Safer and Healthier American Workplaces Through Improving Knowledge

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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SAFER AND HEALTHIER

AMERICAN WORKPLACES

THROUGH IMPROVING

KNOWLEDGE
Section 24(a):

SCOPE: THE SECRETARY...SHALL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF COLLECTION, COMPILATION, AND ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STATISTICS.

SECRETARY OF LABOR DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY FOR STATISTICS TO BLS, THE PRIMARY STATISTICAL AGENCY WITHIN DOL.
ANNUAL SURVEY OF
OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES
1972 - 91

EACH YEAR THE SURVEY PROVIDES ESTIMATES ON
WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES:

* INCIDENCE RATES (PER 100 FULL TIME WORKERS)
* NUMBER OF CASES
* NUMBER OF DAYS AWAY FROM WORK

EACH YEAR THE SURVEY ALSO PROVIDES
ESTIMATES OF WORKPLACE FATALITIES

* INCIDENCE RATES (PER 100,000 FULL TIME
  WORKERS)
* NUMBER OF CASES
Occupational Injury and Illness Incidence Rates, Private Industry, 1972-91

Incidence rates per 100 full-time workers

Total injuries and illnesses

Nonfatal injuries and illnesses without lost workdays

Lost workday injuries and illnesses

June 1993
Year-to-Year Percentage Change in Employment and Total Injury and Illness Cases, Private Industry, 1973-91

NOTE: Shaded areas are recessionary periods, as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Number of Occupational Illnesses, Private Industry, 1972-91

Number of cases (in thousands)


Total all illnesses

OSHA recordkeeping fines assessed

Disorders associated with repeated trauma

Skin diseases or disorders

June 1993
Number of Occupational Fatalities for Employers with 11 or More Employees, Private Industry, 1980-91

NOTE: The shaded area represents the 95-percent confidence interval for the 1991 estimate of fatalities.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE REDESIGN
OF THE BLS OSHS

DISSATISFACTION EXPRESSED BY A VARIETY OF DATA
USERS (E.G., OSHA, UNIONS, MEDIA, AND CONGRESS)
HEIGHTENED IN THE EARLY TO MID 1980'S.

IN 1986 BLS COMMISSIONED THE NATIONAL ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES (NAS) TO REVIEW OSHS AND RECOMMEND
IMPROVEMENTS.
CONCLUSIONS:

"THE BLS SYSTEMS...ARE INADEQUATE FOR PROVIDING OSHA WITH THE DATA IT NEEDS...FOR PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES."

"THERE IS NO SINGLE AGREED UPON ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF OCCUPATIONAL FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

BLS SHOULD COLLECT MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES FROM EXISTING EMPLOYER RECORDS.

BLS SHOULD WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO DEVELOP COMPLETE ROSTERS OF OCCUPATIONAL FATALITIES FROM DEATH CERTIFICATES, MEDICAL EXAMINER RECORDS, AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS.
WHERE are injuries, illnesses, and fatalities occurring?
(INDUSTRY)

WHO are the injured and ill workers?
(OCCUPATION, SEX, AGE, EXPERIENCE)

WHAT kind of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities are occurring?
(NATURE - BURN, FRACTURE...)

WHAT parts of body are being impacted?
(HEAD, ARM, LEG...)

WHAT machines or substances are involved?
(SOURCE)

HOW did the injury, illness, or fatality occur?
(EVENT - FALL, CRUSH, CONTACT...)
REDESIGNED OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STATISTICS PROGRAM

1987
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT

1988 - 91
FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND TESTING

1990 - 91
CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR REDESIGN

1992
IMPLEMENT NEW STATISTICAL PROGRAM

1993
PUBLISH NEW DATA
CENSUS OF FATAL OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES PROGRAM

1988 - 90
TESTS IN COLORADO AND TEXAS

1991
DATA FOR 32 STATES AND NEW YORK CITY

1992
DATA FOR 50 STATES AND D.C.
(PUBLICATION FALL 1993)
Percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by industry, 1991

Construction 16%
Manufacturing 13%
Transportation 16%
Wholesale Trade 4%
Retail Trade 12%
Agriculture 13%
Public Admin. 6%
Services 14%
Mining 3%
Finance 2%

Percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by occupation, 1991

Service 8%
Farming 15%
Craft 18%
Technical 13%
Managerial 12%
Military 1%
Operators 32%

Percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, 1991

Transportation 37%
Homicide 18%
Suicide 2%
Struck 9%
Compressed 7%
Explosion 4%
Contact Electricity 6%
Fall 11%
Other 5%

June 1993
Percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by worker characteristics, 1991

Worker characteristics

Wage and salary
Self-employed

24 years and under
25 to 54 years
55 years and over

Men
Women

June 1993
Number of fatal occupational injuries involving lifting machines (cranes, hoists, etc.), 1991

Event or Exposure

- Employee struck by falling object
- Employee electrocuted
- Employee fell
- Employee crushed between objects

Other fatal incidents

Number of Fatalities

CASE 21: EMPLOYEE WAS ELECTROCUTED WHEN THE CRANE WHICH HE WAS LEANING ON CAME IN CONTACT WITH A 14,400 VOLT ELECTRIC LINE.

CASE 33: WHILE DIRECTING A CRANE AT CONSTRUCTION SITE, EMPLOYEE FELL INTO AN AIR VENT SHAFT.

CASE 101: USING OVERHEAD CRANE AND SLING, EMPLOYEE WAS LOWERED INTO VAT TO RETRIEVE METAL PIECE AND FELL INTO VAT OF ACID.