

**SOUTHERN COTTON GINNERS ASSOCIATION  
GIN SAFETY SURVEYS 1992-1996  
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**Abstract**

Southern Cotton Ginnners Association started collecting injury data in 1992 to determine the extent of injuries in member gins. Gins having no lost time injuries for the year receive safety plaques. These surveys in turn show me where to place emphasis in gin safety programs during the next year. Surveys have shown that finger and hand injuries are the most frequently injured body parts. The largest number of injuries occur in the press area of the gin. The few deaths occurred most often in the press area. Falls were the prevailing cause of accidental deaths during the period. Programs based on injury data when implemented by gins have decreased accidents. The percentage of gins returning safety surveys has risen during this period while the percentage of lost time injuries has declined. Surveys helped to direct our efforts in having safer gins with more effective safety programs.

**Introduction**

Today I would like to share with you results of safety surveys conducted by Southern Cotton Ginnners Association for the seasons of 1992 through 1996, and how we respond to them. Surveys are not much value if they don't spur action. We use the surveys to determine where to place special or added emphasis in our safety program. Safety seminars are conducted in August. Injury surveys show where to place efforts in training. Surveys also guide me in conducting safety inspections throughout the year.

**Discussion**

I will now discuss the results of our safety survey for the years 1992-1996. We send out the injury survey on December 1 each year. The types of injuries and causes are noted. Gins having no lost time injuries are awarded a safety plaque. When these are displayed in a prominent place, it shows visitors, customers, inspectors and employees that your gin is a safe place to work and that safety is a top priority in the gin. In this five year period 680 gins have received a safety award. 328 lost time injuries were reported in these years. Results of our surveys are shown in Tables 1-3.

The body parts injured data (table 1) shows that thirty-five percent, or 122 injuries, were finger, arm, hand, wrist, and elbow injuries. Twenty-six percent were ankle, knee, foot, toe, hip and leg injuries.

Twenty five percent were in the back, shoulder, muscle, neck, and rib areas.

Fourteen percent were eye, head, nose, ear, teeth and forehead injuries.

One percent of injuries were other areas of the body.

When causes of the injuries are analyzed, twenty-nine percent or fifty-seven injuries occurred in the press area. Sixteen percent, or thirty-one injuries occurred in lint cleaners. Thirteen percent, or twenty-six injuries occurred in tractor, trailer, or truck accidents. Nine percent, or seventeen injuries occurred in gin stands.

Seven percent each occurred in the process of lifting and on forklifts. Six percent, eleven injuries, were falls. The percentage does not truly indicate the seriousness, since four of the eleven falls resulted in death. Five percent, or ten injuries occurred in both bale conveyors and suck pipes, and eight injuries each occurred in module feeders and on ladders.

Various machines in which fewer injuries occurred are not included in this report.

The deaths which occurred in our Association's area were tragic. You will notice that four of these deaths were falls. Four were in or around the press. Three of the deaths were falls in the press area. This data has led me to emphasize stronger press worker safety training and placing more emphasis on fall prevention in seminars, safety inspections and recommendations.

These deaths have motivated ginnners to improve communication, prevent falls and improve their training programs to cut down on these types of injuries.

Since 1993 lost time injuries reported have dropped from 87 to 29 in 1997. The number has dropped every year since 1993. There have been no work-related deaths in gins in our area during the last two years.

Results of these surveys have encouraged me to continue promoting complete guarding of lint cleaners, more diligent application of lockout-tagout, and more emphasis on more complete safety training.

We continue to have lint cleaner injuries each year and many of these are very experienced people.

We also continue to have injuries that proper lockout would have prevented.

I would like to challenge you today to develop a mindset that strives for continuous improvement in safety. Many of you have that philosophy already. We should work toward an injury-free culture.

This means that when an employee is injured you don't just dismiss it with "well, these things just happen sometime". Ninety-nine percent of the employee injuries happen because somebody goofed. Analyze the accident. Address the situation by:

1. Eliminating the hazard.
2. Retraining employees to do the job properly and safely.
3. Changing the behavior of the employee. It may be difficult to change the behavior of seasonal employees. It is difficult to change your own behavior! However, your full time people can adjust with proper motivation. This year I saw experienced ginners start wearing ear plugs. I was very surprised! One man said he had lost all the hearing he could afford to lose. Another man told me he realized he had some hearing loss. He wanted to be able to continue hearing deer walking through the woods. Many ginners tell me they can hear changes in the gin better with hearing protection that they can without it.

Gin safety surveys have helped us develop priorities, design safety manuals, develop training seminars, and zero in on improving safety conditions as well as attitudes of owners, managers and employees. The surveys help us measure our progress as an industry as we strive for safer gins, fewer injuries, and better trained, safety-minded employees.

### References

Davis, L.E. 1997. Southern Cotton Ginners Safety Program. Proceedings Beltwide Cotton Conferences. 406-408.

### SCGA - Gin Safety Surveys - 1992-1996

SCGA - Larry Davis. Cotton Gin Inspections. 1992-1996.

Table 1. Gin Injuries 1992-96. Southern Cotton Ginners Assn.-328 Surveys

Body Part Injured	No. Of Injuries	Percent
Finger, hand, arm, wrist, elbow	122	35
Back, shoulder, muscle strain, neck, rib	86	25
Ankle, foot, knee, toe, hip, leg	96	26
Eye, head, nose, ear, teeth, forehead	48	14
Other	5	1

Table 2.

Major Cause of Injuries 92-96	Number	Percent
Press	57	29
Lint Cleaner	31	16
Tractor and Trailer	26	13
Gin Stand	17	9
Lifting	14	7
Forklift	13	7
* Falls	11	6
Bale Conveyor	10	5
Suction Pipe	10	5
Ladder	8	4.5
Module Feeder	8	4.5

Table 3.

Deaths - Six	
1992 -	Employee fell into chain drive in press pit.
1992 -	Employee caught in module truck loading chain.
1993 -	Employee was in lint slide and tramper was turned on. (Miscommunication)
1993 -	Employee fell off trailer tongue into tractor wheel.
1994 -	Employee fell down into press pit fire.