



# BENEATH THE SURFACE

Health and safety in the  
offshore oil and gas industry 2025



# Beneath the surface: Health and safety in the offshore oil and gas industry

## Contents

Beneath the surface: Health and safety in the offshore oil and gas industry .....	1
Research background and objectives .....	1
Summary of key findings .....	2
Methodology .....	3
Benchmarking .....	3
Qualitative data .....	4
List of key findings .....	4
Detailed findings .....	5
Workers' rights .....	5
Health and safety culture .....	6
Health and Safety Representatives .....	8
Offshore workers' exposure to physical hazards .....	10
Offshore workers' exposure to psychological hazards .....	12
Offshore living environment.....	13
Injury or illness.....	14
Gender .....	18
Appendix.....	19
Demographic data .....	19

## Research background and objectives

The offshore oil and gas industry is one of the highest-risk sectors in Australia. It involves workers undertaking dangerous tasks in remote and isolated areas. Workers are routinely exposed to a range of health and safety risks due to the physical demands of the job, including manual handling, slips and trips, hazardous noise and confined workspaces.<sup>1</sup>

These physical demands are intensified by environmental aspects, such as constant machinery noise and vibration, contact with hazardous chemicals and toxic gas, exposure to extreme weather, poor design and remote locations.<sup>2</sup> Long shifts and prolonged isolation from family and support networks add to the psychological risk.

---

<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Executive, (n.d.). *Occupational health risks offshore*. Retrieved from <https://www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/>

<sup>2</sup> Knegtering, B., Pasman, H.J., 2009. *Safety of the process industries in the 21st century: a changing need of process safety management for a changing industry*. *J. Loss Prev. Process Ind.* 22 (2), 162–168.

In addition to these everyday hazards, offshore workers face the possibility of high-consequence events such as fires, explosions and blowouts, which is further exacerbated by the remote nature of the facilities.

The high-risk and remote nature of offshore work requires a comprehensive and proactive health and safety regime where consultation, cooperation, and coordination are embedded at its core.

Worker consultation is especially important in remote and isolated workplaces, where delays in the arrival of NOPSEMA inspectors can hinder timely support for health and safety concerns. Under the current regulatory framework, workers do not have the right to request their unions' attendance at the workplace to assist with suspected health and safety contraventions. Further, the legislation does not make it clear whether an HSR can request the presence of the union to assist in resolving health and safety matters. This limited access to external support makes it even more critical to establish strong and effective consultation mechanisms. Such mechanisms ensure that workers are actively involved in all stages of the risk management process, including the identification, control, and monitoring of risks.

The ACTU and unions have long campaigned to improve the legislative protections for workers in this sector, who, despite being subject to high-risk work, have fewer rights and regulatory protections under the offshore health and safety framework, when compared to workers onshore.

The government has announced a harmonisation review of these offshore health and safety laws, the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (OPGGS) framework,<sup>3</sup> to look at opportunities to ensure consistency and harmonisation with the Model WHS laws. Harmonising key duties, obligations and protections across all workplace health and safety frameworks ensures that all employers in Australia are subject to the same duties and all workers receive the same rights and high standard of health and safety protection, regardless of the work they do or the type or size of the industry they work in.

A key aim of this survey is to provide data on the experience of offshore worker health and safety and to make evidence-based policy recommendations for the harmonisation review.

## Summary of key findings

The findings from the offshore worker survey reveal a concerning disparity in workplace health and safety conditions for offshore workers when compared to the general population. Offshore workers are not only exposed to more frequent and severe physical and psychological risks but also report less involvement and participation in health and safety.

Offshore workers face significantly higher exposure to physical hazards, such as manual handling tasks, repetitive movements, and vibration, with levels ranging from 2.5 to 8.2 times greater than onshore workers. Additionally, the offshore survey indicates that nearly one in two workers reported at least one injury or illness due to work in the 12 months prior to the survey, a rate much higher than that of the general population.

---

<sup>3</sup> King, M. (2024, February 15). *Improving safety for the offshore resources sector workforce*. Department of Industry, Science and Resources. Retrieved from [<https://www.minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/king/media-releases/improving-safety-offshore-resources-sector-workforce>]

Effective health and safety management relies on genuine and meaningful consultation with workers at every stage of the risk management process. Despite this, nearly one in four offshore workers report that their employer fails to consult them on matters that could impact their health and safety. Worker involvement in risk assessment is not only a key element of consultation, but it also leverages the valuable insights of those most familiar with the hazards. Alarming, the same proportion of offshore workers also report that their employers do not regularly inspect for health and safety hazards, highlighting a concerning gap in proactive risk management.

The offshore survey also highlights a troubling culture of underreporting and pressure from management not to raise health and safety concerns. One in four offshore workers feels pressured by management not to report health and safety issues, which is approximately 19% higher than the general population. This culture of silence and fear of retaliation further exacerbates the already precarious health and safety conditions for offshore workers.

These findings call for urgent attention and action to address the disparities and improve the health and safety standards for offshore workers.

## Methodology

The Offshore Health and Safety Survey (offshore survey) was conducted by the ACTU in conjunction with the following unions: Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

The primary purpose of the offshore worker survey is to better understand the experiences of offshore workers, especially around their health and safety on offshore facilities.

The survey, which was developed by the ACTU in consultation with unions, was distributed to members who work in offshore oil and gas by each union. The format of the survey was electronic and accessible via a link. The survey was designed to be completely anonymous; no identifying data was recorded, and respondents were required to complete it in one sitting.

The primary mechanism for distribution was through bulk emails sent to union members. Unions also promoted participation in the survey through SMS/WhatsApp and each union's social media communication platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook. The survey was open for three weeks, from mid-January to February 2025.

A total of 501 complete responses to the survey were received, with a survey completion rate of 42.2%. Please note that because this survey was self-selecting, there may be areas where the experiences and opinions of those who chose to take part do not represent the given population.

## Benchmarking

In this report, some data has been benchmarked against the results of the 2023 Work Shouldn't Hurt survey,<sup>4</sup> to compare the health and safety of offshore workers with the general population of workers. In this report, the 2023 Work Shouldn't Hurt survey results will be referred to as the general population survey.

---

<sup>4</sup> Australian Council of Trade Unions. (2023). *A survey on the state of work health and safety in Australia, 2023*.

Work Shouldn't Hurt is an annual quantitative tracking program for health and safety, conducted by the ACTU Centre for Health and Safety. An external panel was used to survey a broadly representative sample of Australian workers, with quotas for age, gender, and state. When benchmarking is included in the report, the sample size and question are provided in the caption of the figure.

## Qualitative data

Respondents were invited to share their experiences of work health and safety while working offshore through an open-ended free-text question. We received 207 responses, some of which are quoted throughout this report. Minor edits were made to correct typos where necessary.

## List of key findings

**Finding 1:** Offshore workers are more likely than their counterparts in the general population to express dissatisfaction with the level of consultation on issues or changes that could affect their health and safety.

**Finding 2:** One in five offshore workers report a lack of regular communication with management about health and safety issues, mirroring the general population findings.

**Finding 3:** One in four offshore workers feels pressured by management not to raise health and safety concerns. This is approximately 19% higher than the general population sample.

**Finding 4:** One in four workers felt that their employer did not operate in line with its own policies and procedures. This figure is significantly higher than the general population, where only 10% of respondents raised concerns with this.

