

Finding detailed inspection and violation information on the OSHA website

One of the most intriguing parts of the OSHA website is its database of inspections and citations, where you can obtain OSHA data concerning inspections and citations of a specific employer, a specific industry, or within a particular geographic area. OSHA inspection data can be accessed through the OSHA home page by clicking on...

"Statistics"...

"Inspection Data," and then on

"Establishment Search" or "Search Inspections by SIC"

Using the "Establishment Search" form

To use the "Establishment Search" form, you type the required information in the blanks, beginning with the "Establishment" (the name of the employer). When doing a search for data about an employer, it is useful to conduct several searches, using variations of the employer's name or the name of a parent company or subsidiary, because the search engine looks for names exactly as they are entered in the database. For example, OSHA has inspection reports listed under Macy's," and Macys" (no apostrophe), and "Federated Department Stores -- Macy's." Anyone who wants to see all of them must do a separate search on each variation of the name.

Note: The OSHA search engine often finds inspection reports for employers with names that are similar to the one you are looking for; ask for "Morton" and the search engine finds both "Morton International" and "Lockheed Martin." That is because the OSHA search engine ignores vowels – "Morton" and "Martin" are identical, as far as the search program is concerned.

Searching by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC codes)

The OSHA inspection database can also be searched by industrial sector, as codified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. The U.S. Commerce Department assigns every employer a 4-digit SIC code, based on the nature of the business. You can search for very narrow groups of businesses by using all four digits of the SIC code, or you can search over wider industrial groups by using only the first two or three digits of the SIC code. For example, you can search within a narrow group, such as the companies that manufacture industrial gases, by using SIC Code 2813.

- You can widen the search to include all the manufacturers of industrial inorganic chemicals by dropping the last digit and searching on 281.
- You can widen the search still farther by dropping the second-to-last digit and searching on 28, which encompasses the entire chemical industry. You can widen the search to cover all manufacturing companies, by using the letter "D" instead of a number.
- To learn the SIC code of a particular industry, or the letter that stands for each of the ten major industry groups, click on "SIC" on the left side of the "Inspections within SIC" page.

However...

As useful as the OSHA inspection database is, it is not complete, because the site is never completely up to date and because it contains some errors such as misspelled company names (a misspelled name can make a record extremely difficult to find) and incorrect SIC codes. You should not assume that you will find all the relevant and current OSHA inspection data there, even after a thorough search of the website. If complete data is required, you need to contact OSHA directly and make an information request.

