OSHA Costs of Failing to Protect Workers



A report on the financial and social impact of workplace injuries and the huge cost to employers and the workers comp system.

Work injuries and illnesses impose heavy costs on workers, families and the economy.

Forty-four years after Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, requiring employers to provide workplaces “free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm” to their workers, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the United States remains unacceptably high. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that approximately 4,500 workers are killed on the job each year. BLS estimates that employers record nearly three million serious occupational injuries and illnesses annually on legally mandated logs. Recordable workplace injuries and illnesses range in severity from wounds, amputations, back injuries and other serious condition requiring care beyond first aid (injuries receiving only first aid are not recordable) to fatal injuries. About half of recorded injuries require at least a day away from work, a job transfer or a work restriction for recovery.

While the estimate of three million serious workrelated injuries each year may seem extremely high, it is undoubtedly only a…