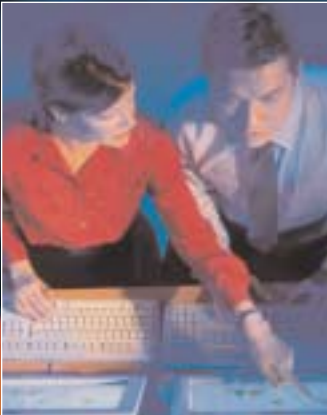


# Occupational Health Indicators



A Guide for Tracking  
Work-Related Health  
Effects and Their  
Determinants

**Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists**

In Collaboration with:  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Track Occupational Health Indicators ...

*Worker health is fundamental to public health.* It is crucial, as part of our overall public health strategy to track the occupational health status of the American workforce.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) is working in collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to develop a set of indicators for use by the states as the basis for a meaningful occupational health surveillance program. These indicators may be used to:

- Promote program and policy development at the national, state, and local levels to protect worker safety and health.
- Build core capacity for occupational health surveillance at the state level.
- Provide guidance to states regarding the minimum level of occupational health surveillance activity.
- Bring consistency to time-trend analyses within states and comparisons of occupational health status among different states and worker populations.

## Occupational Health Indicators:

Provide information about a population's health status with respect to workplace factors that can influence health. These indicators can be measures of health that include work-related injuries and illnesses, or factors associated with health such as workplace exposures, hazards, or interventions in a specified population. Indicators proposed to date by CSTE's Occupational Surveillance Work Group include Health Effect Indicators and Biological Exposure Indicators.



# Work-Related Health Effect and Exposure Indicators . . .

**Health Effect Indicator:** Measure of injury or illness that indicates adverse effects from exposure to known or suspect occupational hazards.

## HEALTH EFFECT DATA SOURCE

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### **Injuries and Illnesses Combined:**

*Non-fatal, work-related injuries & illnesses* Bureau of Labor Statistics

*Work-related hospitalizations* Hospital discharge data

### **Acute and Cumulative Injuries:**

*Traumatic occupational fatalities* Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

*Work-related burns* Hospital discharge data

*Work-related musculoskeletal disorders: Low back injuries* Bureau of Labor Statistics and  
Workers' Compensation data

*Upper extremities*

*Carpal tunnel syndrome*

*Work-related amputations* Bureau of Labor Statistics and  
Workers' Compensation data

### **Illnesses:**

*Mesothelioma cases* Cancer Registry

*Pneumoconiosis deaths* Death certificates

*Pneumoconiosis hospitalizations* Hospital discharge data

*Symptomatic pesticide poisonings* Poison control center data

**Biological Exposure Indicator:** Measure of a biological marker in tissue or fluid that identifies the presence of a potentially harmful substance resulting from exposure in the workplace.

## EXPOSURE DATA SOURCE

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*Elevated blood lead level in adults* Lead Registry

Resources are needed to assure that states have the ability to maintain and utilize data from this minimum list of indicators on a regular basis.



## Approach for Selecting Indicators . . .

Based on the importance of the health effect or exposure:

- Magnitude or extent
- Severity (morbidity and mortality)
- Amenability to intervention
- Public perception and/or policy concern
- Economic impact
- Emergent status of condition

Ideal Occupational Health Indicators:

- Educate and inform the public and responsible agencies.
- Are based on data collected consistently over geographic areas and time.
- Require minimal resources since they are based on data readily available in most states.
- Incorporate clear definitions for health effects, exposures, and determinants.



## Additional indicators are under consideration . . .

These include measures of determinants of work-related injuries and illnesses such as specific hazards, interventions, and worker populations at risk as well as other measures of occupational health policies and practices.

For more information contact:

**Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists**  
2872 Woodcock Boulevard  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015  
USA

Telephone: 770-458-3811  
Facsimile 770-458-8516  
Web site: <http://www.cste.org>



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EPIDEMIOLOGISTS**

