



# Mining Facts - 2002

1. In 2002, 14,520 **mining operations** reported employment statistics to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Almost half (49%) were sand and gravel mines, followed by stone mines (30%), coal mines (14%), nonmetal mines (5%), and metal mines (2%).
2. Mine operators reported 224,803 **employees** (or 227,685 full-time equivalent [FTE] workers<sup>1</sup>) to MSHA.
  - Underground mines accounted for 18.8% of mine operator employees, while surface mines<sup>2</sup> accounted for 81.2% of the employees.
  - Among underground mine operator employees, the majority (81.2%) worked in coal mines.
  - The largest percentage of surface operator employees worked in stone mines (36.4%).
3. Of the 69,270 independent **contractor employees** (or 35,328 FTE contractor workers) reported to MSHA in 2002, 43.8% were coal contractor employees and 56.2% were noncoal contractor employees.
4. In 2002, there were 66 occupational mining **fatalities**, compared to 72 in 2001. The overall mining fatality rate was 25.1 per 100,000 FTE workers.
  - The fatality rate for mine operator employees was 23.3 per 100,000 FTE workers (n = 53; 80.3%), while the rate for contractor employees was higher at 36.8 per 100,000 FTE workers (n = 13; 19.7%).
  - The fatality rate at underground operations was 39.1 per 100,000 FTE workers (n = 18; 27.3%) compared to the lower rate at surface locations of 22.1 per 100,000 FTE workers (n = 48; 72.7%).
5. There were 9,358 **nonfatal lost-time injuries** reported to MSHA in 2002. These occurred at a rate of 3.6 injuries per 100 FTE workers and resulted in a total of 479,655 days lost from work.<sup>3</sup>
  - The underground injury rate was greater than the surface injury rate (7.2 vs. 2.8 per 100 FTE workers).
  - The nonfatal lost-time injury rate for mine operator employees was higher than the rate for contractor employees (3.7 vs. 2.7 per 100 FTE workers). Coal contractor employees had the highest nonfatal lost-time injury rate (13.0 per 100 FTE workers).
  - The highest percentage of nonfatal lost-time injuries was due to handling materials (36.8%).
  - The back continued to be the most frequently reported part of the body injured. It accounted for 2,167 injuries, 115,555 days lost from work, and 24.1% of all days lost.
6. In 2002, 744 cases of **occupational illnesses** were reported to MSHA.<sup>4</sup>
  - Joint, tendon, or muscle inflammation or irritation accounted for 40.2% (n = 299) of reported occupational illnesses.
  - There were 188 cases of hearing loss or impairment reported to MSHA (or 25.3% of all occupational illnesses reported).
  - Mining operations reported 118 cases of black lung (coal workers' pneumoconiosis) and 14 cases of silicosis.

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

<sup>2</sup> Surface production operations include strip mines, surface operations at underground mines (excluding preparation plants), auger mining, culm banks, dredge, and surface shops and yards.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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



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