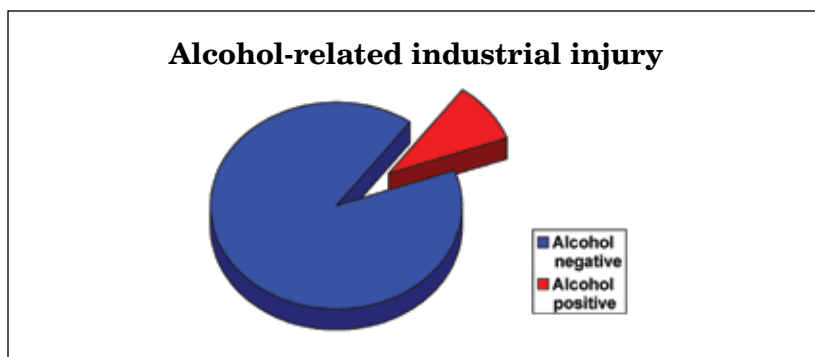

NTDB™ data points

Alcohol is no industrial accident

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In the early 1900s, workers in the U.S. faced remarkably high safety and health risks on the job. Efforts by workers, employers, unions, government agencies, and scientists have made considerable progress in improving these conditions. By the end of the 20th century, fatal workplace injuries had declined steadily from a high of 62 per 100,000 workers to four per 100,000 workers. Industries with the highest average rates for fatal occupational injury during the later part of that century include mining, agriculture/forestry/fishing, construction, and transportation/communications/public utilities. The leading causes of these fatal injuries were motor vehicle-related injuries, workplace homicides, and machine-related injury.

There are cause of injury codes (E codes) that are used to denote the place where an injury occurs. E code 849.3 relates to injuries occurring at an industrial place and premises. This E code accounts for more than 35,000 records in the National Trauma Data Bank™ *Annual Report 2004*. These injuries resulted in an overall mortality rate of 2 percent, an average length of stay of five days, length of stay in an intensive care unit of slightly more than one day, and average medical costs close to \$38,000. Total charges for this group add



up to more than \$1.3 billion. This figure does not begin to scratch the surface of total cost, however, because it doesn't include the financial losses related to decreased productivity as a result of employees' absence from the workplace.

Taking a closer look at this group reveals that of those tested for alcohol after the injury, one in 10 tested positive. These data are depicted in the chart on this page.

As prevalent as alcohol consumption has become, it is not hard to imagine that alcohol consumption and its negative consequences could spill over to the workplace. Consumption of alcohol on the job, arriving to work with a hangover as result of previous consumption, or being a working alcoholic is associated with an increased risk of injury on the job. According to the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA), alcohol

abusers have a risk of being involved in an industrial accident two to three times higher than those who do not abuse alcohol. In addition, EASNA's studies demonstrate that alcohol has been implicated in 40 percent of industrial fatalities.

For more information, visit the EASNA Web site at <http://www.easna.org>. Fortunately, workplaces today have employee assistance programs that are designed to assist these individuals, as "alcohol is no industrial accident."

Throughout the year, we will be highlighting these data through brief monthly reports in the *Bulletin*. The full NTDB *Annual Report Version 4.0* is available on the ACS Web site as a PDF file and a PowerPoint® presentation at <http://www.ntdb.org>. If you are interested in submitting your trauma center's data, contact Melanie L. Neal, Manager, NTDB, at mneal@facs.org.