



Injury Underreporting Patterns in U.S. Construction

Injury Underreporting Among Small Establishments in the Construction Industry

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Overview

CPWR researchers analyzed 15 years of data from five large, nationally representative data sources to assess accuracy of the reported injuries and illnesses related to construction work.

Key Findings

- By comparing the trends in employment, fatal injuries, and nonfatal injuries and illnesses in the construction industry from 1992 to 2006, the findings indicate that construction nonfatal injuries and illnesses are vastly underreported, especially by small establishments/contractors, or those with 10 or fewer wage-and-salary employees.
- Among these small contractors, estimated numbers suggest that 75% of nonfatal injuries to Hispanic workers are not reported, and 40% of injuries are unreported for white, non-Hispanic workers.

The researchers identified a number of recommendations:

- OSHA should focus more on small construction establishments and pay attention to safety and health of non-traditional/self-employed workers in addition to its current scope of worker protection. At present, OSHA regulations only protect wage-and-salary workers in construction occupations.
- Occupational safety and health surveillance should be improved, including using alternative data sources to complement the BLS data.

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See abstract:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21246588>

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