# Development-led Archaeology Health and Safety Survey 2023-24

**FAVE** Health and Safety Survey Series

Development-led Archaeology Health and Safety Survey 2023-24. Version 1, April 2025.

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Injury: Flaticon.com, custom attribution license Near-miss: From FAME's Near-miss guide

## Three key findings

- 1. Archaeology has lower RIDDOR accident rates than the construction industry.
- 2. Ill health causes the most work absences



3. Near misses – are under-reported in the sector.



## Background

A goal of FAME's Health & Safety strategy is to gather data to support preventative measures and improved ways of working. This is FAME's seventh Health and Safety Survey<sup>1</sup>; the first was for the 2009-10 financial year, and since 2018-19, we have undertaken these surveys annually. This report covers the financial year 2023-24 and only covers archaeologists working in the UK.

## Methods

The questions used for this survey were included in the 2023-24 State of the Archaeological Market Survey. This survey samples the sector and assumes that the rates for this sample are reflective of the whole sector. A total of 26 responses were received<sup>2</sup> from organisations employing 1717.72 full-time equivalent<sup>3</sup> positions. This represents 35% of the estimated 4918 FTE (full-time equivalent) archaeologists working in UK development-led archaeology<sup>4</sup> as contractors and consultants – curators are not included in this total.

## Results

In a change, this year, for readability, with the RIDDOR results, we have included only this year's, last year's or/and averages in the body of this report; the full datasets are at the end of the report.

#### Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

In the UK, RIDDOR is the legal instrument that requires employers and those in charge of work premises to report and keep records of:

- work-related accidents which cause deaths
- work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (reportable injuries)
- diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and
- certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm)

Respondents were asked about their RIDDOR reportable injuries, and their responses can be found in Table 1<sup>5</sup>. Development-led archaeology had another low year of RIDDOR reportable injuries (Table 9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Previously called the Health and Safety Injury survey but this year we have changed the name as it no longer focuses just on injuries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> not all respondents to the SoAM survey (50) responded to the H&S questions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 37.5 hours per week, 52 weeks per year

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Due to low responses from Irish organisations to SoAM these data focus only on the UK

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Regulations were last updated in 2013. The 2013 changes mean that the 2009-10 data from the first FAME Health and Safety Injury Survey are mostly not comparable to the data collected by FAME since 2018 and thus not included in any of the tables.

			2018-24
Туре	2022-23	2023-24	average
Specified injuries (including fatality)	1	0	1.00
Injuries resulting in over 7 days absence	0	1	1.67
Occupational diseases <sup>6</sup>	0	0	0.83
Occupational disease other <sup>7</sup>	0	0	0.00
Specified dangerous occurrences	0	2	0.67
Total (n=)	1	3	4.17

Table 1: Reported number of different RIDDOR injuries 2023-24, for development-led archaeology.

### Injury Frequency Rate and Incident Rate

There are two primary injury figures: Incident Rate and Frequency Rate<sup>8</sup>. The Injury Frequency Rate is the number of Reportable Injuries for every 1,000,000 hours worked.<sup>9</sup> The Incident Rate is the number of Reportable Injuries per 100,000 employees<sup>10</sup>. The estimated Injury Frequency<sup>11</sup> and Incident Rates for the sector were calculated and can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Estimated RIDDOR Injury Frequency and Incident Rate of respondents to the survey in 2023-24 and average between 2018-24.

	2023	3-24	2018-24	Average
	Injury		Injury	
	Frequency	Incident	Frequency	Incident
RIDDOR	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
Specified injuries	0	0	0.40	70.36
Injuries resulting in over 7	0.30	58.22	0.56	103.33
days absence				
Occupational diseases	0	0	0.27	52.08
Occupational disease other	0	0	0.00	0.00
Specified dangerous	0.60	116.43	0.22	42.15
occurrences				

#### RIDDOR rates context

To put those findings into perspective, an individual working for 40 years full-time in archaeology would only have a 0.06 frequency rate for a RIDDOR reportable injury, resulting in 'over 7 days absence'. That means they would be unlikely to ever experience one.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> including carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and occupational dermatitis

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> caused by exposure to carcinogens, mutagens & biological agents (including occupational cancers)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> for more information see <u>http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/adhoc-analysis/injury-frequency-rates.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Calculated as (Number of Reportable Injuries in the period / Total hours worked (by all employees) during the period) X 1,000,000

