

Research into occupational injury and illness generally focuses on either the establishment's industry or specifics of the worker and the event that caused the injury. While much has been gained from this research, focusing further on establishment dynamics can help identify the underlying characteristics of establishments where intervention can most impact injury rates. This paper looks at the impact of employer dynamics on injury rates. Using data from the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses combined with information on the universe of establishments from the BLS business register, this paper examines the impact of establishment entry and exit on occupational injury rates. A decomposition of injury rates shows that net entry of establishments contributed to the decline in injury rates in the 2003 through 2013 time period, with newer establishments having lower injury rates and exiting establishments having higher injury rates than the average over the time period. In order to further examine the large fraction of the fall in injury rates attributable to continuers, injury and illness rates are examined by establishment age and employment change. Rates are higher for older or earlier vintage establishments, but within establishments an additional year of age is associated with lower injury rates. Both high levels of job creation and job destruction lead to increases in injury and illness rates, suggesting that on net between establishment shifts in employment may explain little of the change in injury rates but establishment dynamics have a large impact on injury rates. Taken together, the impact of employer dynamics can help to explain differences across establishments. Additionally, the decomposition underscores the importance of continuing establishments in explaining the overall trend in the time period.