



**Department of Commerce  
Occupational Safety and Health Report**

**October 2003**

# **Safety Report October 2003**

## **Introduction**

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for September 2003. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Initiatives, provides information on forthcoming safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Significant Safety and Occupational Health Issues, outlines safety issues and concerns, which arose in September 2003. Section Three, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Departmental injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for September 2003, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Four, Survey Results, provides the October results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

## **Section One: Program Initiatives**

A self-assessment tool to document the state of the safety and occupational health program throughout the Department has been developed and distributed to bureau safety managers, regional safety managers and collateral duty safety representatives. This initial self-assessment will serve as a baseline to develop a strategic plan for the Department's safety and occupational health program for FY 2004. The elements incorporated in the self-assessment survey are contained in Chapter 2 of the Department's Safety and Occupational Health Manual and 29 CFR 1960, *Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs*.

## **Section Two: Significant Safety and Occupational Health Issues**

Slip and fall accidents continue to be the primary cause of injuries throughout the Department. Although this issue has been covered in previous editions of the *Safety Report*, we feel it is important to again publicize this significant problem and the impact that slip and fall accidents have to the Department's Safety and Occupational Health Program. Slip and fall accidents usually result in painful injuries, lost time away from work and great financial cost to the Department. Most of these type of accidents can be prevented by following basic safety precautions and being considerate of fellow workers. The following precautions are provided to assist in preventing slip and fall accidents:

- Clean up spills promptly
- Mark spills, or remain at the site until they are cleaned up
- Avoid storing items in hallways and other thoroughfares

- Never store items in a stairwell
- Route wires away from aisles and other places where people walk
- Be sure carpeting is in good condition, with no tears or bulges
- Inspect workplaces frequently for trip hazards.

Safety is everyone's responsibility throughout the Department; a successful safety program requires the participation of everyone. If you see a hazard please report it promptly, and if necessary, take interim action to prevent an accident.

### Section Three: Injury Statistics and Analysis

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past five years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects September 2003 statistics. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

**Incidence Rate:** The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH}(200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year <sup>1</sup>
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

<sup>1</sup> The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

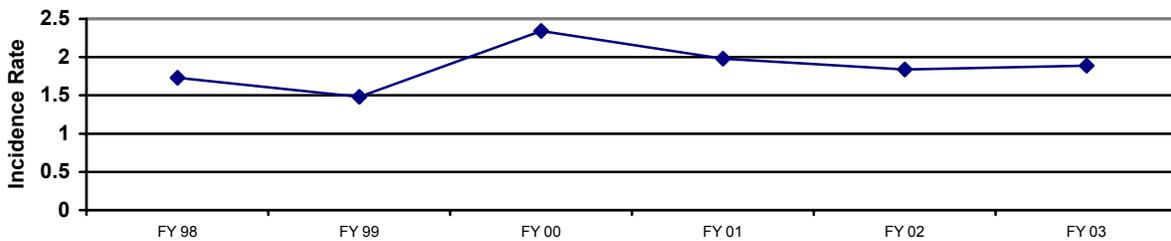
The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment

beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness or death.

**Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.**

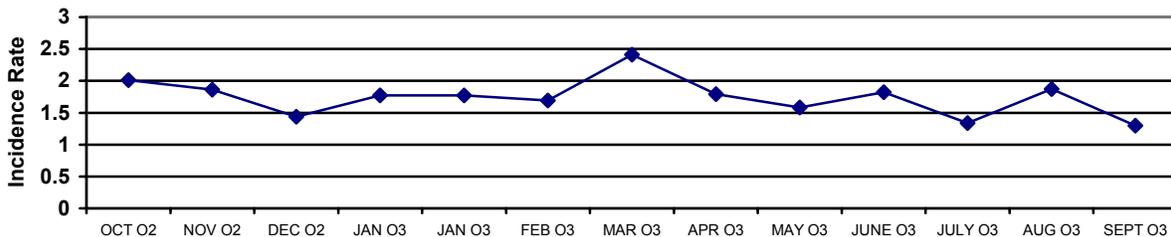
**Chart 1**

**Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)**



**Chart 2**

**Total Monthly for FY 03 Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)**



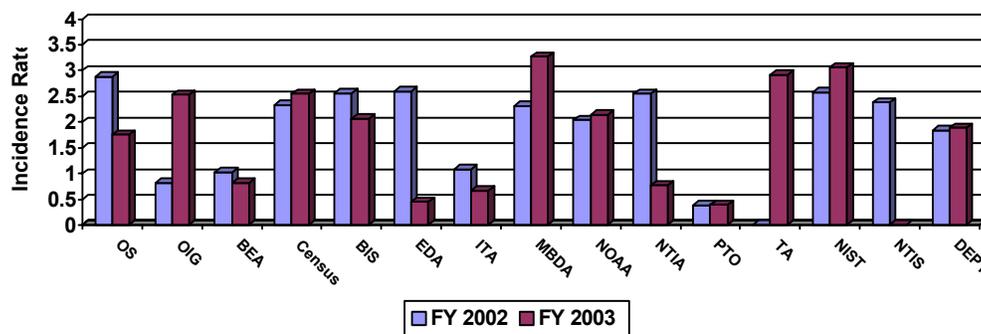
Major Findings include:

- The FY 2003 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is up from the rate for FY 2002 and is down from FY 2001. The TCIR is 1.89 (see Chart 1) for FY 2003, 1.84 for FY 2002, and 1.98 for FY 2001. A total of 645 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2003 (see Table 1).**

- **Of the larger bureaus, the Office of the Secretary (OS) and the International Trade Administration (ITA) had lower TCIRs for FY 2003 when compared to FY 2002 (see Table 1 and Chart 3).**
- **Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) and the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) had significantly lower TCIRs in FY 2003 when compared to FY 2002.**
- **The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years. The TRCIRs for Commerce are 1.44 for FY 2003, 1.60 for FY 2002 and 1.72 for FY 2001 (see Table 1A).**

**Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)**

**Chart 3**



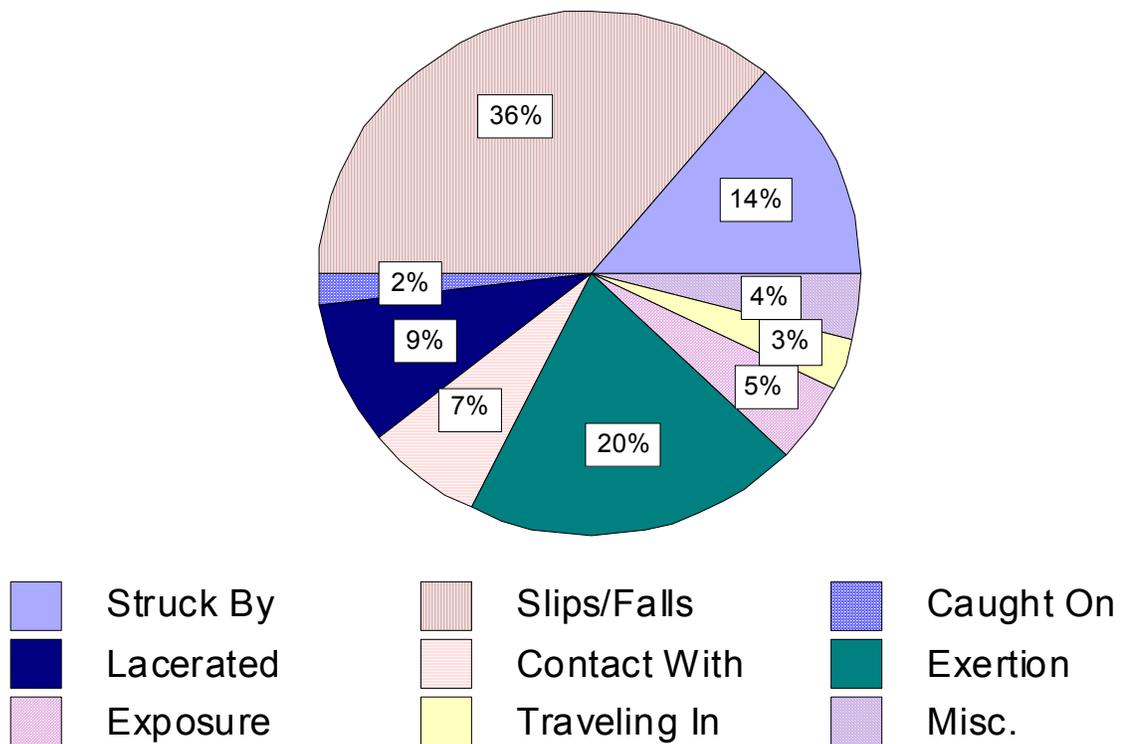
**Types of Injuries:** Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses are essential. Eliminating injuries and illnesses can be accomplished by evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents. Information on types of injuries is provided in charts 4 and 5 and tables 2 and 2A.

