Serious Injury & Fatality Criteria (SIF)

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What is a SIF?
SIF was developed to be a metric that better facilitates the prevention of fatalities and serious injuries that are life threatening or life changing for the employee. The metric should reflect the extent of serious injury to employee(s) from events within the control of the employee and/or the employer.

Criteria
SIF’s are work related and serious injuries that occur within the control of the employee and/or employer as defined below.

Defining Work Related
As the General Rule, work related injuries may result from:

- Activities included within the scope of employment or
- Activities related to a condition of employment.

If we pass the General Rule criteria, ask:

- Is this injury OSHA Recordable?
- Was the injured worker being paid for work or performing work on behalf of the employer at the time of the event or exposure?
- Was the injured worker’s presence at the place of the injury exposure related to a condition of employment?
- Was the cause of the incident within the control of the employee and/or the employer?

If the answer to all of these questions is “Yes,” consider the injury to be work-related.
Frequently Asked Questions

i. If an employee is injured while walking, should these be considered work-related?

The case should be evaluated to consider whether circumstances within the control of the employee or the employer caused or contributed to the injury. It is the intent to count cases where the employee trips, slips, stumbles, falls, or is injured by a hazard in the workplace. It is not the intent to count cases that are outside of the control of the employer, such as a heel break.

ii. Are dog bites in the control of the employer or employee?

Dog bite cases should be evaluated to consider whether the employee was a victim of an unanticipated attack or whether the employee failed to take appropriate actions to prevent the injury. If the employee was clearly a victim, it should not be considered work-related.

Examples of Work Related Events

- Injuries that occur while the employee is performing a work task (e.g., production employee engaged in construction work and operations)

- Injuries that occur while the employee is engaged in normal activities that happen at work between specific work tasks (talking to supervisor, selecting tools, etc.)

- Injuries that occur while injured worker is engaged in work-related travel as defined by current OSHA Recordkeeping Standards

- Injuries resulting from employee slips or trips from a hazard within the work place including employer parking lots and decks

- Injuries that occur during charitable events endorsed by the employer

Examples of Non-Work Related Events

- Injuries that occur on company property or while the worker is engaged in a work activity but would have occurred at the same time and at the same level of severity even if the employee was not engaged in a work activity (epileptic seizure, diabetic seizure, heart attacks, sudden joint failure, etc.)

- Injuries that are related to commuting to or from a place of employment outside of work hours

- Injuries that result solely from normal body movements unrelated to work (sneezing, coughing, bending over to tie a shoe, walking, etc.)
• Injuries that result *solely* from personal tasks performed outside of assigned work hours (retrieving ice for personal use, holding community meeting at employer premises, etc.)

• Injuries that occur in a travel hotel unrelated to work

• Injuries that occur where the employee is present at the site as a member of the general public, unrelated to his or her employment status

• Injuries that result from voluntary participation in wellness, medical, or fitness programs, or recreational activity (team building events)

• Injuries where symptoms surface at work from a known non-work-related event or exposure (yard work, sporting events, etc.)

• Injuries that result from eating/drinking or preparing food/drink for personal consumption (food/drink not provided by employer)

• Injuries that result from personal grooming, self-medication for a non-work-related condition, or intentionally self-inflicted injuries

• Injuries that result from non-preventable vehicle accidents

**Identifying and Classifying Serious Injuries**

When the work-related criteria have been met, compare the employee injury to the Serious Injury criteria listed below to determine if the injury is deemed “Serious.” (Each case should be counted only once. In cases with multiple injuries, assign the case to the category representing the most severe injury.)

1. Fatalities

2. Amputations (involving bone)

3. Concussions and/or cerebral hemorrhages
4. Injury or trauma to internal organs

Frequently Asked Question

i. When should a case of organ damage be classified as serious, such as an exposure to chemical substance?

