

**U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Inspector General
Office of Audit**

BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number 02-09-201-11-001 to the Commissioner, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

WHY READ THE REPORT

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is responsible for collecting and compiling accurate statistics on the extent of occupational injuries and illnesses in the United States. To meet this responsibility, BLS conducts the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) annually, under authority from the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970.

During September 2006, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued government-wide policy and procedural guidance for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by Federal statistical agencies. OMB published 20 standards that document professional principles and practices Federal agencies are required to adhere to, and the level of quality and effort expected in all statistical activities disseminated by the Federal government. The 20 standards are divided among 7 elements or topics in OMB's 2006 Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys.

We audited BLS for compliance with OMB's Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys, limited to the survey development and data collection standards. The survey development and data collection standards affect the earlier stages of the SOII process and provide the foundation for the other OMB standards which affect processing, editing, estimating, analyzing, reviewing, and disseminating data.

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

The audit objective was to determine if BLS complied with OMB standards for SOII development and data collection.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full agency response, go to:

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2009/02-09-201-11-001.pdf>

March 2009

STRENGTHENING FORMAL WRITTEN PROCEDURES MAY DECREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF INCONSISTENCIES OCCURRING IN SURVEY OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES DATA RELEASES

WHAT OIG FOUND

While BLS implemented OMB's 2006 Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys related to SOII development and data collection, its formal written policies and procedures did not fully incorporate all of the OMB requirements.

OMB Standards for Federal statistical programs serve both the interests of the public and the needs of the government by helping to ensure information disseminated by Federal statistical agencies is useful, accurate, reliable, and unbiased. Strengthening formal written policies and procedures to incorporate the requirements prescribed in the OMB standards can help decrease the possibility of inconsistencies occurring in SOII data releases, especially when employees with institutional knowledge of SOII leave the agency.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

The OIG recommended the Commissioner, Bureau of Labor Statistics ensure that formal written policies and procedures for SOII fully incorporate the seven standards for survey development and data collection contained in OMB's 2006 Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys.

BLS acknowledged the report's finding, accepted the recommendation, and plans to enhance SOII's formal documentation to fully incorporate the OMB standards.