**Finding 5:** Nearly one in four offshore respondents reported their employer did not regularly inspect for health and safety hazards or issues, compared with 17% for the general population.

**Finding 6:** Nearly one in 10 workers report no HSR in their workplace. While it is positive that this is lower than the level seen in the general population, this still represents a disturbing proportion without access to an HSR, especially given the high-risk nature of offshore work.

**Finding 7:** Offshore workers face significantly higher exposure to manual handling tasks compared to the general population, with levels ranging from 2.5 to 8.2 times greater.

**Finding 8:** Offshore workers experience significantly higher levels of repetitive movement and vibration compared to the general population.

**Finding 9:** Offshore workers are commonly or sometimes exposed to a range of potential environmental hazards, including working at heights, working on uneven or slippery surfaces, confined spaces, falling objects, use of equipment in unsafe conditions and cranes.

**Finding 10:** Approximately 38% of offshore workers have reported exposure to lead, while 34% have encountered asbestos in their work environment.

**Finding 11:** Exposure to psychological hazards is common across the range of psychological indicators, including 40% of respondents who reported being commonly exposed to high workloads.

**Finding 12:** More than one in three offshore workers have reported at least one negative experience related to their living environment. Survey responses highlight several areas for

improvement, including the provision of quiet spaces, better travel management, and enhanced communication facilities.

**Finding 13:** Responses from the offshore survey indicate a higher rate of injury than that of the general population. Concerningly, nearly one in two offshore workers reported at least one injury or illness due to work in the 12 months before the survey.

**Finding 14:** There is a higher rate of physical injuries/illness and both physical and psychological injuries in offshore workers when compared to the general population of the general population survey.

**Finding 15:** A significantly higher number of respondents from the offshore survey reported concerns that raising health and safety issues could negatively impact their job security, with 72% expressing this concern compared to 42% in the general population sample.

**Finding 16:** The number of responses to the offshore survey indicating that people needed to take a week or more off work may suggest significant underreporting of Lost Time Injuries (LTIs) to NOPSEMA.

**Finding 17:** Only one in five offshore workers who sustained a work-related injury or illness submitted a workers' compensation claim.

## Detailed findings

### Workers' rights

#### *Consultation*

**Finding 1:** Offshore workers are more likely than their counterparts in the general population survey to express dissatisfaction with the level of consultation on issues or changes that could affect their health and safety.

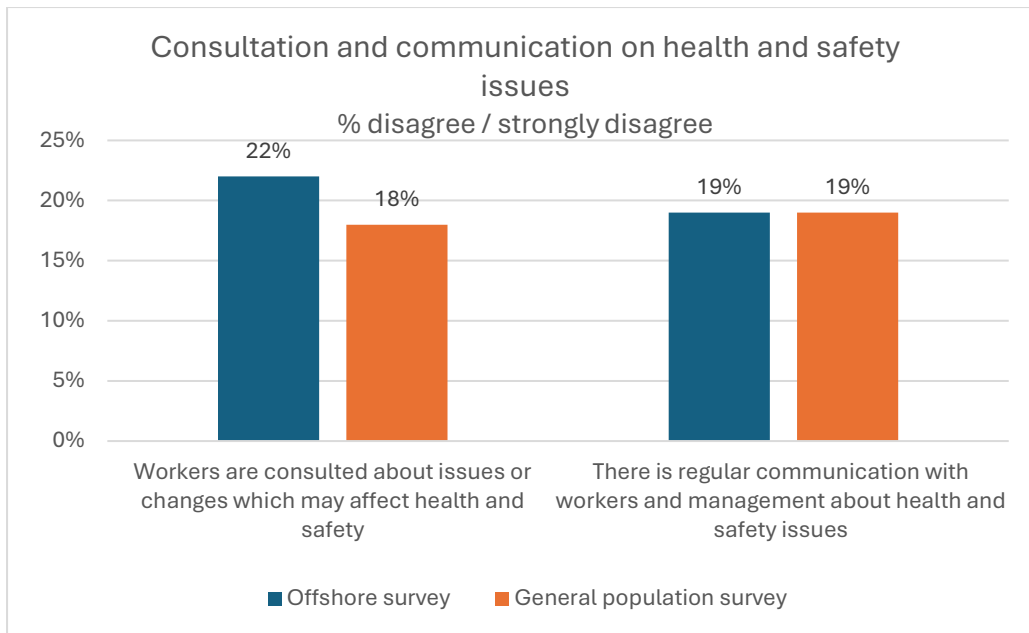
**Finding 2:** One in five offshore workers report a lack of regular communication with management about health and safety issues, mirroring the general population findings.

Consultation with workers and their representatives is a cornerstone of effective workplace health and safety management. It is essential to ensure that workers' experiences and insights are central to risk management and decision-making processes.<sup>5</sup> Effective consultation not only helps in identifying potential hazards but also fosters a culture of cooperation and trust between workers and management. This collaborative approach is crucial for creating a safe and healthy work environment, particularly in high-risk industries like offshore oil and gas.

It is of concern that 16% of respondents disagree, and 7% strongly disagree, that they are consulted on changes that may affect health and safety. The figures are similar for communication between workers and management about health and safety matters.

---

<sup>5</sup> Safe Work Australia, *Model Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination*, updated 10 Aug 2023.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt 2023

Qn: EQ1 Workers are consulted about issues or changes which may affect health and safety (e.g. new chemicals, machinery, rosters or staffing arrangements), and there is regular communication between workers and management about health and safety issues. Shows % who disagree or strongly disagree.

Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n=3,043.

## Health and safety culture

### Pressure not to raise issues

**Finding 3: One in four offshore workers felt pressured by management not to raise health and safety concerns. This is approximately 19% higher than the general population.**

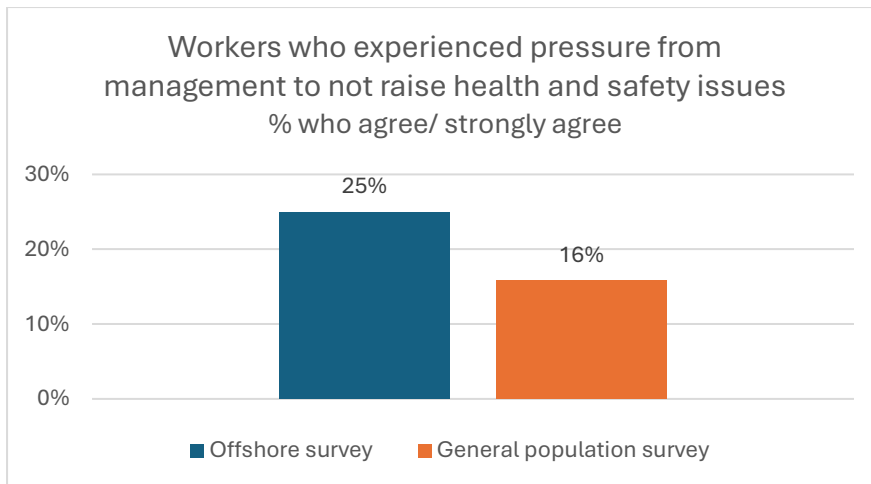
Feeling empowered to report health and safety issues is crucial for maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. When workers feel comfortable reporting hazards, it allows for early identification and mitigation of potential risks, preventing incidents and injuries.

