

Manufacturers' Injury and Illness Records to go Public

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has just released its "Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses" final rule. It will require businesses with 250 or more employees per facility to electronically report to the agency annually all of the company's injury and illness logs for that year starting in 2017. Companies with 20-249 employees per facility in "designated industries" (manufacturing is one) will also have to report annually.

While the agency states it will not report any specific employee information, as stated in the rule, "OSHA intends to post the establishment-specific injury and illness data it collects under this final rule on its public Web site at www.osha.gov," which means each company's record will be available for public consumption. Furthermore, OSHA's press statement states: "Access to injury data will also help OSHA better target our compliance assistance and enforcement resources at establishments where workers are at greatest risk and enable 'big data' researchers to apply their skills to making workplaces safer."

The administration put a target on nearly every company and manufacturer in the United States. Manufacturers are supportive of regulations aimed at increasing transparency and are proud of creating safe workplaces for the men and women who make things in America. However, this regulation will lead to the unfair and unnecessary public shaming of businesses. This is a misguided attempt at transparency that sacrifices employee and employer privacy, allows for distribution of proprietary information and creates burdens for all manufacturers.

The NAM will look at all options to protect manufacturers from this certain threat to the modern shop floor.