



Nonmetal Operator Mining Facts - 2002

1. In 2002, a total of 763 **nonmetal mining operations** reported employment to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Examples of nonmetal mining operations include the mining of clay, trona, barite, phosphate rock, gypsum, talc, gemstones, and pumice. Nonmetal mines comprised 5.3% of all mining operations.
 - Nonmetal mining operations are located in all but nine states or territories (Alaska, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands).
 - Mines producing common clay comprised 29.2% (n = 223) of all nonmetal mining operations.
2. A total of 19,864 **employees**, corresponding to 20,529 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees,¹ were reported by nonmetal operators to MSHA. This is a 5.9% decrease in the number of FTE nonmetal operator employees from 2001.
 - Nonmetal mine operators reported 8% of all employee hours to MSHA.
 - The largest portion of nonmetal operator employees worked in common clay mines (28.3%), followed by phosphate rock mines (13.3%) and trona mines (10.3%).
3. There were no work-related **fatalities** in nonmetal mines in 2002.
4. There were 594 **nonfatal lost-time injuries** among nonmetal mine employees, occurring at a rate of 2.9 per 100 FTE employees. These injuries resulted in 27,284 days lost from work.²
 - The median number of days lost from work among nonmetal employees with nonfatal lost-time injuries was 18.0 days.
 - The highest injury rate was in underground operations (4.0 per 100 FTE operator employees), compared to injury rates of 2.9 and 2.3 for processing mills and surface production operations,³ respectively.
 - The most frequent type of accident for nonmetal employees involved handling of materials (n = 233; 39.2%), followed by slips or falls (n = 145; 24.4%). These accident types together comprised 57.4% of the total days lost from work.
 - Sprains and strains (n = 290) were the most frequently reported injury. They accounted for 46.5% of the days lost from work. The back (n = 134; 22.6%) was the part of the body most frequently reported injured and accounted for 4,602 days lost from work.
 - Among nonmetal employees, those with a job title of "sizing/washing/cleaning plant operator/worker" had the greatest number of nonfatal lost time injuries (n = 182; 30.6%), followed by those classified as "mechanic/repairman/helper" (n = 127; 21.4%).
5. Forty-five cases of **occupational illness** were reported to MSHA for nonmetal mine employees.⁴
 - The most frequently reported illness involved joint, muscle, or tendon irritation or inflammation (n = 22; 48.9%).
 - Hearing loss or impairment was reported for 12 nonmetal mine operator employees in 2002.

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

² 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.

³ Surface production operations include strip or open pit mines, dredge operations, other surface mining, and independent shops and yards.

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



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