According to the findings from the offshore worker survey, nearly one in four offshore workers feels pressured by management not to report health and safety issues, which is approximately 19% higher than the general population. Additionally, qualitative data from the survey underscores this concern, highlighting a pervasive culture of silence and fear of retaliation.

*'People don't report because they will get moved on... Whistle blowers get sacked.'* Male, Western Australia, 50-59.

*'Production in my experience has always come before safety, often workers are forced to minimise a safety issue or concern due to management pressure.'* Male, Western Australia, 40-49.

*'As it has always been said, safety is good when it doesn't cost time (sic) or money.'* Male, Western Australia, 50-59.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn: EQ1 Workers are pressured by management not to raise health and safety issues. Shows % that agree or strongly agree.

Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 3,043.

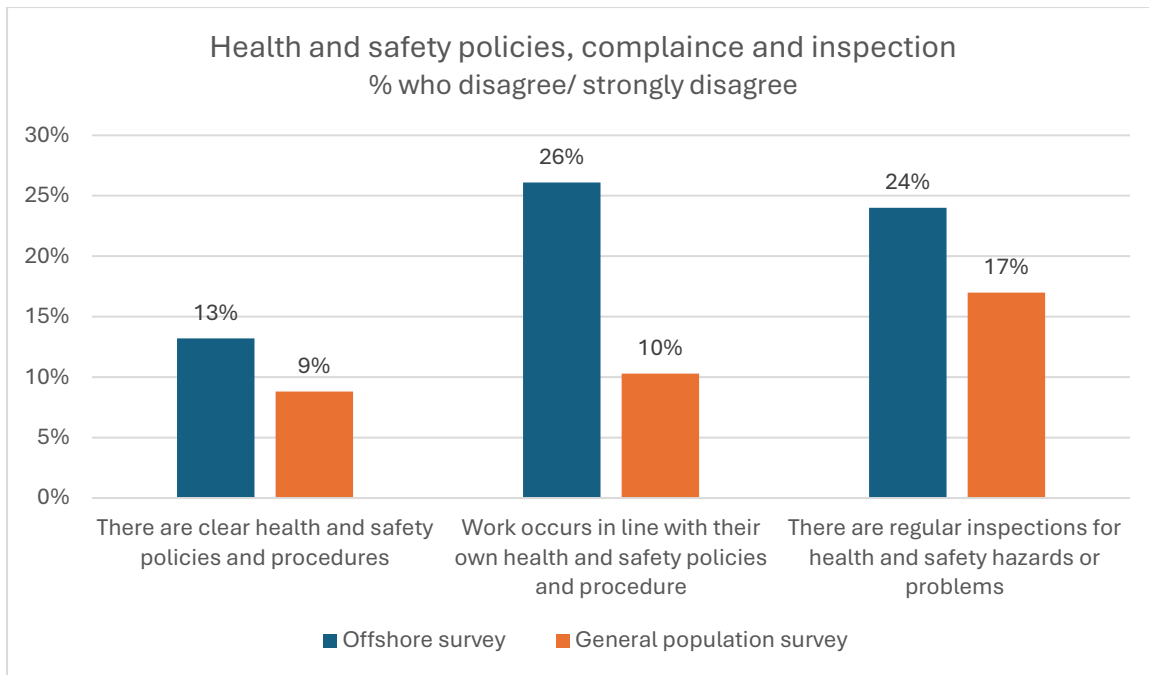
#### Policy, procedures and inspection

**Finding 4:** One in four workers felt that their employer did not operate in line with its own policies and procedures. This figure is significantly higher than the general population, where only 10% of respondents raised concerns with this.

**Finding 5:** Nearly one in four offshore respondents reported their employer did not regularly inspect for health and safety hazards or issues, compared with 17% for the general population.

Although the majority of offshore respondents reported that their workplace had clear health and safety policies and procedures, one in four workers felt that their employer did not adhere to these policies. Several comments from respondents indicated that when tensions arose, such as time pressures or impacts on production, the policies were often disregarded.

Regularly inspecting for health and safety hazards is a crucial part of a safety management system. Concerningly, one in four workers reported that these regular safety inspections may not be occurring.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn: EQ2 Have clear health and safety policies and procedures, operate in line with their own health and safety policies and procedures, regularly inspects for health and safety hazards or problems. Shows % disagree or strongly disagree.

Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 3,043.

*'They preach about health and safety unless there are time constraints and then they change procedures, etc to suit which sometimes go against their policies.'* Male, Western Australia, 50-59.

*'Management tends to ignore following our procedures and policies whenever it's inconvenient.'* Male, Western Australia, 50-59.

*'On the surface, the company expresses all the right sentiments and has the appropriate safety policies. However, underlying this is a culture where employees are discouraged from speaking up or challenging management unless they are in agreement. This can lead to career stagnation or even termination at the earliest opportunity.'* Male, Western Australia, 40-49.

*'Health and safety seem(s) to be more of a box-ticking exercise than anything else. Companies demand safety observation reports but rarely, if at all, act on or acknowledge them.'* Male, Northern Territory, 30-39.

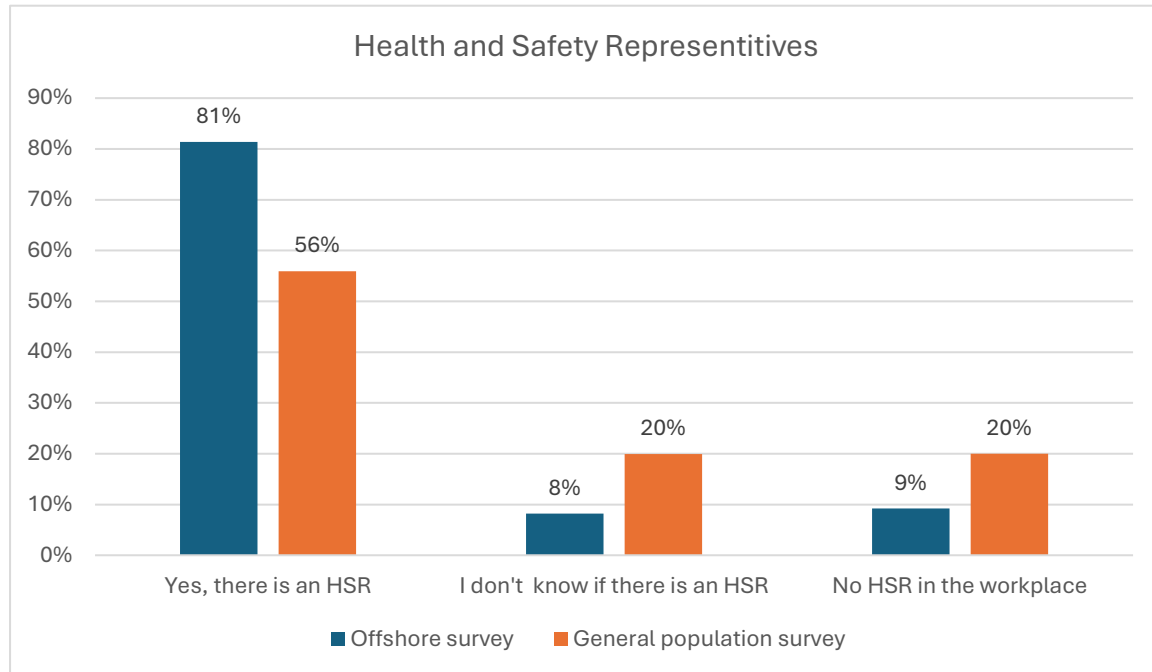
## Health and Safety Representatives

Finding 6: Nearly one in 10 workers report no HSR in their workplace. While it is positive that this is lower than the level seen in the general population, this still represents a disturbing proportion without access to an HSR, especially given the high-risk nature of offshore work.

