

**Sprains, strains and tear continue to dominate the type of cases of injuries and illnesses among all workers.**

## Workplace fatalities trend downward in 2010

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Although the numbers for all of 2010 have not been reported, it appears that workplace fatalities in Kentucky are trending downward for the year. Through the end of October 2010, a total of 46 workplace fatalities had been reported to the Kentucky OSH Program.

Of these, 27 were caused by heart attacks, and 19 were due to accidents. This compares to a total of 50 fatalities in 2009 (29 due to accidents and 21 due to heart attacks) and 70 in 2008 (35 due to accidents and 25 due to heart attacks) through the end of October of each year.

Thus, not only were total fatalities lower in the first 10 months of 2010, but fatalities due to accidents were sharply lower compared to the two previous years.

Of the 19 fatalities due to accidents in 2010 ...

- six (6) were due to motor vehicle accidents;
- three (3) were due to electrocution or electric shock;
- five (5) were crush injuries;
- three (3) were falls;
- one (1) was an explosion; and
- one (1) was shot.

Fatalities (including heart attacks) occurred in almost all industries, with construction and services having the most (seven each), followed by retail trade (six). ▲

### Decline in nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses requiring days off work

Nationwide, the number of reported "nonfatal" occupational injury and illness cases, those that required days away from work to recuperate, decreased 9 percent to 1,238,490 cases in 2009, the latest official annual data available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Measured another way, the incident rate, the number of nonfatal injuries and illness at

work in 2009 decreased 5 percent to 117 cases per 10,000 full-time workers.

While the overall incidence rate dipped, some jobs in the private sector saw an increase in the injury-illness incidence rate: light or delivery service truck drivers up 24 percent; restaurant cooks up 20 percent; landscape and groundskeepers up 10 percent; and registered nurses up 5 percent.

### Key findings

- Sprains, strains and tear continue to dominate the type of cases of injuries and illnesses among all workers. However, here also the number of cases dropped 7 percent and the incidence rate fell 4 percent to 47 cases per 10,000 full-time workers.
- In the private sector, the number of days-away-from-work cases decreased 11 percent to 964,990 cases — the first time the number of cases in the private sector has been below 1 million since data has been collected by the government.
- Maybe no surprise for readers in the coal-mining state of Kentucky, workers in the mining industry had longer absences from work than employees of any industry — a median of 26 days away from work, compared to eight days for all industries. The number of median days for coal in 2009 was one day shy of the record high of 27 days in 2007.
- In the government sector, correctional officers and jailers had an incidence rate of 451 cases per 10,000 full-time employees — a rate that is two-and-one-half times the total rate for state government. This group reported by far the most injuries and illnesses in state government with 16 percent of the total. But topping them in the incidence rate, police and sheriff's patrol officers in state government had a rate of 567.

- In 2009, three event or exposure categories accounted for 62 percent of total injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work: (1) contact with objects and equipment; (2) overexertion; and (3) fall on same level. ▲