Key findings are explained below:

- **“Slips/Falls” injuries were the most prevalent type of injury in September (see Chart 5). These injuries accounted for 36 percent of those reported for FY 2002 (see Chart 4) and 33 percent in September 2003.** Wet floors continue to be the major cause of “Slips/Falls.” Employees need to report wet floors to the proper office so signs can be posted and spills cleaned up.

- **“Struck By” injuries were second in frequency for September 2003 (see Chart 5). “Struck By” injuries accounted for 14 percent of all injuries within the Department for FY 2002 and for 27 percent in September 2003.** Objects not being secure in the workplace caused several of the injuries, i.e.- nameplates on cubicles. When cubicle walls were knocked against, the object would fall and hit the employee. Attention should be given to the placement of objects in the workplace.
- **“Exertion” injuries remain a concern. “Exertion” injuries were 20 percent of all injuries in FY 2002 (see Chart 4). The numbers have decreased from last month, August 2003, and account for 19 percent of the injuries reported in September 2003 (see Chart 5).** Lifting heavy boxes and other objects account for many of the “Exertion” injuries. To prevent back injuries, employees should use a cart to move objects and avoid hand carrying them.

**Chart 4**



**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for**

FY 2002

## Injury Type As Percentage Of Total Injuries

AUGUST 03

SEPTEMBER 03

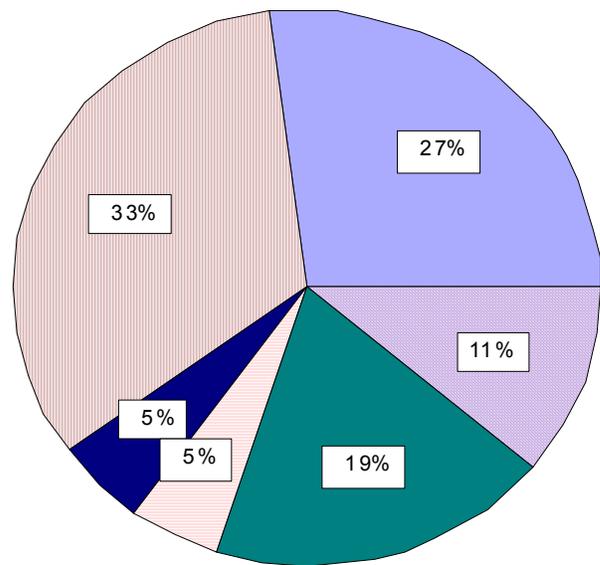
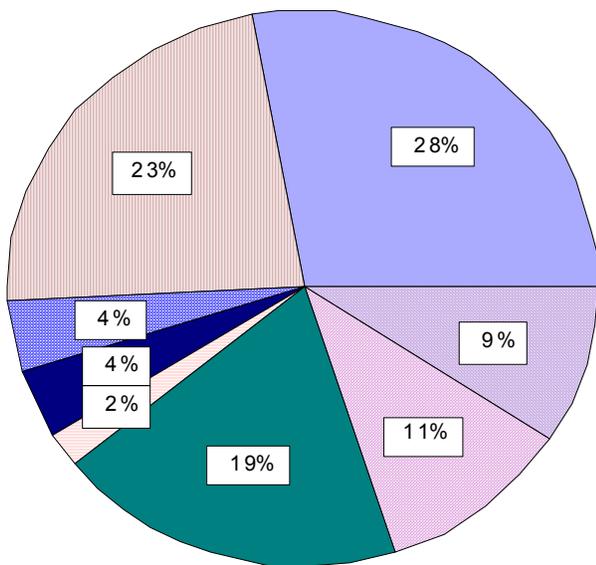