Worker elected and supported Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are vital in maintaining workplace safety by serving as a crucial link between workers and management. They have powers under the health and safety legislation to work with the duty holder to identify and mitigate hazards, advocate for safer practices, and ensure that workers' voices are heard

and considered in decision-making processes. When there are concerns about unsafe practices which have been unaddressed by the duty holder, they can take steps to escalate and seek a remedy, such as issuing a Provisional Improvement Notice or direct a cease work.

While it is positive that 8 out of 10 offshore workers report there is an HSR in their workplace, there is still around 10% who do not have an HSR or are unsure.



Source: *Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023*  
 Qn: EQ1 Does your workplace have an Health and Safety Representative (HSR)?  
 Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 3.043.

Offshore survey respondents were classified as having insecure or secure work arrangements, depending on their answer to their main work status. Insecure work included full-time or part-time work on a fixed contract, casual work or independent contractors. Secure work included full-time or part-time work on a permanent contract.

It was found that those in secure work were more likely to know if they had an HSR than those in insecure work; 5% in secure work (n=212) didn't know who their HSR was, compared to 10% of insecure workers (n=251). This is problematic because it indicates that insecure workers, who are already in more precarious employment situations, may lack support and representation in health and safety matters, potentially exacerbating their vulnerability to workplace hazards.

Offshore respondents were classified according to the type of offshore facility. Options included: fixed production (e.g. platform), floating production (e.g. FPSO), drilling, support vessel and other. There was a statistically significant difference for those working on a support vessel, with 15% of respondents reporting they did not have an HSR, compared with 9% of the base sample.

This indicates that workers on support vessels may lack crucial health and safety representation, which is essential for addressing workplace hazards and ensuring a safe working environment.

## Offshore workers' exposure to physical hazards

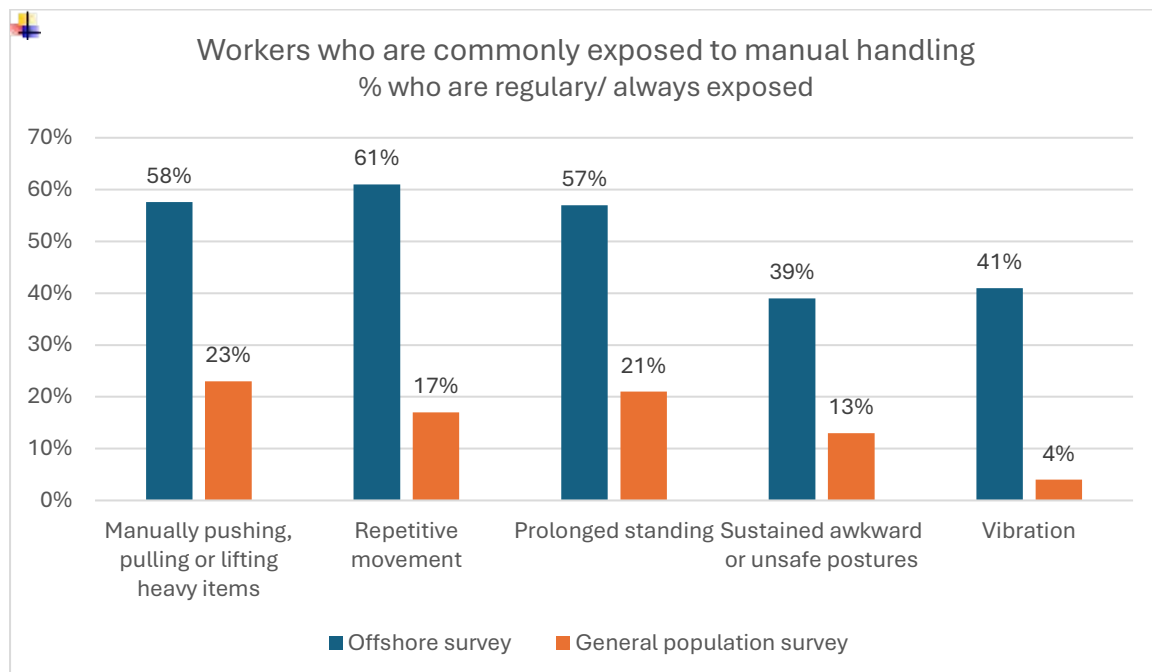
### Hazardous manual handling

**Finding 7:** Offshore workers face significantly higher exposure to manual handling tasks compared to the general population, with levels ranging from 2.5 to 8.2 times greater.

**Finding 8:** Offshore workers experience significantly higher levels of repetitive movement and vibration compared to the general population.

Exposure to hazardous manual handling, such as repetitive or sustained force, sustained or awkward posture and exposure to vibration, can directly stress the body and can result in workers sustaining musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases.<sup>6</sup> Musculoskeletal disorders account for 14.5% of all serious diseases in Australia.<sup>7</sup>

It is of considerable concern that offshore workers reported significantly higher exposure to hazardous manual tasks compared to the general population. For example, 61% of offshore workers reported commonly being exposed to repetitive movement, compared to only 18% of the general population.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn Offshore: AQ1 How often in the past 12 months have you been exposed to any of the following? Manually pushing, pulling or lifting heavy items, repetitive movement, prolonged standing, sustained awkward or unsafe postures, vibration.

Qn Work Shouldn't Hurt: 1Q2. Thinking now about your experience of workplace health and safety risks and hazards (both physical and psychological) in the past 12 months, how often are you, or someone else in your workplace, required to: Manually push or lift heavy items, perform repetitive work that may lead/has led to ongoing pain or disability, stand for long hours without being able to sit or rest, awkward or unsafe postures, whole body vibrations. Responses included: regularly and always exposed.

Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 3,043.

