

Safety & Health Programs

That Was No Accident!

Using Your OSHA 300 Log to Improve Safety and Health



When you hear the word “accident,” you probably think of an unexpected, random event that no one could foresee or prevent. Accidents “just happen.”

Most workplace injuries and illnesses don’t just happen—they are usually *predictable* and *preventable*. That’s why OSHA calls them “incidents” instead of “accidents.” While using a different word might seem like a small thing, it’s part of a huge shift underway. It’s a shift toward **prevention**—finding and fixing hazards *before* they lead to injury or illness. It’s like choosing between putting out fires after they damage people and property and making sure fires never start in the first place.

This is where your OSHA 300 log comes in. The log is not just a way to look at your past safety and health record, and it’s not just something for OSHA. It’s a powerful tool to help you identify hazards in your workplace so you can correct them and prevent future injuries and illnesses.

Think of the 300 log as part of your **road map to finding and fixing hazards**. For example:

- “Slip and fall” injuries might tell you that there are housekeeping-related hazards to correct or procedures to adjust.
- A back injury might show you that there is a need for lifting equipment or better training in safe lifting techniques.
- A needlestick injury might indicate that you need to improve your needlestick prevention program and/or implement safer needle devices.
- A fall-related injury might indicate the need for improvements in fall protection or training.

You should examine the log regularly (at least annually), to look for trends. The log should indicate the types of injuries or illnesses that have occurred, their frequency, and the specific processes, activities, tasks, or equipment/material involved. You can use this information to “find and fix” safety and health problems. [*Note: Make sure to review injuries or illnesses among temporary or contractor employees you may have working onsite as well.*]

Using the 300 log to identify injury and illness trends is a good first step in identifying hazards and demonstrating management commitment to safety and health. Eventually, you will build on this step and add other means of identifying hazards, such as self-inspections, job hazard analyses, maintenance work order trends, and worker suggestions.

Involving workers in reviewing the log and making recommendations for correcting hazards will make this step much more effective. In fact, **management leadership** and **worker participation**—along with a **systematic approach to finding and fixing hazards**—are key components of all successful safety and health programs.

For more information about implementing a safety and health program for a **safe workplace** and a **sound business**, visit www.osha.gov/shpcampaign.