

One log, two data collection programs

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Minnesota employers with 20 or more employees are now required to report OSHA log summary data (OSHA Form 300A) electronically to OSHA. Also, every year, some Minnesota employers are randomly selected to report their OSHA log information for the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII), a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In 2019, the due date for the OSHA electronic reporting is March 2. This date is during the initial phase of the SOII data collection period. The existence of these two programs, both asking employers to provide OSHA log data, raises many questions for employers. This article uses answers to frequently asked questions from BLS to address some of the issues (see www.bls.gov/iif/oshfaq1.htm).

Employers participating in the SOII, with 20 employees or more, need to also submit data to OSHA
OSHA's electronic reporting requirements do not change requirements for reporting for the BLS SOII. Employers that have been notified that they have been selected to submit data for the SOII continue to be required by law to respond to the SOII. These same employers, if they have an establishment with 20 or more employees, also need to report to OSHA.

BLS realizes OSHA's new electronic data collection effort may occasionally require some employers to report injury and illness data to both OSHA and to BLS. BLS will continue to offer several ways to report data for the SOII to make the process as convenient as possible. However, BLS has begun researching alternative methodologies that may allow the use of OSHA-collected data in the future, as a way to minimize the reporting burden.

Federal law prohibits BLS from sharing nonpublic data

BLS is not permitted to share the identity of SOII respondents and the data employers provide to BLS is kept in strict confidence in accordance with its data integrity guidelines (see www.bls.gov/bls/data_integrity.htm) and with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) of 2002 (see www.bls.gov/bls/confidentiality.htm). BLS uses data collected from the SOII for statistical purposes only, to estimate counts and rates of nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses among U.S. workplaces. CIPSEA prohibits BLS from disclosing or releasing respondent data in identifiable form to unauthorized persons, including OSHA.

OSHA electronic reporting is different from reporting for the SOII

BLS is charged with providing accurate and statistically valid estimates of rates and counts of workplace injuries and illnesses in the United States and conducts the SOII annually for this purpose.

BLS reviews data extensively for accuracy and validity and may contact employers to verify data reported for the SOII or to correct things like typographical errors or anomalous data. To accurately estimate the injuries and illnesses occurring in each industry, BLS must ensure the data provided by employers is correct and that the employers match the establishments selected to participate annually in the SOII.