

## Injury and Illness Reporting According to OSHA

OSHA requires most businesses with more than ten employees to keep a record of all serious work-related injuries and illnesses. However, certain [low-risk industries](#) and injuries that require basic first aid are exempt from this rule.

### Recordable Injury & Illness

As per OSHA guidelines, the following injuries and illnesses must be recorded:

- Any fatality at the workplace
- Any injury or illness that results in loss of consciousness, days off from work, restricted work, or led to a transfer to another job
- Any injury or illness that requires medical treatment beyond the scope of basic first aid
- Diagnosis of chronic irreversible diseases and conditions, such as cancer, fractured bones, broken teeth, and punctured eardrums
- Work-related cases that involve needle sticks and sharps injuries, medical removal, hearing loss, and tuberculosis

Using such information, employers and OSHA evaluate the effectiveness of safety regulations at workplaces. This helps OSHA understand industry-related hazards and devise specific protection procedures to reduce and eliminate the dangers and prevent any future injuries and illnesses.

### Protection against Retaliation by Employers

In 2012, OSHA issued a memo titled [Employer Safety Incentive and Disincentive Policies and Practices](#). This highlighted OSHA's stance on employer policies and procedures that often discourage employees from reporting any work related injuries and illnesses. OSHA outlines the legal protections that employees have for reporting illnesses and injuries under Section 11(c) of the OSH Act.

Further stressing on the importance of encouraging employees to freely and confidently report any illness or injury, OSHA released the [Final Rule](#) in 2016. The rule prohibits employers from retaliating against their workers for reporting an injury or illnesses.

Falling in line with OSHA's [workplace poster](#), the Final Rule requires employers to discuss with employees their rights to report without fearing about actions taken by the management against them. It clarifies all existing requirements surrounding reporting procedures and emphasizes on existing statutory prohibition on employers from retaliating against their employees. These provisions under §1904.35 became effective on August 10, 2016, but OSHA enforced them on December 1, 2016.

## Maintaining and Recording Records

OSHA requires businesses to maintain five years of records on the worksite. Furthermore, employers must submit and post a summary to OSHA of all the injuries and illnesses recorded for the previous year between February and April each year at each site.

## Record Injury and Illness Data Online

As of January 01, 2017, OSHA requires certain employers to submit their workplace injury and illness related data electronically. It claims that the analysis of such data allows OSHA to use resources more efficiently and helps come up with better solutions to tackle hazards at those workplaces.

## How do Electronic Submissions Work?

OSHA's Injury Tracking Application (ITA) is easily accessible through the [ITA's launch page](#) and requires you to create an account to submit your company's information.

OSHA's safe and secure website offers three options to submit data. The first option is for users to manually enter the data to complete OSHA's form. The second option is to upload a copy of CSV file that can be used to process multiple establishments at the same time. The third option is to use an API (Application Programming Interface) to transfer information from your automated recordkeeping systems, electronically.

OSHA publishes some of the data on its website. The agency aims to use public disclosure as a source to encourage employers to take important measures that promote the overall workplace safety and provide valuable information to employees, job seekers, and the general public. This change in OSHA's policy appears to be a solid move for improving the safety of employees across the US.

By making such information public, it can push employers to focus on providing a safe environment to employees by signing up for [Safety & Compliance Training](#). It can help protect the lives of many workers that could be at a risk of sustaining injuries and illnesses due to their employers' carelessness.