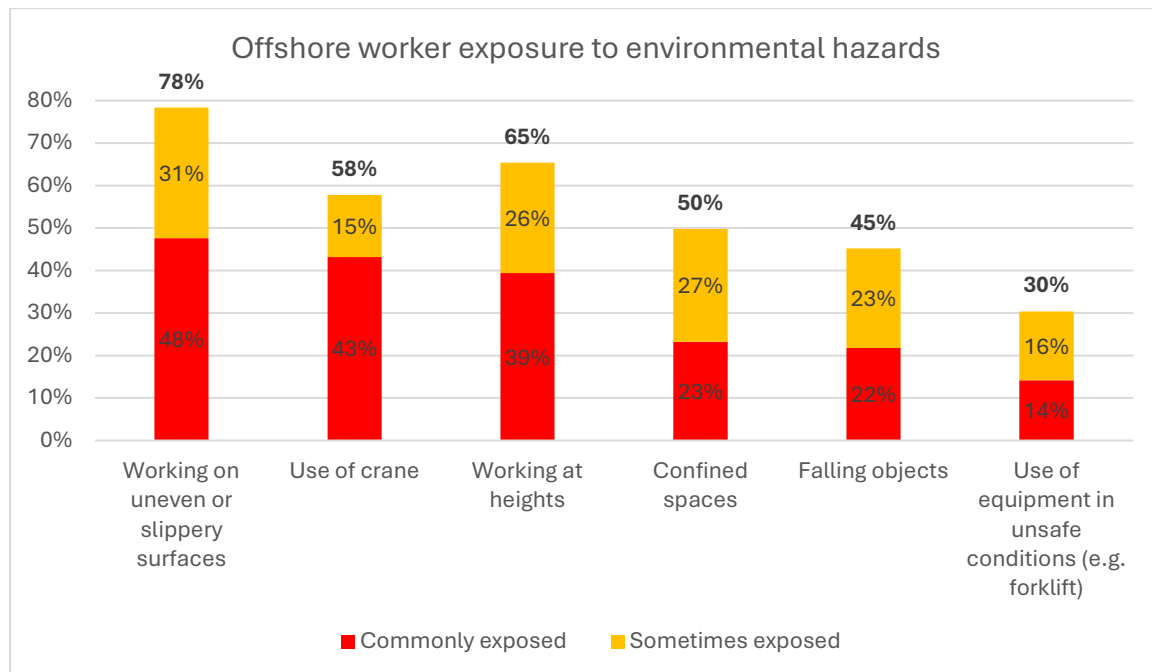
<sup>6</sup> Safe Work Australia, Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice, December 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Safe Work Australia, Key Work Health and Safety Statistics Australia, 2024.

### Environmental hazards

**Finding 9:** Offshore workers are commonly or sometimes exposed to a range of potential environmental hazards, including working at heights, working on uneven or slippery surfaces, confined spaces, falling objects, use of equipment in unsafe conditions and cranes.

A high percentage of offshore workers are exposed to multiple physical hazards from environmental factors. Nearly 80% of workers reported working on uneven or slippery surfaces, and over 60% reported being exposed to working at heights. Of particular concern, nearly one in three workers reported using equipment, such as a forklift, in unsafe conditions.



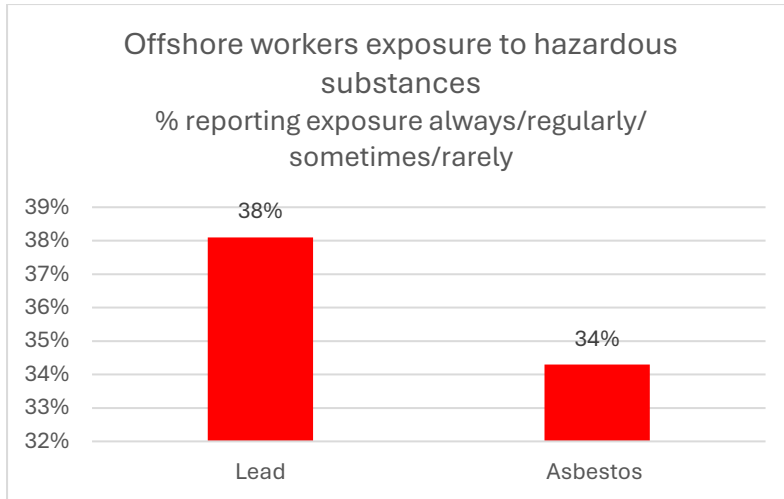
Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025

Qn: AQ2 In the past 12 months, how often have you, or others in your workplace, been exposed to the following? Commonly exposed includes always and regularly. Base: Offshore workers, n=501.

### Exposure to hazardous substances

**Finding 10:** Approximately 38% of offshore workers have reported exposure to lead, while 34% have encountered asbestos in their work environment.

A significant percentage of offshore workers reported exposure to hazardous substances such as lead and asbestos. 38% of workers reported being always, regularly or sometimes exposed to lead, and 34% reported being exposed to asbestos. Exposure to these substances poses significant health risks to workers, including respiratory issues, neurological damage and risk of cancer.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025

Qn: AQ2 In the past 12 months, how often have you, or others in your workplace, been exposed to the following?

Responses include: always, regularly, sometimes and rarely exposed.

Base: Offshore workers, n=501.

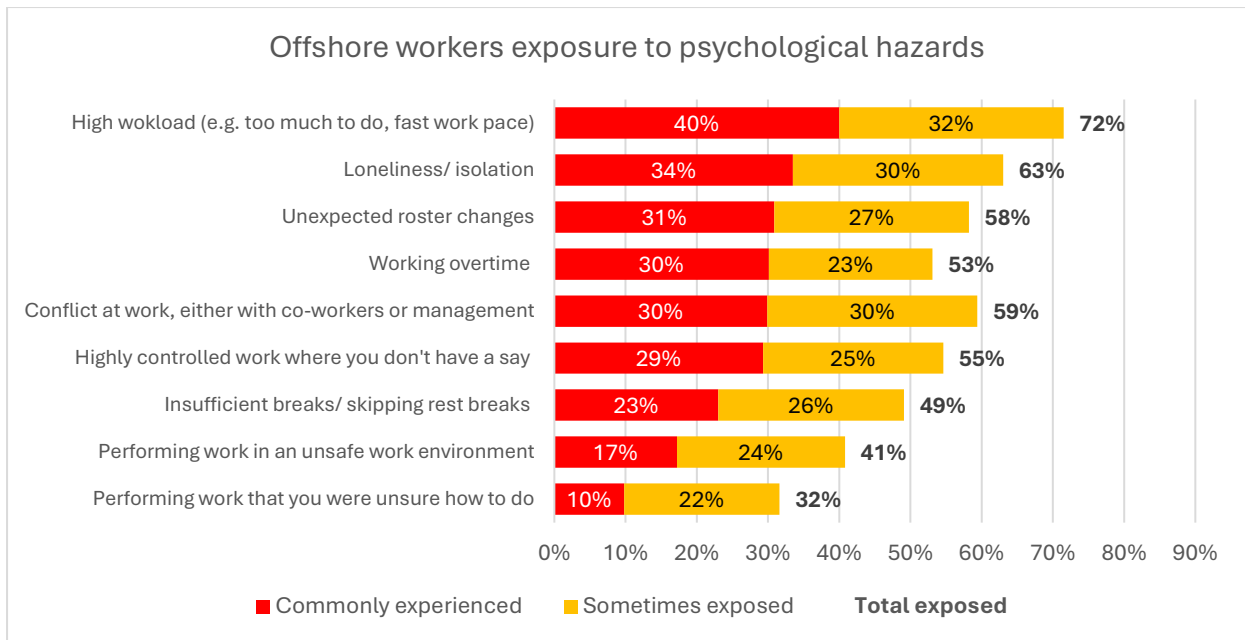
*(There is) 'little understanding or even turning a blind eye to harder issues like exposure to toxic substances such as chemicals, dust, particulates in the general shipboard environment and at the worksite.' Male, Western Australia, 50-59.*

## Offshore workers' exposure to psychological hazards

**Finding 11:** Exposure to psychological hazards is common across the range of psychological indicators, including 40% of respondents who reported being commonly exposed to high workloads.

The rate of exposure to psychological hazards is consistently high among offshore workers. Key hazards include high workloads, isolated work and issues relating to fatigue and rostering.

Comments from respondents raised fatigue-related issues such as poor shift planning with travel, requirement to work overtime, long working hours, inadequate breaks and long swing durations.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025

Qn: BQ1 In the past 12 months, how often have you, or others in your workplace, been exposed to the following?