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Calculated as (Injuries per year / employed) \* 100,000

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Using 37.5 hrs per week x 52 weeks x 1717.72 FTE archaeologists

#### Compared to other sectors

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provide Incident Rate data for different sectors<sup>12</sup>. Given how incident rates are calculated, per every 100,000 workers, and the size of the development-led archaeological industry, 4-5k people, one reported accident can greatly alter the results. Because of this, we use the average Incident Rates for archaeology from 2018-24. Compared to the construction sector, which we work in and alongside (Table 3), Archaeology has better RIDDOR rates, and this average Rate is significantly lower than some manufacturing sectors, though higher than the lowest sectors, like financial services.

Table 3: Calculated average RIDDOR Incident Rates, non-fatal, for different sectors 2023-24 vs archaeology's average of 2018-24

			Over-7-					
Industry	Total	Specified	day					
Highest two sectors								
Other manufacturing	1877	496	1381					
Waste collection, treatment & disposal activities	1526	395	1131					
Archaeology & Construction								
Construction	306	116	190					
Archaeology	173	70	103					
Lowest two sectors								
Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	1 <sup>13</sup>							
Activities auxiliary to financial services & insurance activities	1		1					

#### Non-Reportable accidents and near misses

To gather data on the prevalence of commonly occurring accidents/incidents across the sector, respondents were asked to report the number of accidents and near misses, which were **not** RIDDOR reportable (Table 4).

Table 4: Non-RIDDOR accidents and near misses from 2018-24.

							2018-24
Туре	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	average
non-reportable accidents	147	159	235	285	212	340	230
near misses reported	140	133	132	90	30	39	94
Total (n=)	287	292	370	375	252	379	326

For the second year, to better understand the seriousness of these non-RIDDOR reportable accidents, respondents were asked to report on how many incidents resulted in a day or more of absences from work. This year, only 17% of those incidents resulted in any

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The Health and Safety Executive only reports data using the Incident Rate by Standard Industrial Classification codes (SIC 2007) and does not report on Frequency Rates. However, they do provide a methodology for generating the Frequency Rates for sectors, see <u>http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/adhoc-</u> <u>analysis/injury-frequency-rates.pdf</u>. In past reports, we have made these calculations but have stopped doing this as they have consistently shown the Frequency Rate for archaeology places the sector in a similar position as the Incident rate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Because of rounding this is one.

absences (Table 5), and the majority come from slips, trips or falls and the other category. The other category is mainly driven by one respondent, which includes 'environmental events' in that category.

		2022-23	2023-24			
	no days	1+ days	near	no days	1+ days	near
tуре	absence	absence	misses	absence	absence	misses
slip, trip or fall	63	4	5	39	12	6
injured while handling, lifting or carrying	45	0	0	70	0	5
struck by moving object - including vehicles	21	8	5	18	0	0
vehicle related incident (including all	Q	С	12	46	2	3
business usage)	0	2	15	-0	5	5
musculoskeletal injury (repetitive type	11	6	0	7	0	20
injuries) <sup>14</sup>		0	0	/	0	20
Other <sup>15</sup>	36	8	7	101	44	5
Total ( <i>n</i> =)	184	28	30	281	59	39

Table 5: Non-RIDDOR accidents and near misses in 2022-23 and 2023-24 by type and severity.

#### Near misses context

There should be significantly more near-misses reported than accidents – the Health and Safety Executive believes there are ninety near-misses for every one injury, which this survey demonstrates the sector is not close to capturing.

#### Days absence

For the second year, respondents were asked about days of absence relating to injuries, ill health, stress/depression/anxiety and musculoskeletal disorders to better understand what is causing absences. Ill health is, again, the number one driver of absences, resulting in an average of two and a half days lost each year for each FTE archaeologist<sup>16</sup> (Table 6).

		2022-23		2023-24		
	days	average per	days	average per		
Causes	absence	FTE	absence	FTE		
injuries	73	0.11	56	0.06		
ill health cases	3662	5.43	2426.26	2.57		
stress, depression or anxiety	526.50	0.78	295.83	0.31		
musculoskeletal disorder	347	0.51	216.50	0.23		
Total ( <i>n</i> =)	4608.50		2994.59			

Table 6: Days of absence and causes in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> sustained over a period of time rather than due to a specific accident e.g. repetitive strain injury, tendonitis, chronic back pain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Respondents could provide more detail on the other category and three did so – 'stats collated cover all forms of accident/near misses'; 'two incidents of heat exhaustion'; 'dirt in eye'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Respondents representing 945.1 FTE responded to this question.

