

Overview

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) generates state and national estimates of non-fatal workplace injuries based on its annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). The annual survey requires employers to provide information about OSHA-recordable injuries and illnesses. Past research has shown that employers fail to report some injuries in the SOII, but little is known about why specific cases go unreported.

To identify reasons why employers exclude certain cases in the SOII, 2012 Washington SOII respondents were interviewed about why they had not reported specific workers' compensation indemnity claims to the BLS. Qualitative content analysis methods were used to detect themes and patterns in the responses.

Contact the author:

Christina.Rappin@Lni.wa.gov

Research for Safe Work

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Employer Reasons for Injury Underreporting

Employer reasons for failing to report eligible workers' compensation claims in the BLS survey of occupational injuries and illnesses.

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Christina L. Rappin, Sara E. Wuellner, and David K. Bonauto

Key Findings

Reasons eligible claims were not reported in the SOII included:

- **Noncompliance with OSHA recordkeeping rules**
 - Employer misunderstood recordkeeping rules, especially how to count days of missed work
 - Injury information not transferred or communicated properly at establishment
- **Noncompliance with SOII reporting instructions**
 - Employer did not keep OSHA logs or track injuries
 - Employer did not include all required locations, workers, or injury types
- **Employer did not consider the injury work-related**
 - Condition did not result from specific injury incident
 - Employer believed outside activities caused the injury
- **Data entry errors by employer**
 - Date of injury recorded incorrectly
- **Indeterminate SOII eligibility**
 - Injury not OSHA recordable, or injury severity progressed post-employment

Impact

This study identified many reasons employers fail to report some injuries in the SOII, including a lack of understanding of both OSHA and SOII reporting requirements. In addition to increased education and outreach, efforts to streamline injury recordkeeping and reporting processes could increase SOII accuracy.

Find the free article here:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajim.22582/full>

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