Commonly experienced includes the response: regularly and always.

Base: Offshore workers, n=501.

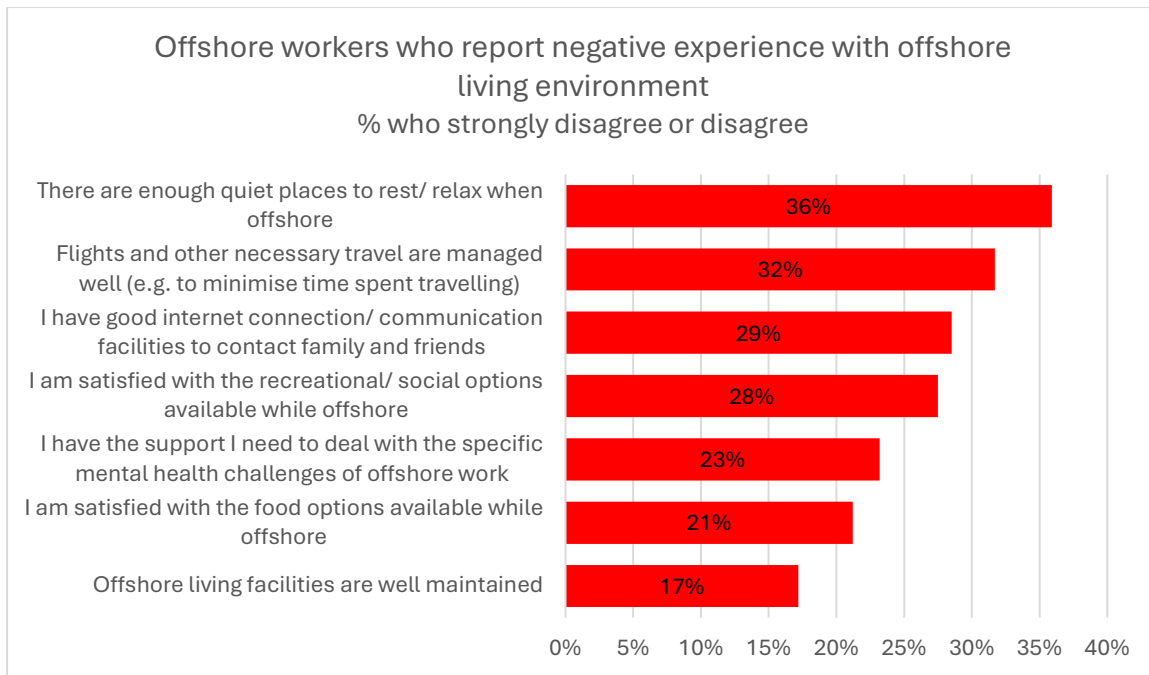
*'Fatigue cannot be managed for a whole month if your longest break is only 6- 8 hours.'* Male, Western Australia, 40-49.

*'My current contract on offshore supply vessels requires me to work 12-hour shifts and 28 days straight. This can be very tiring and impact on mental and physical health.'* Male, Western Australia, 30-39.

## Offshore living environment

**Finding 12:** More than one in three offshore workers have reported at least one negative experience related to their living environment. Survey responses highlight several areas for improvement, including the provision of quiet spaces, better travel management, and enhanced communication facilities.

A significant number of offshore workers raised concerns about aspects of the offshore living environment, such as having quiet places to rest/relax when offshore, good internet connection, and recreational and social activity options.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025

Qn: FQ1 Thinking specifically about offshore work, how strongly do you agree or disagree that... Negative experience includes the responses 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree.'

Base: Offshore workers, n=501.

The survey asked about the arrangement of living quarters, with respondents asked if they have a single cabin, shared cabin (same shift) or shared cabin (different shift). While 43% of respondents reported having a single cabin, 44% reported having a shared cabin with a different shift. There were 13% of respondents who reported having a shared cabin with the same shift. Several free-text responses highlighted the challenges of sharing a cabin and the impact that this could have on fatigue and recovery.

*'It is hard to get sufficient rest when you share the same shift with changing roomies, also snorers.'* Male, Western Australia, 40-49.

*'Having fast internet at all times would mitigate a lot of stress and family separation anxiety while working away.'* Male, Western Australia, 30-39.

*'Noise/vibration pollution is starting to become a major problem with the older facilities and ships, mostly due to wear and aging machinery.'* Male, Western Australia, 60-64.

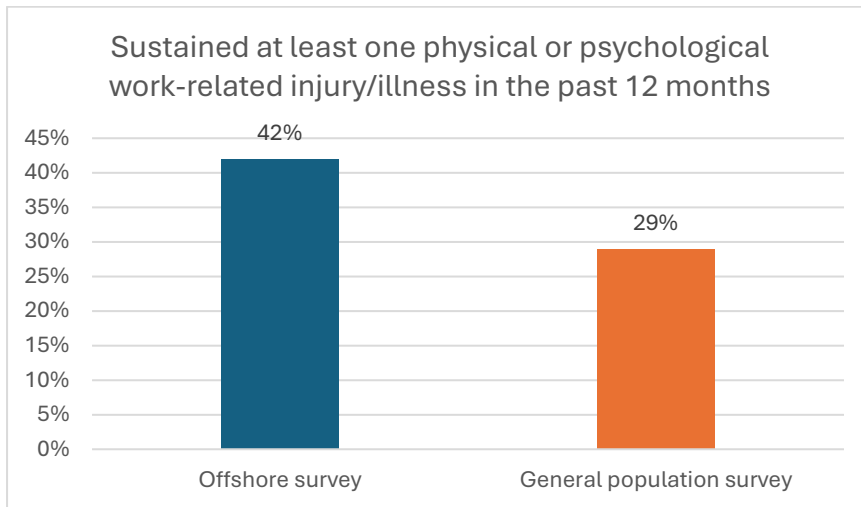
## Injury or illness

### Frequency of injury/illness

**Finding 13:** Responses from the offshore survey indicate a higher rate of injury than that of the general population. Concerningly, nearly one in two offshore workers reported at least one injury or illness due to work in the 12 months before the survey.

The offshore worker survey revealed that 42% of workers self-reported a physical and/or psychological injury or illness in the prior 12 months. This figure is higher than for the general population, where 29% reported at least one injury in the prior 12 months.