Chart 5

**TABLE 1  
TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TCIR)**

Bureau	FY1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY2002		August 2003		September 2003		FY 2003 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate								
Office of the Secretary	17	2.38	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	2	3.00	1	1.50	14	1.75
Office of Inspector General	2	1.22	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	0	0	1	10.10	3	2.53
Bureau of Economic Analysis	8	1.75	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	0	0	0	0	4	0.82
Bureau of the Census	282	1.34	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	18	2.23	18	2.23	247	2.55
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	3.02	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	0	0	0	0	7	2.07
Economic Development Administration	4	1.72	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	1	0.45
International Trade Administration	26	1.33	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	0	0	0	0	11	0.67
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.13	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	0	0	0	0	3	3.27
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	280	2.52	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	26	2.77	11	1.18	240	2.14
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	3	1.22	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	0	0	0	0	2	0.77
Patent and Trademark Office	38	0.73	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	2	0.40	2	0.39	24	0.39
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92
National Institute of Standards and Technology	105	3.57	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	5	2.07	4	1.67	88	3.06
National Technical Information Service	2	0.66	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>1.89</b>
Decennial Census 2000	182	3.4	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3								

\* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

**TABLE 1A  
TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TRCIR)**

Bureau	FY1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY2002		August 2003		September 2003		FY 2003 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate								
Office of the Secretary	17	2.38	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	2	3.00	1	1.50	12	1.50
Office of Inspector General	2	1.22	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	0	0	1	10.10	3	2.53
Bureau of Economic Analysis	7	1.53	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	0	0	0	0	3	0.62
Bureau of the Census	244	1.15	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	15	1.86	14	1.73	179	1.85
Bureau of Industry and Security	8	2.42	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	0	0	0	0	7	2.07
Economic Development Administration	4	1.72	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	24	1.23	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	0	0	0	0	11	0.67
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.13	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	0	0	0	0	2	2.18
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	260	2.34	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	21	2.24	10	1.07	190	1.70
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	3	1.22	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	0	0	0	0	2	0.77
Patent and Trademark Office	35	0.67	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	2	0.40	2	0.39	24	0.39
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92
National Institute of Standards and Technology	87	2.96	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	4	1.66	4	1.68	56	1.95
National Technical Information Service	2	0.66	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1.55</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>1.44</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	182	3.4	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3								

\* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

**Table 2**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through September 2003)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	
Struck By/Against An Object	24	29	55	56	27	45	16	8	26	6	4	5	1	1	3	5	2	3	316
Falls/Slips	72	59	59	153	96	96	19	22	21	13	7	12	5	7	6	10	2	2	661
Caught On An Object	4	5	12	9	8	3	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	55
Cuts/Bites	20	26	5	36	19	19	12	9	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	155
Contact With An Object	13	19	5	24	11	5	1	6	0	6	6	4	1	2	0	1	1	0	105
Exertion/Motion	64	64	73	54	37	51	7	17	22	3	2	2	1	2	0	3	1	8	411
Exposure To Chemicals/Elements	13	9	9	7	6	18	3	3	3	0	1	0	1	6	1	0	12	0	92
Traveling In Car/Metro/Taxi	4	10	0	10	16	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	43
Miscellaneous*	2	7	22	8	21	10	1	8	8	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	92
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1930</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

\*\* Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

**Table 2A**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through September 2003)**

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total
	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	15
Falls/Slips	2	0	1	2	2	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	0	3	1	2	6	0	2	38
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	7
Exertion/Motion	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	3	14
Exposure To Chemicals/Elements	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Traveling In Car/Metro/Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Miscellaneous*	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>85</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

**Section Three: Survey Results**

We continue to receive comments through the Safety Survey Web Site. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The Web Site can be accessed through the Office of Human Resources Management Homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

***Safety Survey Statistics***

We received 72 responses through the Web Site survey. The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions.

**Safety Survey  
October Results**

<b>Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	49	70.00%
Yes	21	30.00%

<b>Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	39	54.93%
Yes	32	45.07%