Injuries should be classified as serious if objective medical evidence indicates significant or sustained (beyond initial event, acute treatment and testing) organ damage, or progressive changes in organ function or anatomy. This criterion does not include rapidly dissipating signs and symptoms from the acute event (such as irritation or localized redness) and their associated treatment, or injury from long term or repetitive exposures.

Only cases that involve relatively short term events should be included in the serious metric, even if the result is an illness (example, reactive upper-dysfunction syndrome resulting from chlorine exposure event). Illnesses that develop from exposure over long periods of time (years) are not to be captured in this metric (example, fibrosis of the lung from asbestos exposure).

ii. Is a hernia considered a severe case?

A hernia by itself would not be classified as a severe case. However, if the hernia causes damage to an internal organ such as a strangulated colon, it would be classified as a severe case.

5. Bone fractures with the following considerations:

a. Include fractures of the fingers and toes only if they are open, compound, or comminuted (crushing)

b. Include all bone fractures of the face, skull, or navicular wrist bone

c. Exclude any hairline fractures unless described above

Frequently Asked Questions

i. Are all hairline fractures excluded?

Hairline fractures in the face, skull, or navicular wrist bone are considered a serious injury. All other hairline fractures are excluded.

ii. Are nasal fractures included as a serious injury in bone fracture criteria?

Typical nasal cartilage-only fractures are not likely to cause life altering or life threatening injuries, unless other facial bone fractures are involved. If the employee has a “broken nose” that involves facial bone fractures, the injury should be included as a serious injury. Nasal cartridge-only fractures should not be included as a serious injury.
iii. Are broken teeth considered a severe case?

No, unless there were other injuries in addition that meet the criteria (Example: Broken Jaw)

6. Complete tendon, ligament and cartilage tears of the major joints (e.g., shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, and ankle).

Frequently Asked Questions

i. Are partial tendon, ligament and cartilage tears included?

No. Partial tears are not to be classified as a serious injury.

7. Herniated disks (neck or back)

8. Lacerations resulting in severed tendons and/or a deep wound requiring internal stitches

Frequently Asked Question

i. Does a puncture that requires internal sutures meet the laceration criteria?

Yes

9. 2nd (10% body surface) or 3rd degree burns

10. Eye injuries resulting in eye damage or loss of vision

Frequently Asked Questions

i. Does a corneal abrasion constitute eye damage injury?

No. Corneal abrasions and/or scratches due to foreign bodies are considered minor and usually heal quickly.

ii. What are some examples of “eye damage” that meet the criteria?

Examples of eye damage would be cases where the eyeball is penetrated or damaged by a significant foreign body.
iii. Does loss of vision mean total loss or is some degradation of vision all that is required to meet the serious injury criteria?

Loss of vision means any permanent change in the employee’s vision or change that requires corrective lenses.

11. Injections of foreign materials (e.g. hydraulic fluid)

12. Severe heat exhaustion and all heat stroke cases (Severe heat exhaustion cases are those where all of the following symptoms are present: profuse sweating, nausea, and confusion). If confirmed fainting occurs due to the heat exposure, this is an automatic severe case.

   a. Exclude cases where confirmed personal medical conditions or medications significantly contributed to heat exhaustion

Frequently Asked Question

i. If an employee receives an IV for heat exhaustion, does this make it a severe case?

The application of an IV does not necessarily indicate a severe case; further investigation should be conducted to determine if the criteria for severe heat exhaustion were met (profuse sweating, nausea, and confusion or confirmed fainting).

13. Dislocation of a major joint (hip, shoulder, elbow, etc.)

14. The Other Injuries” category should only be selected for reporting injuries not identified in the existing categories. A Description box is also provided to briefly describe the nature of the injury.

Other Terms and Definitions

1. Serious Injury Incidence Rate (SIIR)

The Serious Injury Incidence Rate (SIIR) is calculated using the formula (# cases x 200,000/hours worked). The calculation of the SIIR uses the same hours worked number as your calculation of the Recordable Incidence Rate.