

## ARE OUR WORKPLACES SAFE? ... Cases of Occupational Diseases (Last of a four-part series)

*This series of LABSTAT Updates presents statistical briefs on cases of occupational injuries and diseases that affected private sector establishments in 2007. The statistics were based on results of the 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) conducted in 2008 by the Bureau in coordination with the DOLE Regional Offices. As a vital supplementary source of data to administrative-based statistics on occupational safety and health in DOLE, the BITS is a nationwide survey covering 6,460 sample non-agricultural establishments with 20 or more workers. It has expanded its industry coverage from 58 industries in 2003 to 65 to include building and repairing of ships and boats (manufacturing industry); bus line operation (transport, storage and communications); accounting, bookkeeping and auditing activities, tax consultancy; architectural, engineering and related technical consultancy; call center activities; medical transcription and related outsourcing activities (real estate, renting and business activities); and, animated films and cartoons production (other community, social and personal service activities) industries. The last three sub-industries are technology-based industries that have played significant roles in the Philippine economy in recent years.*

*The BITS also generated other labor statistics on employment of specific group of workers, occupational shortages and surpluses, safety and health practices and labor cost of employee that can be used as basis for policy and program formulation and evaluation.*

*Specifically, this issue discusses the results of the survey regarding the number and types of occupational diseases by industry covering the period 2007 compared with those of 2003. The metadata and the statistical tables of the survey are posted on the BLES website.*

### Occupational diseases in real estate, renting and business activities up by almost 300%

In the 2007 occupational injuries and diseases inquiry, occupational disease is defined as an abnormal condition or disorder other than one resulting from an occupational injury caused by exposure over a period of time to risk factors associated with work activity such as contact with certain chemicals, inhaling coal dust, carrying out repetitive movements, etc.

Occurrences of occupational diseases in non-agricultural establishments employing 20 or more workers decreased by 14.8% from 55,413 in 2003 to 47,235 in 2007. (Table 1)

The bulk of the occupational diseases was in the manufacturing industries for both years at 64.9% in 2003 and 55.6% in 2007. Other industries had shares ranging from 0.3% (construction) to 9.5% (wholesale and retail trade) in 2003 and from 0.1% (mining and quarrying) to 13.1% (transport, storage and communications) in 2007.

Across industries, occupational diseases in mining and quarrying had the highest decline at 96.2% from 1,350 cases in 2003 to only 51 in 2007. Lowest decline at 17.2% (from 5,241 in 2003 to 4,342 in 2007) occurred in wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor

vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods.

In contrast, cases of occupational diseases in real estate, renting and business activities increased by 284.5% from 761 in 2003 to 2,926 in 2007. This was followed by construction at 148.3% from 149 in 2003 to 370 in 2007. The least growth was posted in other

community, social and personal service activities at 4.7% from 695 in 2003 to 728 in 2007.

Occupational diseases in call center activities, which accounted for about 40% of total in real estate, renting and business activities, was mainly responsible for the large jump in the work-related diseases.

**TABLE 1 – Cases of Occupational Diseases in Non-Agricultural Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers by Major Industry Group  
Philippines: 2003 and 2007**

Major Industry Group	2003	2007	Percent Change
<b>All Industries</b>	<b>55,413</b>	<b>47,235</b>	<b>-14.8</b>
Mining and Quarrying	1,350	51	-96.2
Manufacturing	35,956	26,284	-26.9
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	1,112	526	-52.7
Construction	149	370	148.3
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles and Personal and Household Goods	5,241	4,342	-17.2
Hotels and Restaurants	2,195	1,697	-22.7
Transport, Storage and Communications	3,828	6,176	61.3
Financial Intermediation	594	700	17.8
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	761	2,926	284.5
<i>Real Estate and Renting</i>	121	137	13.2
<i>Business Activities</i>	640	2,789	335.8
- <i>Call Center Activities</i>	NA	1,175	-
Private Education Services	2,694	2,204	-18.2
Health and Social Work except Public Medical, Dental and Other Health Activities	839	1,233	47.0
Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities	695	728	4.7

NA – Not Available.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, BLES Integrated Survey (2003/2004 and 2007/2008).

### Work-related musculoskeletal diseases most prevalent in 2003 and 2007



Incidences of occupational diseases decreased in almost all types of diseases in 2007 except in three categories, namely: bronchial asthma (+29.9%), occupational dermatitis (+18.6%) and essential hypertension (+7.8%). (Table 2)

The highest drop of 66.3% was posted in cases of deafness, that is, from 510 in 2003 to 172 in 2007. The

lowest decline of 6.4% (from 202 in 2003 to 189 in 2007) was recorded in cases of acute poisonings.

Work-related musculoskeletal diseases were most prevalent in non-agricultural establishments employing 20 or more workers in both periods under review. This type of disease accounted for 37.2% and 28.1% of the totals in 2003 and 2007, respectively. Other types of diseases which made up more than 10% of total diseases in 2007 were bronchial asthma (18.5%), infections (13.8%), essential hypertension (13.0%) and occupational

dermatitis (12.6%). Relatively lesser proportions of occupational diseases in 2007 were as follows: chilblain, frostbite, etc. (0.2%) and acute

poisonings and deafness (at 0.4% each). The same occupational diseases recorded the lowest shares at 0.3%, 0.4% and 0.9% in 2003, respectively.

**TABLE 2 – Cases of Occupational Diseases in Non-Agricultural Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers by Type of Occupational Disease Philippines: 2003 and 2007**

Type of Occupational Disease	2003	2007	Percent Change
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,413</b>	<b>47,235</b>	<b>-14.8</b>
Occupational Dermatitis	5,028	5,965	18.6
Bronchial Asthma	6,742	8,759	29.9
Acute Poisonings	202	189	-6.4
Heat Stroke, Cramps, Exhaustion	631	577	-8.6
Chilblain, Frostbite, etc.	150	112	-25.3
Deafness	510	172	-66.3
Infections	7,825	6,517	-16.7
Cataract	634	284	-55.2
Cardiovascular Diseases	1,454	854	-41.3
Essential Hypertension	5,708	6,152	7.8
Peptic Ulcer	5,347	4,135	-22.7
Work-Related Musculoskeletal Diseases	20,603	13,296	-35.5
Others	579	222	-61.7

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, BLES Integrated Survey (2003/2004 and 2007/2008).

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