

## Appendix B. Definitions

Occupational injuries and illnesses are defined for the survey as any of the following:

*Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses* involve days away from work, days of job transfer or restriction, loss of consciousness, or medical treatment other than first aid.

- *Occupational injuries* are any injuries such as cuts, fractures, sprains, amputations, and so forth that result from a work-related event of a single instantaneous exposure in the work environment.
- *Occupational illnesses* are any abnormal condition or disorder, other than one resulting from an occupational injury, caused by exposure to factors associated with employment. They include acute and chronic illnesses or diseases that may be caused by inhalation, absorption, ingestion, or direct contact.

The following list gives the occupational illness and disorder categories that are used to classify recordable illnesses for the data in table 4. For all illnesses except hearing loss examples of each category are given. These should be considered typical examples. They are not intended as complete listings of the types of illnesses and disorders that are counted under each category. Hearing loss is only recordable if it meets specific criteria based on a hearing test.

*Occupational skin diseases or disorders.* Examples include contact dermatitis, eczema, or rash caused by primary irritants and sensitizers or poisonous plants; oil acne; chrome ulcers; chemical burns or inflammations.

*Respiratory conditions.* Examples include silicosis, asbestosis, pneumonitis, pharyngitis, rhinitis or acute congestion, and farmer's lung.

*Poisoning (systemic effects of toxic materials).* Examples include poisoning by lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, or other metals; poisoning by carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, or other gases; poisoning by benzol, carbon tetrachloride, or other organic solvents; poisoning by insecticide sprays such as parathion and lead arsenate; poisoning by other chemicals such as formaldehyde, plastics, and resins.

*Hearing loss.* Hearing loss involves a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) in hearing in one or both ears based on a hearing test (audiogram) resulting in a total hearing level of 25 dB or more above audiometric zero (averaged at 2000, 3000, & 4000 Hz) in the same ear(s) as the STS.

*All other occupational illnesses.* Examples include effects of environmental temperature extremes; effects of ionizing and non-ionizing radiation; conditions resulting from repeated motion, vibration, or pressure; anthrax; brucellosis; infectious hepatitis; malignant and benign tumors; food poisoning; histoplasmosis; coccidioidomycosis; and all other occupational illnesses.

*Cases with days away from work* may or may not include days of job transfer or restriction.

*Cases with job transfer or restriction* are those that result in job transfer or restriction only.

*Nature of injury or illness* names the principal physical characteristic of a disabling condition, such as sprain/strain, cut/laceration, or carpal tunnel syndrome.

*Part of body affected* is directly linked to the nature of the injury or illness cited, for example, back sprain, finger cut, or wrist and carpal tunnel syndrome.

*Source of injury or illness* is the object, substance, exposure, or bodily motion that directly produced or inflicted the disabling condition cited. Examples are a heavy box, a toxic substance, fire/flame, and bodily motion of the injured or ill worker.

*Event or exposure* signifies the manner in which the injury or illness was produced or inflicted—for example, overexertion while lifting or a fall from a ladder.

*Median days away from work* is the measure used to summarize the varying lengths of absences from work among cases with days away from work and cases with days away from work with days of job transfer or restriction. One-half of the cases involved more days and one-half involved fewer days than a specified median.

*Incidence rates* represent the number of injuries and/or illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as follows:

$(N/EH) \times 200,000$

where:

N = number of injuries and/or illnesses

EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year

200,000 = base for 100 full-time equivalent workers  
(working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year).

In some instances, incidence rates are calculated using a base for 10,000 full-time equivalent workers (20 million hours). These instances include measures of work-related illnesses and injury and illness characteristics of cases with days away from work.