It is of considerable concern that nearly half of offshore workers report sustaining at least one work-related injury/illness in the past 12 months.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

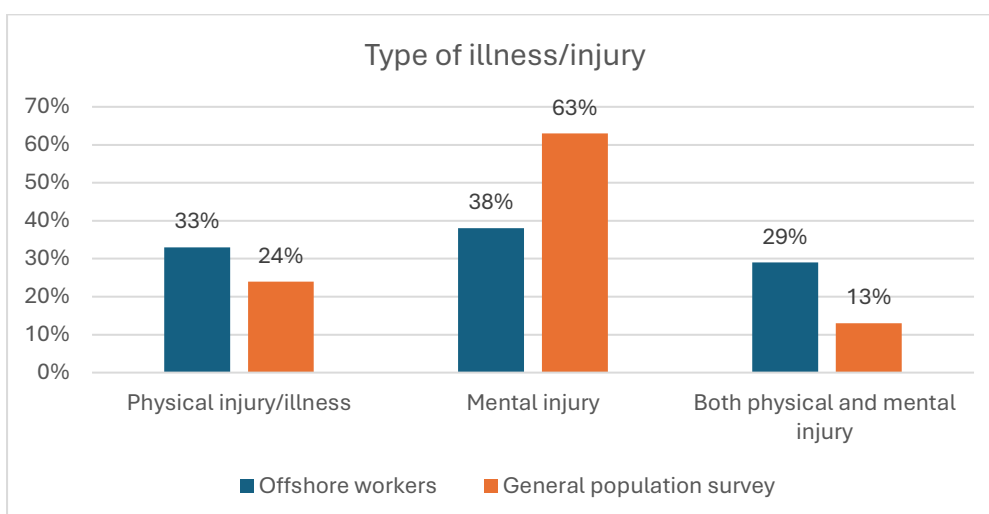
Qn: Offshore survey CQ1 In the past 12 months, have you experienced a physical or mental injury due to work in the oil and gas industry. Work Shouldn't Hurt XQ1. In the past 12 months, have you personally sustained any of the following injuries as a result of your work?

Base: Offshore workers, n=501. Work Shouldn't Hurt, n=3,043.

### Type of injury/illness

**Finding 14:** There is a higher rate of physical injuries/illness and both physical and psychological injuries in offshore workers when compared to the general population of the general population survey.

One in three offshore workers reported sustaining a physical injury or illness in the last year. This figure is higher than the general population sample, where one in four workers reported a physical injury or illness. A significantly higher percentage of offshore workers reported sustaining both a physical and psychological injury when compared to the general population sample, with the rate being 16% higher.

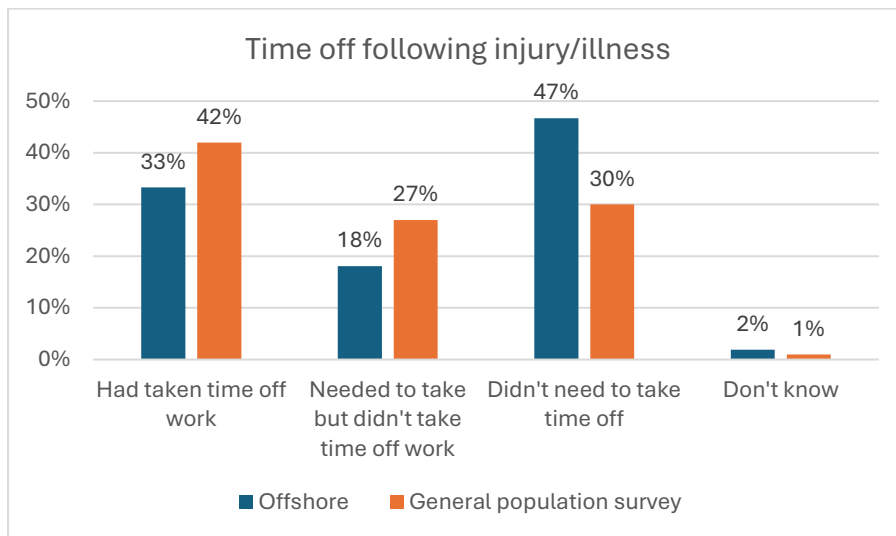


Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn: Offshore CQ1.  
Base: Offshore n=501, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 975.

### Response to injuries

Respondents who reported sustaining an injury or illness were asked if they took time off work. Interestingly, the figures show that offshore workers seemed less likely to need time off following injury. The offshore respondents were also more likely to take time off work when needed, when compared to the general population sample.

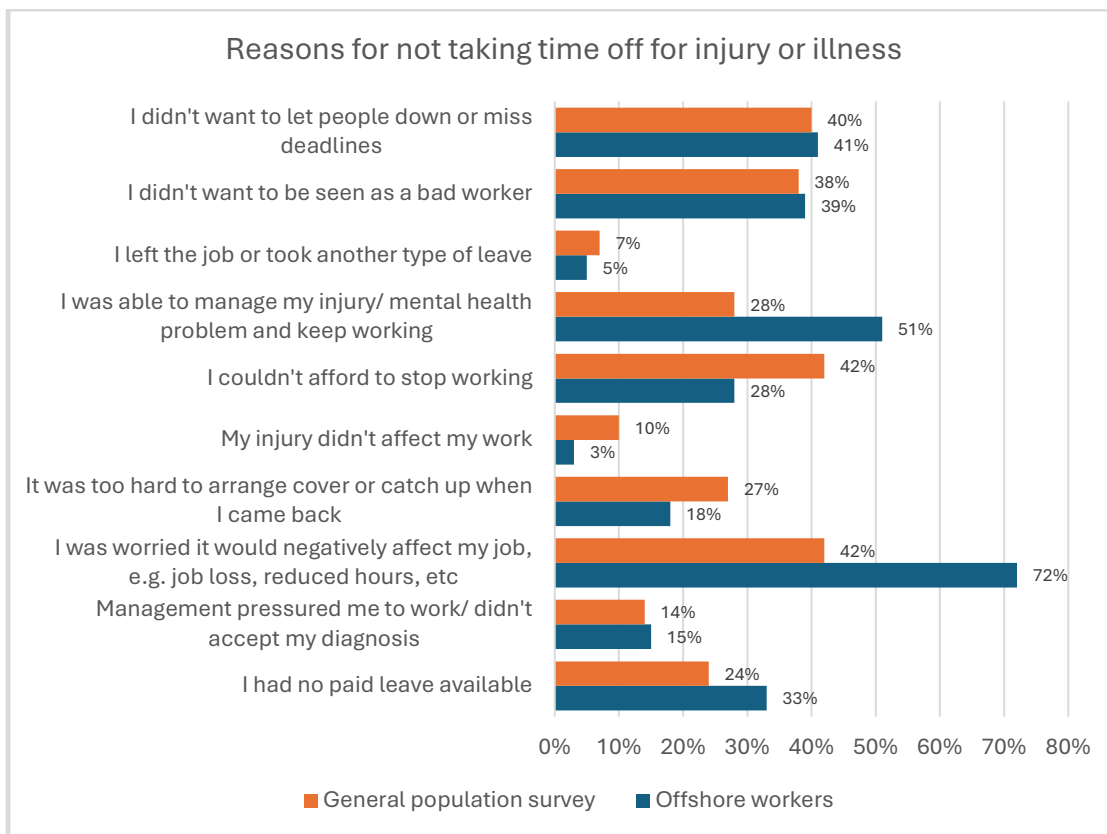


Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023  
Qn: Offshore CQ2 Did you need to take time off work due to the injury or illness you sustained at work?  
Base: Offshore n=210, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 975.

### Why no time off?

**Finding 15:** A significantly higher number of respondents from the offshore survey reported concerns that raising health and safety issues could negatively impact their job security, with 72% expressing this concern compared to 42% in the general population sample.

Respondents who did not take time off following an injury or illness despite needing to, were asked to provide their reasons, with the option to select multiple answers. There was consistency with the offshore and general population on many of these reasons. However, a finding that stands out is that 72% of offshore workers reported being worried that it would negatively affect their job, compared to 42% of the general population sample.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn: Offshore CQ2 Reasons for not taking time off for injury or illness. Could select multiple responses.

Base: Offshore n=210, Work Shouldn't Hurt n= 260.

