By the Numbers: Incident Reporting

DID YOU KNOW?

The Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities (IIF) program produces a wide range of information about workplace injuries and illnesses. These data are collected and reported annually through the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) and the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI).

The latest numbers show the follows:

Groupings:

Nonfatal Injuries and Illness, Private Industry.

Total recordable cases:

2,834,500 in 2018

Cases involving days away from work:

900,400 in 2018

Median days away from work:

8 in 2018

Cases involving sprains, strains, tears:

308,630 in 2018

Cases involving injuries to the back:

142,230 in 2018

Cases involving falls, slips, trips:

240,160 in 2018

Total fatal injuries (all sectors):

5,250 in 2018

Roadway incidents (all sectors):

1,276 in 2018

Falls, slips, trips (all sectors):

791 in 2018

Homicides (all sectors):

453 in 2018

A total of 5,250 workers died from a work-related injury in the U.S. in 2018, up 2 percent from the 2017 total of 5,147. The fatal injury rate was unchanged in 2018 at 3.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers.

Employer-reported injury and illness rate unchanged in 2018 at 2.8 cases per 100 workers

The rate of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses among private industry employees was unchanged for the first time since 2012 at 2.8 cases per 100 full-time equivalent workers in 2018. Workers in private industry incurred 2.8 million injuries or illnesses in 2018.

KEEP IN MIND

The term “accident” has been used often in the past referring to an unplanned, unwanted event. Some people suggest that “accident” was a random event that could not have been prevented!!! But OSHA suggests that nearly all worksite fatalities, injuries, illness are preventable. “Incident” is the appropriated term when referring to these events.

Incident reporting of all injuries including close calls is critical to the integrity of the workplace.

- It is impossible to create improved processes that protect workers if management is not aware of what kinds of problems are occurring in the workplace that may cause injury or property damage.
- The workplace is even at greater risk for a more serious incident to occur in the future if a minor incident or near miss is ignored or not reported.
- Failure for incident reporting will negate a process in which situations can be corrected to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.
- A strong safety culture will not be fostered if incident reporting is relegated to the trash bin.

Prevention

INCIDENT REPORTING

- All incidents, near-misses and injuries should be **reported immediately**. The employee should not have to make a guess as to whether “their issue or incident” is worthy of an incident report. When in doubt, file an incident report.

INCIDENT REPORTING TRAINING

- All employees should be trained on the incident reporting process for their company. Ideally, this training is included as part of the on-boarding process for every employee. Throughout the year, holding periodic safety meetings on the hazard, near-miss, and incident reporting processes is essential.

INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS

Some companies may require employees to report directly to HR or their immediate supervisor to file a report. Others may have a very convenient online reporting system that employees can access through their company's internet. Typically, and at minimum, a company should provide a standard incident report form that every employee knows how to locate and any employee can complete and submit.

PAST INCIDENT REPORTING

There should never be any punitive damages associated with any employee filing an incident report. Following the company's incident reporting process, there should be an interview with the employee to ensure all the facts have been collected, the form is complete, and the nature of the incident is fully understood. The incident reporting follow-up process should include an investigation into the incident, medical care provided to the employee (if needed), corrective actions implemented immediately and preventive actions implemented as deemed necessary to prevent future incidents of the same nature.