

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 work at coal mines and noncoal mines.

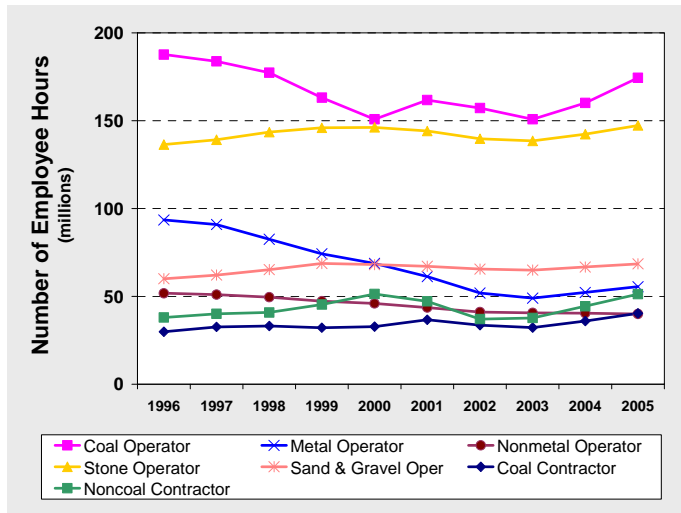
Companies

In 2005, a total of 2,503 contracting companies reported employment at coal mines to MSHA, or 36.8% of all independent contractor companies.

Employees

A total of 32,639 employees,¹ corresponding to 20,136 full-time equivalent (FTE)² employees, were reported by coal contractors to MSHA.

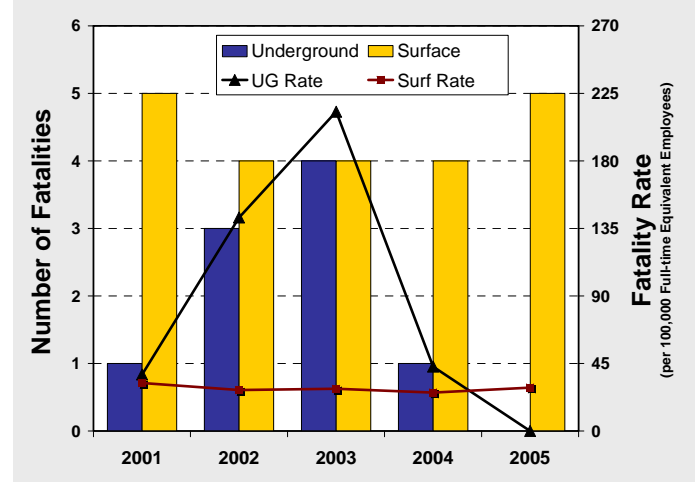
- Within the mining sectors,³ coal contractor employees comprised 7.0% of all employee hours reported to MSHA.
- Coal contractor employee hours were reported for both underground (14.0%) and surface (86.0%) work locations.⁴



Fatalities

Five occupational fatalities occurred among coal contractor employees in 2005. These coal fatalities accounted for 71.4% of all fatalities attributed to independent contractors.

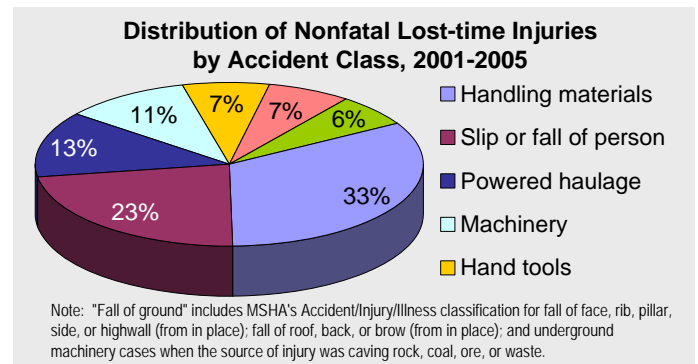
- All five fatalities were at the surface work location. The coal contractor fatality rate was 24.8 per 100,000 FTE employees.



Nonfatal Lost-time Injuries

There were 535 nonfatal lost-time injuries among coal contractor employees (213 at underground and 322 at surface work locations) occurring at a rate of 2.7 injuries per 100 FTE employees. These injuries resulted in 39,506 days lost⁵ from work, comprising 8.6% of days lost across all mining sectors.

- The underground nonfatal lost-time injury rate was greater than the surface injury rate (7.5 vs. 1.9 per 100 FTE workers).
- The most frequent classification of nonfatal lost-time injuries for coal contractor employees involved handling materials (n=150; 28.0%), followed by slip or fall of person (n=126; 23.6%).
- Sprains and strains were the most frequently reported nature of injury (n=203; 37.9%).
- The back was the most frequently reported body part injured (n=87; 16.3%) and accounted for 10,703 days lost from work.



Mining Characteristics, 2005

Commodity and Type of Employer	No. of Mines	No. of Companies	No. of Employees ¹	No. of FTE Employees ²	Fatality Rate	Nonfatal Lost-time Injury Rate
Coal Operator	2,063	--	78,281	87,184	19.5	3.5
Metal Operator	263	--	26,442	27,773	18.0	2.4
Nonmetal Operator	739	--	19,678	20,014	20.0	2.5
Stone Operator	4,490	--	69,759	73,650	20.4	3.1
Sand and Gravel Operator	7,111	--	37,705	34,258	26.3	2.5
Operator Total	14,666	--	231,865	242,879	20.6	3.0
Coal Contractor	--	2,503	32,639	20,136	24.8	2.7
Noncoal Contractor	--	4,297	46,623	25,590	7.8	1.6
Contractor Total	--	6,800	79,262	45,726	15.3	2.1
TOTAL			311,127	288,605	19.8	2.9

Fatality rates were computed per 100,000 FTE employees. Nonfatal lost-time injury rates were computed per 100 FTE employees.

Data source: Publicly released files of employment and accident/injury/illness data collected by MSHA under 30 CFR 50.

Notes: All analyses exclude office employees, except for the total number of mining operations. Analyses of fatalities exclude all individuals under 17 years of age and all individuals who were not classified as employees of a mining operator or mining contractor. Further statistical methodology is available on the NIOSH Internet [<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/statistics/method.htm>].

¹Number of employees is the average number of persons working at individual establishments during calendar quarters of active operations.

²Full-time equivalent employees were computed using reported employee hours (2,000 hours = 1 FTE).

³Mining sectors: coal operators, metal operators, nonmetal operators, stone operators, sand and gravel operators, coal contractors, and noncoal contractors.

⁴Surface work locations include surface operations at underground mines (surface shops and yards, tipples physically located at the mine site), surface operations (strip or open pit mines including associated shops and yards), auger mining operations, culm banks (reworking of mine dumps or refuse pile), dredge (mining operations conducted from a platform floating on water), independent shops and yards not associated with a specific mine, and mill or preparation plant.

⁵Includes 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.

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