#### Time taken off work due to injury

**Finding 16:** The number of responses to the offshore survey indicating that people needed to take a week or more off work may suggest significant underreporting of Lost Time Injuries (LTIs) to NOPSEMA.

Offshore respondents who sustained a work-related injury or illness and required time off were asked how long off work they needed (n=71). The responses were as follows:

- 13% required between two days and a week
- 25% required more than a week but less than a month
- 48% more than a month but less than a year
- 6% more than a year
- 8% don't know

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) reports<sup>8</sup> on injury data, including lost time injuries (LTI) of equal or greater than three days. In 2024, NOPSEMA reported 21 lost-time injuries for the sector. However, responses in the offshore worker survey revealed that 56 respondents sustained an injury in the past 12 months that required more than a week off work.

<sup>8</sup> NOPSEMA charts 2015-2024, accessible [Published - Report - CY - Charts - All activities - 10 years](#)

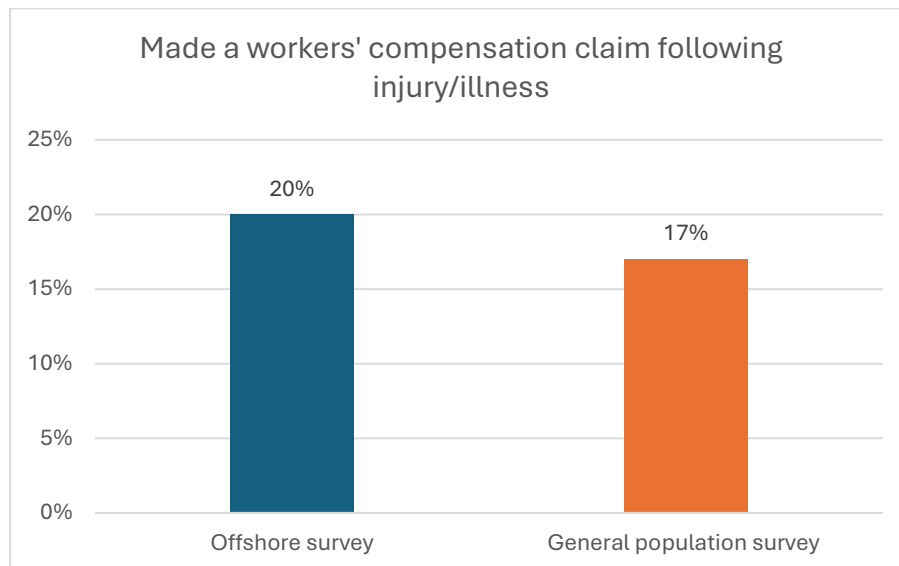
The significant discrepancies in these figures highlight that there could be under-reporting of the LTIs to NOPSEMA.

*'LTIs (lost time injuries) and injuries always seem not to get recorded correctly, e.g., a worker sustains an injury at work and has time off work, but our records for injuries don't change. Somehow, figures are changed so that it is not categorised as an LTI or injury at work,' Male, Western Australia, 50-59.*

#### Whether a workers' compensation claim is made

Finding 17: Only one in five offshore workers who sustained a work-related injury or illness submitted a workers' compensation claim.

80% of offshore workers who experienced an injury or illness did not submit a workers' compensation claim. While concerning, this figure is comparable to the general population survey, where 83% of workers did not submit a workers' compensation claim.



Source: Offshore Workers Research 2025 | Work Shouldn't Hurt Research 2023

Qn: Offshore CQ4: Whether a Seacare or workers' compensation claim was made in relation to your injury or illness? Work Shouldn't Hurt XQ6. Did you make a workers' compensation claim? Included responses indicating 'yes'.

Base: Offshore n=210, Work Shouldn't Hurt n=975.

## Gender

A total of 26 women responded to the offshore workers survey, representing 5% of the respondents. It is challenging to determine the current female workforce participation in the offshore oil and gas industry, as this data is not readily accessible. However, several years ago, it was reported that women comprised 13% of the workforce in this sector.<sup>9</sup> The survey sample may be representative of the current industry demographics for offshore oil and gas.

While these numbers are insufficient to drill down into the data, there are overall patterns that suggest some areas of concern. For example, women are notably more likely to say that they

<sup>9</sup> Marinelli, M., & McGrath, K. (2012). Female workforce participation in the Australian oil and gas industry—a global comparison. *The APPEA Journal*, 52(2), 709-709. <https://doi.org/10.1071/AJ11123>

feel pressured by management not to raise health and safety issues, are less likely to take time off work when injured, despite needing to and are more likely to report experiencing a psychological health injury.

Several free-text responses from female participants highlighted concerns about sexual harassment and inappropriate workplace behaviours. To protect the anonymity of the individuals involved, we have chosen not to include these specific quotes in the report.

## Appendix

### Demographic data

		Totals	
		Count	Column %
Gender	Female	28	5.6%
	Male	461	92.0%
	Prefer not to say	12	2.4%
	Column n	501	
Age	Under 18	0	0.0%
	18-29	12	2.4%
	30-39	77	15.4%
	40-49	138	27.5%
	50-59	184	36.7%
	60-64	60	12.0%
	65+	30	6.0%
	Column n	501	
State	NSW	8	1.6%
	VIC	52	10.4%
	QLD	15	3.0%
	SA	2	0.4%
	WA	381	76.0%
	TAS	5	1.0%
	ACT	0	0.0%
	NT	38	7.6%
	Column n	501	
LOTE status - speak language other than English	Speak a language other than English at home	24	4.8%
	Speak mainly English at home	50	10.0%
	Speak only English at home	427	85.2%
	Column n	501	
Citizenship status	Australian Citizen	447	89.2%
	NZ Citizen	30	6.0%
	Australian Permanent Resident	22	4.4%
	Applied for Australian Permanent Residency	0	0.0%
	Australian Temporary Resident	2	0.4%
	Column n	501	

		Totals	
		Count	Column %
Main work status	Full time paid work (permanent)	205	41%
	Part time paid work (permanent)	7	1%
	Full time paid work (fixed term contract)	27	5%
	Part time paid work (fixed term contract)	3	1%
	Casual paid work	220	44%
	Independent contractor	4	1%

	<b>Retired</b>	0	0%
	<b>Not currently working / not being paid</b>	35	7%
	<b>Column n</b>	501	
<b>Years of experience in offshore work</b>	<b>Less than a year</b>	15	3%
	<b>1-2 years</b>	43	9%
	<b>3-4 years</b>	36	7%
	<b>5-9 years</b>	65	13%
	<b>10-19 years</b>	201	40%
	<b>20 years or more</b>	141	28%
	<b>Column n</b>	501	
<b>Description of offshore facility</b>	<b>Fixed production (e.g. platform)</b>	91	18%
	<b>Floating production (e.g. FPSO)</b>	92	18%
	<b>Drilling</b>	38	8%
	<b>Support vessel</b>	180	36%
	<b>Other</b>	100	20%
	<b>Column n</b>	501	
<b>Employer type</b>	<b>Facility operator</b>	117	23%
	<b>Tier 1 contractor</b>	0	0%
	<b>Tier 2 contractor</b>	0	0%
	<b>Tier 3 contractor</b>	0	0%
	<b>Labour hire company / manning agency</b>	208	42%
	<b>Contractor</b>	176	35%
	<b>Column n</b>	501	

