

# Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty: Impact of licensing red tape on worker safety

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January 10, 2018 – Milwaukee, WI – The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty issued a new study examining the effect of licensing regulations on worker safety in two widely-licensed professions. The analysis, using publicly available data from United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), found no significant relationship between burdensome licensing regulations and worker safety for Emergency Medical Technicians and Security Guards.

Occupational licensing, the system where certain regulated professions require a government permission slip to work, has been the subject of scrutiny and topic of reform across the country. New research has found that licensing has negative impacts on employment, prices, women, immigrants, and interstate migration. But licensing advocates consistently argue that licensing plays an important role in ensuring professionals receive adequate training, for their own health and safety, as well as the public.

WILL's new study examined BLS data on non-fatal injuries for Emergency Medical Technicians and Security Guards. These two professions are widely licensed and had sufficient BLS data on worker injuries. The findings for both professions was conclusive: burdensome state licensing regulations in the form of increased training hours, fees, exams, and age requirements have no effect on worker safety.

“While nearly a dozen studies have failed to find conclusive evidence that licensing results in increases in quality, few have measured the impact of licensing on worker safety,” said WILL Research Director Will Flanders. “This study scrutinizes one more argument from licensing advocates, that licensing results in fewer workplace injuries, and finds that the evidence just isn’t there.”

This is the fourth study on occupational licensing published by WILL since 2016. Previous studies have found:

More than 440,000 Wisconsin workers are licensed.

The number of Wisconsin licenses has grown by 84% since 1996.

Wisconsin has the 5th most burdensome licensing red tape for 10 professions.

Wisconsin could see 7% job growth across 10 professions with licensing reform.

States with burdensome licensing laws have fewer jobs in 10 licensed professions.