

Indicator 18: OSHA Enforcement Activities

Significanceⁱ

The United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), conducts investigations and inspections at worksites to ensure employee safety and health compliance. Investigations and inspections typically occur at worksites in the event of work-related fatal and non-fatal injuries, hospitalizations, employee complaints and outside referrals. Random inspections are also conducted at high-risk worksites.

Colorado does not have a State-run OSHA; thus, Federal OSHA jurisdiction applies. Federal OSHA covers private sector and Federal employers and employees. It excludes self-employed, family farms or farms with 10 or fewer employees, state and local government workers and workplace hazards regulated by another Federal agency (e.g., the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)).

Methods

The Federal OSHA Denver Area Office provides Colorado OSHA inspection data based on annual reports. Included are enforcement activities in OSHA-covered establishments under OSHA jurisdiction in Colorado. Denominator data were obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW), also known as Covered Employment and Wages (CEW) or the ES-202 program. Data exclude mines, farms and local and state government establishments and employees.

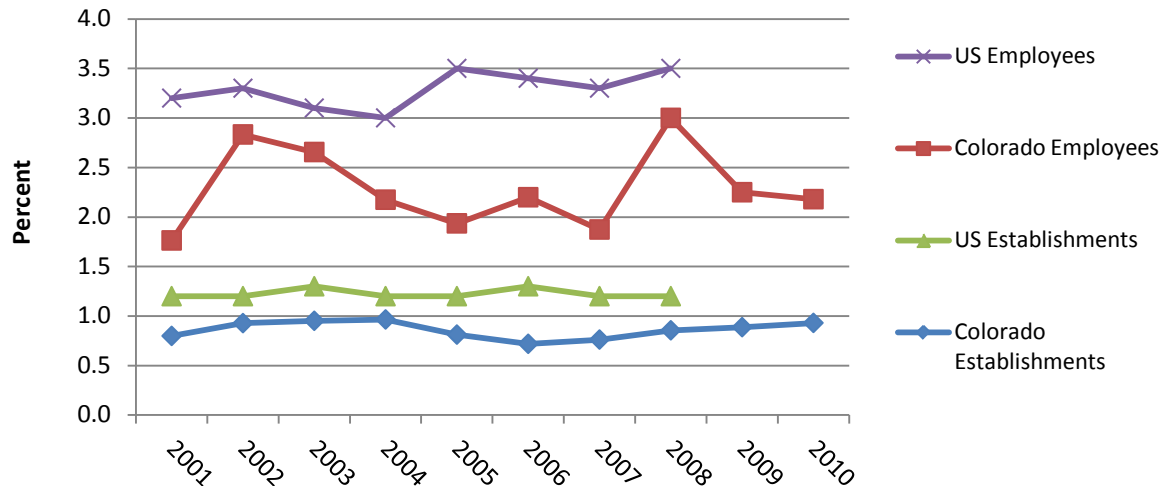
ⁱ Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. *Occupational Health Indicators: A Guide for Tracking Occupational Health Conditions and Their Determinants*. Last updated April 2012.

Results

Table 18.1 Establishments and employees inspected by OSHA, Colorado 2001-2011

Year	Establishments under jurisdiction	Establishments inspected	Percent of establishments inspected	Covered employees eligible for inspection	Employees inspected	Percent of employees inspected
2001	150,319	1,200	0.8	1,904,182	33,561	1.8
2002	153,099	1,420	0.9	1,846,285	52,301	2.8
2003	156,264	1,486	1.0	1,809,416	48,046	2.7
2004	159,346	1,537	1.0	1,831,325	39,811	2.2
2005	165,706	1,345	0.8	1,871,536	36,215	1.9
2006	170,744	1,227	0.7	1,915,522	42,118	2.2
2007	174,663	1,330	0.8	1,956,618	36,647	1.9
2008	174,531	1,492	0.9	1,963,490	58,904	3.0
2009	170,868	1,515	0.9	1,855,128	41,729	2.2
2010	167,356	1,556	0.9	1,830,951	39,901	2.2
2011	165,700	1,518	0.9	1,864,233	40,276	2.2
Average	164,418	1,421	0.9	1,877,153	42,683	2.3
<i>Source: OSHA data on total inspections conducted and the number of workers covered by these inspections (numerators); BLS data on Covered Employers and Wages (denominators)</i>						

Figure 18.1 Percent of establishments and employees whose work areas were inspected by OSHA, Colorado and the United States, 2001-2010



Colorado data source: OSHA data on total inspections conducted and the number of workers covered by these inspections (numerator); Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) (denominator). Includes only employees and establishments under OSHA jurisdiction in Colorado.

US data source: Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, Occupational Health Indicators. Currently, US data is only available through 2008.

Limitations

- Because OSHA may conduct multiple inspections of the same establishment during the calendar year, the percent of establishments inspected may be slightly overestimated. Additionally, if OSHA conducts multiple inspections of the same worksite during the year, the number of workers covered by OSHA inspections may be over counted.
- Only enforcement activities are measured. These data do not include information about education and compliance assistance activities.
- Employers participating in an OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) or the Safety and Health Achievement and Recognition Program (SHARP) are exempted from routine inspections. Excluding workers from these programs will reduce the numerator, resulting in an underestimate of the protective function.
- In the BLS QCEW data, individuals holding more than one job are counted multiple times.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

- Collaborate with OSHA's Denver Area Office to obtain data to report and track details of enforcement activities by type of establishment or event inspected or enforced.
- Identify methods to demonstrate whether increasing inspection and enforcement activities is effective at preventing work-related injuries and illnesses.