



## NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

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### Position/Policy Statement

#### Research and Data Collection

The mission of the National Safety Council (NSC) is to end preventable death through research, education, advocacy and leadership. NSC recognizes the important role of research and data in developing effective policies, practices and solutions to prevent intentional and unintentional injuries and illnesses at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads. Robust data collection systems help identify shifts in trends and patterns indicating the emergence of new injury issues and concerns. NSC will continue to take a leadership role in conducting research, reviewing and consolidating relevant research and data, and facilitating a collaborative process of work with key stakeholders from academia, government, industry, labor and other entities. This collaborative work will be focused on helping to gain consensus on safety research priorities, conducting research in priority areas, and translating research into practice.

NSC will also continue to conduct rigorous evaluation and demonstrate how effective research to practice is linked to performance and prevention. Injury prevention research often involves individuals or groups in community, transportation, or workplace settings. The National Safety Council recognizes the need to respect and protect the welfare of research participants and is committed to upholding the highest standards in the ethical conduct of research.

The NSC recommends that academia, government, industry, labor and other entities consider how they can further contribute to research and data collection. Examples of those contributions include:

- Funding research projects
- Investing in data collection systems and sufficient resources (e.g., staffing and technical software tools) for data analysis and ensure appropriate protection of this data
- Expanding the use of technology such as web portals or other platforms to make data accessible for research and program planning
- Participating in improvement of data collection and reporting methodologies
- Serving as subject matter experts
- Developing cross-functional priority research projects
- Providing access to worksite, operations, surveillance, municipal, and other governmental data, including other relevant resources that support research
- Implementing solutions that demonstrate the impact of research to practice

- Disseminating solutions resulting from research
- Improving exposure tracking and full, accurate and timely reporting of injuries and illnesses

In the context of occupational, home and community, and road safety, research and data are crucial to developing solutions that protect the safety and health of people based on causal determinants and effective interventions for prevention. As the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) notes in their brochure titled “The Nation’s Investment in Occupational Safety and Health Research – Research Priorities through Partnerships” (DHHS NIOSH Publication No. 2007-118), data shows that when interventions are based on sound research, injuries and illnesses can be significantly reduced.

Research leading to the prevention of injuries is of vital importance given that it is a leading cause of death in the United States, and it has ranked as a leading cause of death for over 25 years. Additionally, there is a significant economic burden associated with injuries and deaths. The cost to business, society and families is estimate to be at least \$671 billion on an annual basis.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding the impact of NSC on eliminating preventable deaths in our lifetime requires valid, regular data gathering, reporting, and analysis. NSC depends on the data collection and research efforts of academia, government, industry and nonprofit partners and others to provide relevant and timely research and data. Examples of these databases are not confined to any single strategic initiative, but rather cut across the entire NSC mission. These include:

- Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) – This Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) survey uses multiple sources to identify, verify, and profile fatal worker injuries. Information about each workplace fatal injury—occupation and other worker characteristics, equipment involved, and circumstances of the event—is obtained by cross-referencing the source records, such as death certificates, workers' compensation reports, and Federal and State agency administrative reports. These data are used by safety and health professionals, including NSC subject matter experts, government affairs and *Injury Facts*.
- Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) – This nationwide census conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provides Congress and the public with annual data regarding fatal injuries suffered in motor vehicle traffic crashes, including tracking data on distracted and teen driving crashes. Staff across the Council rely on data from the FARS system.
- National Roadside Survey of Alcohol and Drugged Driving (NRS) – This NHTSA survey historically collected voluntary samples from drivers to identify which percentage of the population was using alcohol and drugs behind the wheel. Cancelled after four decades due to recent pressure from Congress over privacy concerns, this survey provided important information for NSC efforts on impaired driving, prescription drug overdose, and other risky driving behaviors.
- National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) – This Centers for Disease Control (CDC) database provides 42 states and communities with an understanding of violent deaths. These include homicides, suicides, child maltreatment, unintentional firearm discharge, and other causes of violent death. NSC Safe Communities, as well as *Injury*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/wisqars/cost-slides-2015-a.pdf>

*Facts*, rely on data included in this system. Funding is not available to expand data collection to all 50 states.

- Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) – This BLS survey collects data on non-fatal injuries and illnesses from a sample of employers each calendar year and is designed to provide an estimate of the number and frequency rate of work related injuries and illnesses. For more serious cases that involve one or more days away from work, it also provides a description of the injury or illness circumstances as well as the characteristics of the affected workers. This data is used by NSC workplace consultants, subject matter experts, and *Injury Facts*.

NSC supports these and other institutions pursuing these endeavors, including advocating for this type of research and data collection. NSC should continue to develop its own resources to support research and data collection as well as more effective ways to communicate the results and applications of such research and data analysis.

*This position statement reflects the opinions of the National Safety Council but not necessarily those of each member organization.*

Adopted by the National Safety Council, 2017