

Assessment of the feasibility of producing statistics on all work-related fatalities and injuries

Background

HSE's published statistics on fatalities and work-related injury are based on events reportable under the RIDDOR regulations since these are the injuries where HSE has enforcement responsibility. RIDDOR places a legal duty on employers and other specified duty holders to report certain workplace incidents to the relevant enforcing authority, namely HSE, local authorities and the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). Incidents falling within scope of RIDDOR are specified fatal and non-fatal injuries, occupational diseases, dangerous occurrences; and certain gas incidents.

Injuries which are not reportable under RIDDOR include road traffic collisions involving people travelling in the course of their work (which are covered by road traffic legislation); accidents reportable under separate merchant shipping, civil aviation and air navigation legislation; and injuries to members of the armed forces.

At the beginning of 2010, HSE's statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority for compliance with the Code of practice for Official Statistics. As a result of consulting with statistics users, they placed a requirement on HSE to:

“Investigate the feasibility of producing statistics on the total number of work-related injuries and fatalities, including those not reportable under RIDDOR”.

Analysis

In respect of work-related injury, there are four main exclusions from the Riddor regulations, where others have policy and regulatory primacy:

- i. Road traffic collisions
- ii. Accidents at sea
- iii. Accidents in the air and injuries to cabin and flight crew
- iv. Injuries to armed forces personnel

The table below summarises the data that is currently available in all four categories.

Availability of work-related injury statistics for accidents which are not reportable under RIDDOR

	Fatal injury statistics	Non-fatal injury statistics
Road Traffic Collisions	<p>The total number of fatalities from road traffic collisions are published by the Department of Transport. They do not split out events which were work-related from other collisions in published statistics.</p> <p>See below for further information.</p>	<p>The total number of casualties from road traffic collisions are published by the Department of Transport. They do not split out events which were work-related from other collisions in published statistics and the data is heavily under-reported.</p> <p>See below for further information.</p> <p>The Labour Force Survey (LFS) offers a potential source of data for non-fatal work-related road traffic injuries. See below for further information.</p>

Marine accidents	<p>The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (a branch of Dept Transport) publish an annual report which includes various statistics. Deaths on merchant and fishing vessels are detailed and broadly comparable statistics with RIDDOR reportable fatalities could be extracted.</p> <p>Proposed changes in legislation could result in some overlap between events reportable under Riddor and those reported by MAIB</p>	<p>The Marine Accident Investigation Branch publish an annual report which includes various statistics. Injuries to crew on merchant and fishing vessels are tabulated and broadly comparable statistics with RIDDOR reportable injuries could be extracted.</p> <p>Proposed changes in legislation could result in some overlap between events reportable under Riddor and those reported by MAIB</p>
Air accidents and injuries to air personnel	<p>The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (a branch of Dept Transport) publish monthly bulletins of incidents which have occurred. Within these bulletins the number of injuries sustained and the severity are recorded for incidents where an injury has occurred. This information could potentially be extracted and collated into annual statistics. It would be very difficult however to ensure comparability with Riddor reportable accidents and there would be staff costs associated with extracting and collating the data.</p> <p>The Civil Aviation Authority (sponsored by the Department for Transport) regulate the health and safety of cabin and flight crew on board aircraft in flight. Data on injuries to these personnel are not currently published.</p>	
Injuries to armed forces personnel	Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces are published as National Statistics on the MOD website	Major injuries to MOD service personnel are published as official statistics on the MOD website.

Further information for Road Traffic Collisions

a) STATS19 data

In England, personal injury road casualty data are collected by the police and processed by either local police or local authority units before being submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). In Scotland and Wales, the data are submitted to the Scottish Government (SG) and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) who provide the data to DfT for inclusion in its GB-wide database. Collectively, this system is referred to as STATS19.

The STATS19 report form consists of a record of collision circumstances, a record for each vehicle involved, and a record for each casualty arising from the collision. In 2008, there were 230,000 casualty records reported of which 2,500 were fatalities and 26,000 were assessed to be serious injuries (severe cuts, fractured or broken bones, concussion, internal injuries, crushing, burns or severe shock requiring medical attention, or any casualty treated by admission to hospital to central government). In response to the UKSA assessment of road casualty statistics, the Department of Transport undertook some analysis of reporting levels for the STATS19 system. They estimate that reporting levels are around 30% and only slightly higher (at 33%) for serious injuries.

One of the data fields collected on the SPATS19 form is “purpose of journey” with possible responses of:

- 1 – Journey as part of work
- 2 – Commuting to/from work
- 3 – Taking pupil to/from school
- Other
- Unknown

In theory, this field should provide data on work-related road collisions (for fatalities at least where reporting levels are not considered to be an issue). However, almost 75% of the records are coded as Other or Unknown. The Department of Transport consider the current field to be unreliable and don't recommend using it for statistical purposes. They do not proactively publish any data using this field,

The STATS19 form has just been reviewed and will be changed from January 2011. One of the changes is to separate out the other/not known variable so that leisure journeys can be separately identified. There is also a new requirement to provide a text description of the collision. This may increase the value of the data and enable a better estimate of work-related injuries on the road to be produced (particularly when combined with information about vehicle type e.g. HGV). The new data is expected to be available for analysis from 2012 and, assuming it is an improvement, the Department of Transport will publish it.

b) Labour Force Survey data

Each year, HSE sponsor questions in the Labour Force Survey about workplace injury. The screening question “Over the last 12 months, have you had any accident in work resulting in injury?” is followed by the question “Was that injury caused by a road accident?” Respondents who answered yes to the second question are excluded from the headline statistics of RIDDOR reportable injuries which are published on the HSE Statistics web site. However, the data is still collected and hence estimates can be produced of non-fatal work-related road traffic injuries although this was not the primary or intended purpose of the questions. Analysis of this data indicates that on average there are 70-100k non-fatal work-related injuries on the road each year of which 30-40k result in the injured person being away from work for at least three days.

Summary and conclusions

From a review of available data sources, our assessment is that it would be feasible to produce an estimate of work-related non-fatal injuries which are not reportable under RIDDOR but result in absence from work. This estimate would be in the region of 30-40k each year, dominated by injuries on the road. This is approximately 10-15% of the number of RIDDOR reportable injuries. However, in view of the imprecision of the estimates and the difficulties of ensuring comparability, we do not believe it would be worthwhile or useful to produce this estimate on an annual basis. There would also be an administrative cost from extracting the air accident records which would be difficult to justify and it is unclear whether data on injuries to air cabin personnel would be available.

In light of the problems with coding the purpose of journey field for road traffic accidents, we do not believe that it is feasible at this time to produce a reliable estimate of work-related fatalities which are not reportable under RIDDOR. This situation may change when new data becomes available in 2012.