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ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

Injury & Illness Reporting and Recordkeeping (29 CFR 1904)

How to record and report work-related injuries and illnesses to comply with OSHA regulations.

This *Ultimate Guide* covers how to determine if a workplace injury or illness case is “recordable” and what you must submit each year to achieve compliance with *revised OSHA reporting regulations in effect now*.

Recording Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

An American worker gets hurt on the job every 7 seconds.*

At that rate, safety managers and supervisors make thousands of decisions per day about which cases must be recorded. In general, OSHA requires employers with **more than ten full-time-equivalent employees** to record work-related injuries and illnesses [29 CFR 1904.1(a)].

Forms for Recordkeeping and Reporting

Employers use **three forms** to comply with injury/illness recordkeeping & reporting mandates:

300	Form 300	301	Form 301	300 A	Form 300A
	A daily log of recorded cases.		A detailed incident report for each recorded case.		An annual summary of recorded injuries/illnesses.



What is “recordable”?

An injury or illness must be recorded if it is a “**new case**” that is **work-related** *and it*:

- Results in death;
- Results in days away, restricted work, or transfer to another job function (DART);
- Requires treatment beyond first aid;
- Involves loss of consciousness; or
- Is a “significant injury or illness” diagnosed by a medical professional.

[29 CFR 1904.7]

What is a “new case”?

An injury or illness is a “**new case**” *if*:

- The employee has not experienced a recorded case of the same type affecting the same body part before; or
- The employee re-injures a body part or gets ill from an event/exposure at work after full recovery from an earlier recorded case of the same type.

[29 CFR 1904.6(a)]

What is “work-related”?

Not every injury or illness that happens at or around the workplace is “*work-related*” for recordkeeping purposes.

OSHA provides **nine exceptions** that help clarify the meaning of “work-related” (i.e., *recordable*).

See all 9 exceptions on pp. 4—6.

[29 CFR 1904.5(b)(2)]

*National Safety Council, [Workplace Injuries by the Numbers](#).



Annual Injury & Illness Reporting

In addition to *keeping records of* injuries and illnesses, many workplaces must submit some of the information recorded in an annual report to OSHA.

All workplaces must report the most serious work-related incidents—those that result in death, amputation, hospitalization, or loss of an eye.



Fatalities must be reported within **8 hours**.



All others must be reported within **24 hours**.

[29 CFR 1904.39(a)]



Who Must Report to OSHA?

The following establishments must submit details about recorded injury and illness cases from OSHA Forms 300, 301, and 300A ([Learn more](#)):

- Establishments with 100 or more employees in certain very high-risk industries listed in a new Appendix B to Part 1904, Subpart E.

The following establishments must submit the Annual Summary (Form 300A) only:

- Establishments with 250 or more employees that are required to keep OSHA injury and illness records (i.e., are not partially exempt per 29 CFR 1904.2); and
- Establishments with 20–249 employees in certain higher-risk industries listed in Appendix A to Part 1904, Subpart E.



March 2

is the annual deadline to report. Submissions must be sent electronically through the Injury Tracking Application (ITA) at [OSHA.gov](#).
Cases of injuries and illnesses that employers are not required to record/report.



9 Exceptions to “Work-Related”

To help employers make determinations about the “work-relatedness” of individual injury and illness cases, OSHA includes nine exceptions to the recordability criteria in the regulations. The exceptions are in 29 CFR 1904.5(b)(2), listed in a chart that begins:

“You are not required to record injuries and illnesses if...”

1. At the time of the injury or illness, the employee was present in the work environment as a member of the general public rather than as an employee.

Example: A cashier slips and falls while buying groceries on their day off.



2. The injury or illness involves signs and symptoms that surface at work, but result solely from a non-work-related event or exposure that occurs outside the work environment.

Example: A forklift driver hits their head during a football game with friends *outside of work*, then shows signs of a concussion the next day when starting their shift.



3. The injury or illness results solely from voluntary participation in a wellness program or in a medical, fitness, or recreational activity like a blood donation, physical exam, flu shot, or exercise class.

Example: During a break from work, a machine operator breaks their thumb while throwing a frisbee disc outside the facility.



[29 CFR 1904.5(b)(2)(i)–(iii)]



9 Exceptions to “Work-Related”

“You are not required to record injuries and illnesses if...”

4. The injury or illness is solely the result of an employee eating, drinking, or preparing food or drink for personal consumption.

Example: An employee burns their hand while reaching into the toaster to grab toast they are making for themselves.

Note: Food- or drink-related incidents must be recorded if an employee is made ill by ingesting food that was contaminated by workplace contaminants or an employee gets food poisoning from food supplied by the employer.

5. The injury or illness is solely the result of an employee doing personal tasks (unrelated to their employment) at the establishment outside of the employee’s assigned working hours.

Example: A hardware store worker cuts their hand shopping for a chainsaw after their shift ends.

6. The injury or illness is solely the result of personal grooming or self-medication for a non-work-related condition or is intentionally self-inflicted.

Example: An employee has an allergic reaction to cough medicine taken of their own volition during work hours.

[29 CFR 1904.5(b)(2)(iv)—(vi)]



9 Exceptions to “Work-Related”

“You are not required to record injuries and illnesses if...”

7. The injury or illness is caused by a motor vehicle accident and occurs on a company parking lot or company access road while the employee is commuting to or from work.

Example: An employee complains of neck pain after a “fender bender” in the parking lot.



8. The illness is a common cold or flu.

Example: An employee reports flu symptoms and requests an early dismissal.

Note: Other contagious diseases like COVID-19, tuberculosis, brucellosis, or hepatitis A are generally considered work-related if the employee is infected at work.



9. The illness is a mental illness.

Mental illness is not considered work-related unless the employee voluntarily provides the employer with an opinion from a healthcare professional stating that the employee has a mental illness that is work-related.

Example: An employee reports symptoms of depression to his manager.

[29 CFR 1904.5(b)(2)(vii)—(ix)]

While not all injuries or illnesses are “work-related” for recordkeeping purposes, employers should address every incident with appropriate consideration in the workplace.

Knowing which injury and illness cases to record and what information (if any) you must submit each year is crucial to meet your responsibilities, avoid “over-recording” cases, and protect your site from State or Federal penalties for noncompliance.



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More on this topic: [OSHA Workplace Health & Safety Topics](#)



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