

Indicator 1: Non-Fatal Injuries and Illnesses

Significance

The identification of non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses and associated factors, risks, and exposures is useful for intervention, education, and prevention.

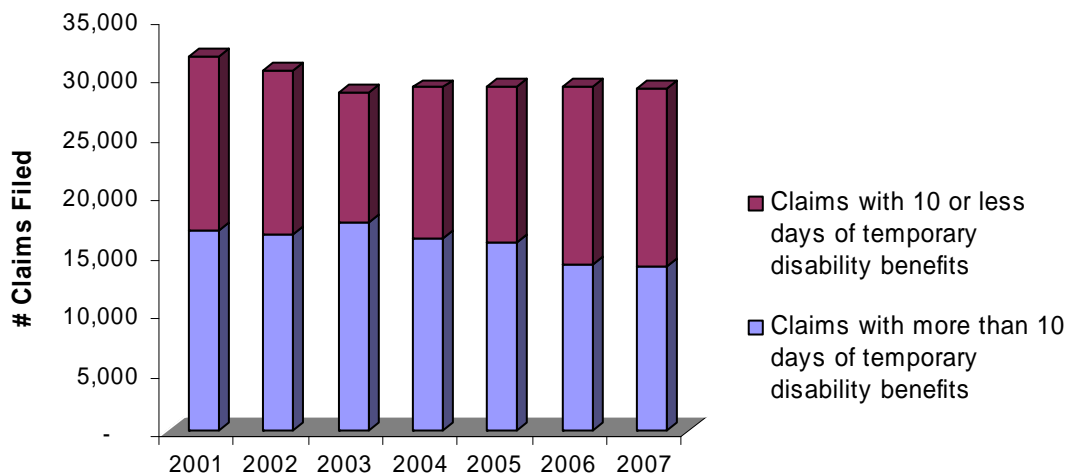
Methods

Work-related **injuries** are typically one-time events and include burns, falls, strains, sprains or fractures, electric shocks, being struck by a falling object, or amputation from getting caught in machinery. Work-related **illnesses** are usually a result of cumulative exposure to hazardous materials or repetitive motions. Examples include occupational asthma, asbestosis, pneumoconiosis, mesothelioma, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

The Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologist's (CSTE) method to calculate Indicator 1 is based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). Because of funding/resource limitations, Colorado does not participate in the SOII program and cannot collect the data for Indicator 1 utilizing the CSTE guidance. As an alternative method, workers' compensation claims data collected by the Colorado State Department of Labor, Division of Workers' Compensation, were utilized. These data provided the number of non-fatal work-related injury and illness claims filed (lost time, denied and settled) with a date of injury or illness during the calendar year (2001 to 2007), including the percent of cases with more than 10 days of temporary disability benefits for each fiscal year. Rates were calculated using, as the denominator, the numbers of workers covered by workers' compensation insurance provided by the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI).

Results

Figure 1.1 Non-fatal work-related injury and illness claims filed, Colorado, 2001-2007



Source: Colorado Department of Labor, Division of Workers' Compensation (numerator)
National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI) estimate of workers covered by workers' compensation (denominator)

Table 1.1 Nonfatal Work-Related Injury and Illness Claims Filed, Colorado 2001-2007			
Year	Civilian Worker's Covered By WC Insurance in Colorado, n (%)	Non-Fatal Work-Related Injury And Illness Claims, n (%)	WC Claims Resulting in >10 Day Of Temporary Disability Benefits, n (%)
2001	2,148,000 (93.6%)	31,785 (1.5%)	17,052 (53.6%)
2002	2,101,000 (86.2%)	30,492 (1.5%)	16,621 (54.5%)
2003	2,064,000 (83.3%)	28,659 (1.4%)	17,691 (61.7%)
2004	2,074,000 (82.1%)	29,120 (1.4%)	16,384 (56.3%)
2005	2,120,000 (83.8%)	29,173 (1.4%)	15,915 (54.6%)
2006	2,173,000 (83.3%)	29,261 (1.3%)	14,110 (48.2%)
2007	2,241,000 (83.7%)	29,061 (1.3%)	13,956 (48.0%)
Average	2,131,571 (85.0%)	29,650 (1.4%)	15,961 (53.8%)
<i>Source: Colorado Department of Labor, Division of Workers' Compensation (numerator) National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI) estimate of workers covered by workers' compensation (denominator)</i>			

- Between 2001-2007, 85% of all civilian workers in Colorado were covered by Colorado workers' compensation insurance. (Table 1.1)
- Between 2001-2007 an average of 1.4% of workers covered by Colorado workers' compensation insurers filed a non-fatal work-related injury and illness claim. (Table 1.1)
- Since 2001, over half of all workers' compensation claims filed (53.8%), resulted in more than 10 days of temporary disability benefits. Since 2003, the percent of claims filed involving more than 10 days of temporary disability benefits have gradually decreased from 61.7% to 48.0% (Table 1.1)
- Many non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses were severe enough to result in significant lost time at work. (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1)

Source:

- Colorado Department of Labor, Division of Workers' Compensation (numerator)
- National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI) estimate of workers covered by workers' compensation (denominator)

Limitations

- The number of claims filed for workers' compensation may underestimate the number of non-fatal injuries and illnesses because not all individuals with work-related injuries and illnesses file for workers' compensation benefits.
- Those workers who are self-employed (e.g., farmers, independent contractors), who work in small businesses or who are federal employees may not be covered by state workers' compensation insurers and therefore are not included in these estimates.
- Differences in eligibility criteria and availability of data from workers' compensations programs in different states limit these data from being compared with other states or with overall US data.

Recommendations

- Describe non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses in Colorado by industry, occupation, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and injury/illness characteristics, including type of injury/illness, part of the body affected, and source of injury/illness, for the purpose of intervention, education, and prevention.
- Colorado should participate in the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). The SOII collects data on work-related injuries and illnesses reported by employers. These data are helpful in describing the burden of injuries and illnesses that occur in the workplace and are an addition to workers' compensation data.