

Recordkeeping 101: Part 7

Using your log results: 'How do we compare?'

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Editor's note: This is the seventh installment of a series about using the OSHA Form 300 and summarizing its results. This information is directed to people who are new to OSHA recordkeeping activities, who are unfamiliar with the 2002 recordkeeping changes or who want to review their recordkeeping practices. Visit www.doli.state.mn.us/recordkeeping.html for previous installments.

This installment explains how to use log summary results to track your company's performance and to benchmark your rates with state and national results for your industry. The previous installment of this series discussed how to complete an annual log summary (OSHA form 300A). Computing the incidence rates gives those who are responsible for workplace safety some perspective about safety and health issues and a broad measure of the performance of safety processes. It also helps in setting goals and prioritizing safety activities for the coming year.

Data available from the log summary

When you have accurately completed your OSHA log summary, you have annual numbers for:

- hours worked by all employees;
- cases with days away from work;
- cases with job transfer or restriction; and
- other recordable cases.

Add the number of cases to produce the number of total recordable cases.

You should also have your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. This is necessary if you want to compare your rates to the corresponding state and national rates. To find an NAICS code or convert a SIC code to a NAICS code, visit www.census.gov/epcd/naics02. Call the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development at (651) 297-2242 to get your firm's NAICS designation.

Computing incidence rates

The number of cases are converted into incidence rates to show the relative level of injuries and illnesses, which can be used to compare with rates of other firms. The most widely used incidence rate measures are the:

- total case incidence rate;

ONLINE RESOURCES

Federal OSHA recordkeeping resources

- www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html

MNOSHA recordkeeping resources

- www.doli.state.mn.us/recordkeeping.html

MNOSHA WSC recordkeeping training

- www.doli.state.mn.us/osseven.html

Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

- www.bls.gov/iif
- www.doli.state.mn.us/dlistats.html

Packet of recordkeeping forms, instructions

- www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/RKforms.html

Booklet: Minnesota OSHA recordkeeping requirement

- www.doli.state.mn.us/pdf/recordkeepingstandard.pdf

- rate of cases with days away from work;
- rate of cases with job transfer or restriction; and
- the DART rate, which combines the cases with days away from work and cases with job transfer or restriction.

Incidence rates are expressed as the rate of cases per 100 full-time-equivalent (FTE) workers. An FTE is defined as one employee working for 40 hours a week for 50 weeks, resulting in 2,000 work hours. One hundred FTEs is equal to 200,000 work hours.

Rates are calculated by first computing the number of cases per work hour at your firm (divide the relevant case count by the number of hours worked). Multiply the result by 200,000 to convert it to a rate per 100 FTEs.

To assist you in this process, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has produced an instructive document, *How to compute a firm's incidence rate for safety management*. It is available online at www.bls.gov/iif/osheval.htm.

Recordkeeping continues ...

BLS rate calculator tool

Fortunately, BLS has a Web tool, the *Incidence rate calculator and comparison tool*, that performs these calculations and provides the comparison benchmark rates you need. The tool can be accessed online at <http://data.bls.gov/IIRC>.

- Steps 1 and 2 of the tool ask you to input numbers from your log summary and the total number of recordable cases.
- Step 3 of the tool allows you to select the comparison jurisdiction and industry.
 - First, select an area, either the entire United States or an individual state, indicating whether you want private-sector or public-sector results. Only the states that participate in the BLS *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* are listed.
 - Next, select a NAICS supersector, the broad industry category that describes your firm’s work. Selecting a supersector changes the industry list to show you the available options for your benchmarking rate.
 - Then select the industry with the NAICS code most similar to your firm’s code. This is usually an industry with the same first three or four NAICS digits as your firm.
- In Step 4, click on the calculate button. Rates for your firm and the corresponding rates for the comparison jurisdiction industry will be displayed in the results. Below is an example of what the results table looks like.

Using and preserving your rates

The real power of incidence rates lies in observing the rate trends. Firms’ incidence rates often display much year-to-year fluctuation, so longer-term trends are necessary to see what is really happening. The BLS rate calculator tool only allows you to generate one year’s set of rates at a time. To observe rate trends, DLI provides an Excel file at www.doli.state.mn.us/xls/ratechart.xls that enables you to copy annual results from the BLS tool and produce line charts showing your firm’s rates and a set of comparison rates.

Copy the file from the Web to your computer or network to use it to display your firm’s incidence rates. The first worksheet of the file contains detailed instructions. If you need assistance using this Excel file, send an e-mail message to Brian Zaidman at brian.zaidman@state.mn.us.

Next installment: a recordkeeping review.

Where do comparison rates come from?

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and most states conduct the annual *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses*. Based on size and industry, a random sample of firms is selected each year to participate in the survey. These firms transfer their log summary information to a survey form that is returned to state or regional BLS offices. These summaries are used to compute state and national incidence rates. The survey is completely confidential and is used for statistical purposes only. In Minnesota each year, about 5,000 firms participate in the survey.

Year:	2004
Area:	Private industry, Minnesota
Supersector:	Manufacturing
Industry:	Metalworking machinery manufacturing

Case type	Your establishment	Private industry, Minnesota
Total	10.3	6.1
Days away	2.6	1.6
Job transfer/restriction	1.7	0.9
DART	4.3	2.5