

Overview

Studies of regulatory effectiveness have shown mixed evidence for the impact that OSHA inspections have on injury rates.

The purpose of this study was to examine changes in workers' compensation claim rates and costs for Washington employers having either a) an inspection b) an inspection with citation(s) or c) a voluntary consultation activity.

Ten years of OSHA enforcement and consultation data was matched with workplace-level injury data for stable firms with a single business location and at least 10 full-time employees. The change in claims incidence rates was estimated; separate analyses were performed for non-musculoskeletal and musculoskeletal injuries, claims costs, and for enforcement activities with and without a citation.

OSHA Enforcement Activity Reduces Claims Incidence Rate

The impact of regulatory enforcement and consultation visits on workers' compensation claims incidence rates and costs, 1999-2008.

American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 2012

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Key Findings

- Enforcement activities make a significant contribution to reducing claims incidence rates and costs
 - Inspections were associated with a 4% decline in time-loss claims rates compared to uninspected workplaces
- Inspections with citations are more effective than those without
 - Citations are associated with a 20% decline in non-musculoskeletal claims incidence rates relative to uninspected workplaces
- There is also evidence for a reduction in musculoskeletal claims rates beginning in the second year following an inspection.
- Both enforcement and consultation activity is associated with substantial decreases in claims costs.
- Businesses receiving a consultation visit also showed decreases in claims incidence rates.

Policy Impact

OSHA enforcement activities make a significant and cost-effective contribution to reducing claims incidence rates and costs. They play an important role in ensuring compliance with safety and health rules.

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<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajim.22084/abstract>

Research for Safe Work

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