#### Compared to other sectors

HSE collects similar statistics on missed days through the Labour Force Survey<sup>17</sup>. Given the variability in results between years for archaeologists, we will need several years of data to create a more accurate average (Table 7) and even then, as discussed next, the number may not be comparable.

#### HSE data context

There are significant differences between the statistics gathered here and by HSE. HSE data are based on reporting from individuals based on their recollections of the past year, which reduces accuracy due to recall issues, while this survey's data are based on actual days taken off, as recorded by employers. Moreover, the HSE data is for absences caused or made worse by their current or most recent job. This survey covers all absences, thus covering the common cold, the flu, etc., which will cause absences but are not work-related, usually. However, after collecting the data, we discovered some respondents replied with all absences, while some did so for only work-related. We will change the wording of the question in the future to clarify that the data sought and these numbers should be viewed as possibly inaccurate.

	Average days lost per worker									
	archaeologists 2022-23	archaeologists 2023-24	HSE All 2021-24	HSE construction						
Source				2021-24						
All illness	6.83	3.16	.93	1.11						
Musculoskeletal disorders	0.51	0.23	0.21	0.42						
Stress, depression or anxiety	0.78	0.31	0.51	0.26						

Table 7: Average days of absence by source from this survey compared to HSE data.

#### Mental health

For a third year, we have asked questions about mental health provision. Respondents covering 92% of the FTE staff do track staff mental health concerns (Table 8), same as the previous year.

Table 8: Respondents tracking staff mental health 2021-24.

	2021-22		202	2-23	2023-24		
Tracking mental health concerns of staff	n	FTE staff	n	FTE staff	n	FTE staff	
Yes	16	1577.75	11	1391.5	11	1150.1	
No	3	20.1	6	120.1	5	94	
Total (n=)	19	1597.85	17	1511.6	16	1244.1	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> <u>https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/index.htm</u>

The respondents track mental health incidents and levels in the following ways:

- Through the Mental Health First Aiders x3
- When recorded as sickness x2
- One-to-one check-ins x2
- Informally x2
- Periodic stress questionnaires
- Formally
- Tracking all incident reporting through our online system.

Those same organisations provide the following mental health provisions:

- Counselling services x3
- Mental Health First Aid x3
- Employee Assistance Programme x3
- Awareness training x3
- External sources
- Buddy system
- Stress policy
- Wellbeing Champions
- Flexible working



							2018-24
Туре	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	average
Specified injuries (including fatality)	4	1	0	0	1	0	1.00
Injuries resulting in over 7 days absence	3	2	3	1	0	1	1.67
Occupational diseases <sup>18</sup>	0	0	5	0	0	0	0.83
Occupational disease other <sup>19</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Specified dangerous occurrences	0	1	1	0	0	2	0.67
Total (n=)	7	4	9	1	1	3	4.17

Table 9: Reported number of different RIDDOR injuries from 2018-24, for development-led archaeology.

Table 10: Estimated RIDDOR injury frequency and incident rate of respondents to the survey from 2018-24.

	2018-	19	2019-2	20	2020-2	21	2021-2	22	2022-	23	2023-	24	Average 2	018-24
	Injury		Injury		Injury		Injury		Injury		Injury		Injury	
RIDDOR	frequency	Incident												
	rate	rate												
Specified injuries (including fatality)	2.01	342	0.16	31.83	0	0	0	0	0.247775	48.31618	0.00	0.00	0.40	70.36
Injuries resulting in over 7 days absence	1.51	256	0.33	63.65	0.96	187.5	0.2805	54.64	0	0	0.30	58.22	0.56	103.33
Occupational diseases	0	0	0	0	1.6	312.5	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.27	52.08
Occupational disease other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Specified dangerous occurrences	-	-	0.16	31.83	0.32	62.5	0	0	0	0	0.60	116.43	0.22	42.15

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> including carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and occupational dermatitis
<sup>19</sup> caused by exposure to carcinogens, mutagens & biological agents (including occupational cancers)