

For more information, contact  
[4healthandsafety@aft.org](mailto:4healthandsafety@aft.org)

\*This regulation applies to public workers in the 22 states and jurisdictions operating complete OSHA state plans, which cover both the private sector and state and local government employees (Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming), and the five covering public employees only (Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and the Virgin Islands).



## REPORTING WORKPLACE-RELATED INJURY AND ILLNESS

This material was produced under the grant SH 24860-13-6-0F-11 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.



A Union of Professionals

Randi Weingarten  
 PRESIDENT

Fedrick C. Ingram  
 SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
 EXECUTIVE VICE

PRESIDENT

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. • Washington, DC 20001 • 202-879-4400 • www.aft.org



**SHARON:** Yes! This is a recordable incident because Sharon needed time off the job to recover. The total number of days away from work must be recorded.

**JESS:** Yes! While it is unclear at this point if Jess's fall will result in medical care beyond first aid or in her missing work, she should report the incident for two reasons. First, if her injury doesn't improve, this may turn into a recordable incident. Second, by reporting the incident immediately, the hazard can be corrected right away so others don't suffer her fate.

**RYAN:** Yes! This is a recordable incident because Ryan lost consciousness. While Ryan might be embarrassed that he passed out at work, it may result in a review of the product used and the possibility of switching to a less hazardous substance or using the product in a better ventilated area.

**ERIC:** Yes! This is a recordable incident because Eric's normal work activities will be restricted for a period of time. The total time he is on restricted duty must be recorded.

**ANSWERS:**

## IDENTIFY IT!

### WHAT WE KNOW:

- Public employees continue to have higher rates of work-related injuries and illnesses than workers in the private sector.
- Local government employees, for example, have higher rates of work-related injuries and illnesses than state workers.
- Local government **education workers** (elementary and secondary schools) have an injury rate of 5.2 per 100,000 workers, while private sector education workers have an injury rate of 3.2.



Unfortunately, these statistics, which are based on employer records, fail to capture the full extent of work-related injuries and illnesses because workers are often reluctant to report such cases. Why? Workers often fear discipline or retaliation, do not recognize some hazards as work-related, or simply feel embarrassed, among many other reasons for not reporting. For instance, work-related asthma or asthma triggered at work often goes unrecognized as work-related. Symptomatic workers may not associate work-related exposures (e.g., to substances such as bleach, wood dust or mold) to their asthma attack, and hence they do not report it. Another common example is workers who trip, slip or fall at work. They often blame themselves for their clumsiness or inattention, try to “cope” and avoid reporting the incident.

Everyone pays a price when injuries and illnesses go unreported: Employers, unions and OSHA don’t have an accurate picture of the impact of hazardous exposures on workers, workers continue to be at risk of injury and illness associated with hazards that go unaddressed, and workers may harbor a false sense of security. Help your employer identify potentially dangerous conditions in the workplace. Report it!

## REPORT IT!

### WHAT IS REQUIRED? OSHA RECORDKEEPING REGULATION\*

The OSHA’s recordkeeping regulation requires employers to create and maintain records of serious occupational injuries and illnesses (called OSHA 300 logs). The employer **must set up a way for employees to report** work-related injuries and illnesses promptly, and must tell each employee how to report them. Employers also must post an annual summary of injuries and illnesses (called OSHA 300A summaries) from Feb. 1 through April 30 of each year. **Have you ever seen this summary?**

Identifying what is a recordable case is not always cut and dry and easy to figure out. For more information on what to report, please go to [www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html). The AFT **encourages the reporting of all injuries and illnesses**, even if they turn out not to be officially “recordable” on OSHA logs. By doing so, the employer is put on alert, there is a history of the problem, and the employer may take corrective action.

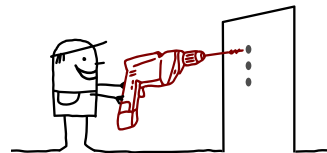
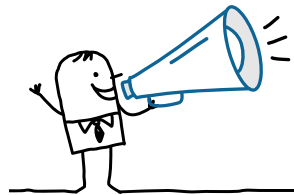
## FIX IT!

### SOLUTION-DRIVEN UNIONISM: HOW CAN THE UNION USE THIS INFORMATION?

Reviewing these records can help unions and employers track incidents and identify hazards that need to be addressed to prevent work-related injury and illness.

- Workers and their union have the **right to review and have copies** of the current log of work-related injuries and illnesses, as well as the logs from the past five years.
- They also have the right to view and have a copy of the annually posted summary of injuries and illnesses.

Analyzing this data is a widely recognized and speedy method for discovering workplace safety and health hazards, and for tracking progress in correcting identified problems. While workers are protected from retaliation under OSHA, you can always ask your union representative to get this information for you.



## Should You Report It?

Many work-related injuries and illnesses are recordable, but others are not. Review the following scenarios and determine if the worker should report the injury or illness, and if the employer should record it on the OSHA 300 log.

**ERIC:** Eric moves 10- to 40-pound boxes in a warehouse. He hurt his shoulder lifting a box and sees a doctor. The doctor tells him he can’t lift anything heavier than 15 pounds for one week. Should Eric report the incident to his supervisor? Should the employer record it?

**RYAN:** Ryan is part of a custodial crew. He lost consciousness while preparing a mop bucket with a new product his employer recently switched to. Ryan came to less than a minute after he passed out. Should Ryan report the incident to his supervisor? Should the employer record it?

**JESS:** Jess is a teacher. She slipped in a puddle in the hall and hurt her knee. She was embarrassed and quickly limped back to her classroom and iced her knee. Should Jess report the incident to her supervisor? Should the employer record it?

**SHARON:** Sharon is a nurse. She attempts to move a patient when she strains her back. She continues to work through her shift and ends up taking a few days off to recover. Should Sharon report the incident to her supervisor? Should the employer record it?

*(ANSWERS on reverse side.)*

### RECLAIMING THE PROMISE OF SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES: HOW DOES REPORTING HELP?

No matter where you work—in education, healthcare or public service—a safer workplace for you means a safer environment for the people you serve. For example, in education, schools that are safe and healthy for staff are better for students too, and they allow students to perform better academically. Reporting injuries and illnesses in the workplace can help restore the promise of safe and welcoming schools, world-class patient care and public services.