



Noncoal Contractor Mining Facts - 2002

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) defines an independent contractor as "any person, partnership, corporation, subsidiary of a corporation, firm, association or other organization that contracts to perform services or construction at a mine." Contractors that perform specific types of work are required to report the number of employees who perform work at coal mines and at noncoal mines.

1. In 2002, a total of 4,003 **contracting companies** reported employment at noncoal mines (metal, nonmetal, sand and gravel, and stone mines) to MSHA.
2. A total of 38,938 noncoal contractor **employees**, corresponding to 18,533 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees,¹ were reported to MSHA in 2002. This is a decrease of 21.4% in FTE noncoal contractor employees from 2001.
 - The highest proportion of noncoal contractor employees was found in surface production operations (68.1%),² followed by processing mills (28.3%) and underground operations (3.6%).
3. Six work-related **fatalities** occurred among noncoal contractor employees in 2002, compared to 10 in 2001.
 - In 2002, noncoal contractor employees had a fatality rate of 32.4 per 100,000 FTE employees.
 - Three out of the six fatalities occurred in processing mills/preparation plants.
4. There were 318 **nonfatal lost-time injuries** among noncoal contractor employees, occurring at a rate of 1.7 per 100 FTE employees in 2002. A total of 16,104 days lost from work³ resulted from these injuries.
 - For noncoal contractor employees, the median number of days lost from work as a result of nonfatal lost-time injuries was 16.0. The median number of days lost from work for noncoal operator employees was 14.0 days.
 - The injury rate among noncoal contractor employees in processing mills/preparation plants was 2.2 per 100 FTE employees, compared to 1.8 in underground operations and 1.5 in surface mining operations.
 - The most frequently reported types of accidents among noncoal contractor employees were handling material (n = 105; 33.0%) and slips or falls (n = 91; 28.6%).
 - Of the most frequently reported injuries (greater than 10% of total), the most severe injuries (as measured by the median number of days lost from work) were associated with fractures and chips (median = 59 days).
 - The back (n = 45; 14.2%) was the most frequently reported part of body injured, accounting for 1,511 days lost from work. Injuries to the finger were also frequently reported (n = 44; 13.8%), accounting for 2,169 days lost from work.
 - Among noncoal contractor employees, those with the job title of "mechanic/repairman/helper" had the greatest number of nonfatal lost-time injuries (n = 50; 15.7%), followed by those with a job title of "truck driver" (n = 44; 13.8%).
5. Five cases of **occupational illness** in noncoal contractor employees were reported to MSHA in 2002.⁴ There were three cases of heat/sunstroke and one case each of asphyxia and systemic poisoning.

¹ Computed using reported employee hours (2,000 hours = 1 FTE); excludes office employees.

² Surface production operations include strip or open pit mines, dredge operations, other surface mining, and independent shops and yards.

³ Includes actual days away from work and/or days of restricted work activity. For permanently disabling injuries only, statutory days charged by MSHA were used if they exceeded the total lost workdays.

⁴ Because of the complexity of attributing disease causation to the workplace, occupational illnesses may be underreported.



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DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2004-129