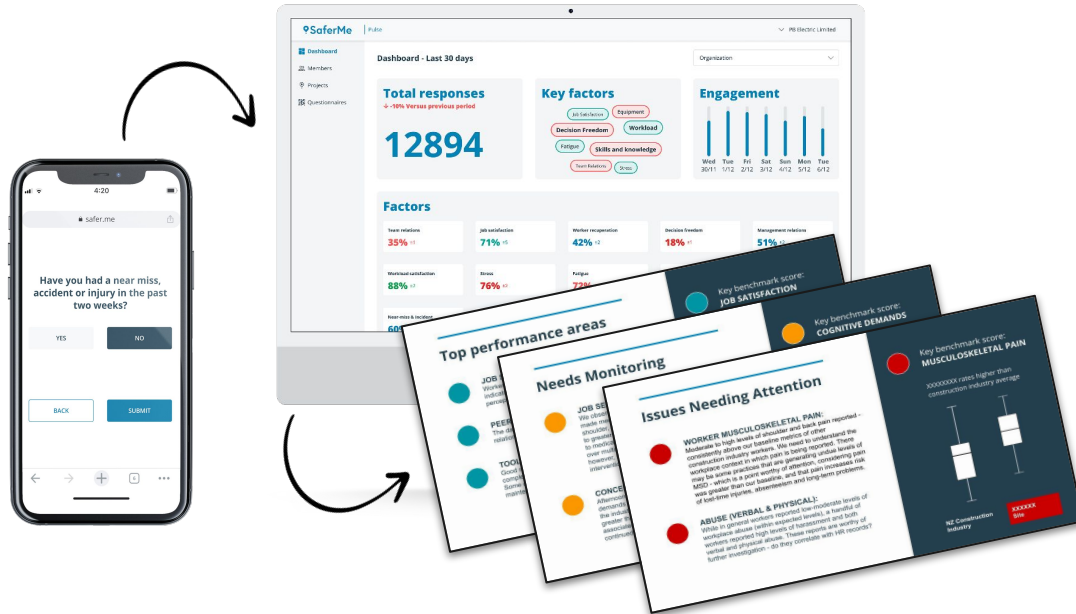
Absenteeism

Higher risk for issues with

Wellbeing

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## Free Demo of Safety Snap

- One minute per week
- Insights for your organisation / industry
- Available in multiple languages

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## SaferMe's Expert Research Team

Dr Steve Cantwell has a PhD in Applied Cognitive Psychology from Waikato University.

Dr Cantwell led SaferMe's international literary review of workplace psychosocial hazard studies, and the data collection from New Zealand businesses. His work has been integral to the development of the [Safety Snap](#) tool for measuring psychosocial hazards at work.



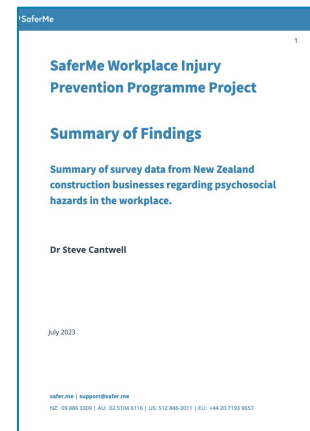


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# Download the detailed analysis

The full summary of findings / statistical analysis of the first subset of the psychosocial hazard data noted in this report is available for download on the SaferMe website.

[Access Here \(Email required\)](#)



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**Thank you to our  
key partners,  
supporters and  
collaborators**



**He Kaupare. He Manaaki.  
He Whakaora.**  
prevention. care. recovery.