



WEST VIRGINIA WORKPLACE FATALITIES, 2002

Fatal work injuries totaled 40 in 2002 for West Virginia, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that this year's count was the lowest since the series began counting West Virginia workplace fatalities in 1992.

Highway crashes was the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities for both the nation and West Virginia, accounting for 12 deaths in the State, or 30 percent of its total. The number of fatal highway incidents was considerably lower than the 20 reported in 2001, and was consistent with the number of work-related deaths recorded in five of the six years since 1997. (See table A.) Nationally, highway crashes accounted for one-quarter of fatal work injuries. Fatalities resulting from being struck by an object were nearly identical to those reported in 2000 and 2001. The number of work-related deaths from being struck by an object declined by three-quarters since 1992, when a series high 20 workers were fatally injured. Workplace deaths due to workers being struck by an object made up 13 percent of the West Virginia total and 9 percent of the U.S. total—the lowest number ever recorded by the fatality census at the national level.

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in West Virginia by selected event groups, 1992-2002

Year	Total fatalities	Highway crashes		Struck by object	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	77	16	21	20	26
1993	66	14	21	11	17
1994	61	12	20	7	11
1995	56	17	30	12	21
1996	66	21	32	10	15
1997	53	10	19	16	30
1998	57	13	23	14	25
1999	57	13	23	13	23
2000	46	12	26	4	9
2001	63	20	32	6	10
2002	40	12	30	5	13

Other leading causes¹ of workplace fatalities in 2002 were caught in or compressed by equipment or objects (4), caught in or crushed in collapsing materials (4), and falls to lower level (3). All together, these three groups were responsible for over one-quarter of the fatal work injuries in West Virginia. (See table 1.)

¹ Fatal events are categorized into several major groupings including transportation incidents, assaults and violent acts, and falls. These major groups are further broken down into more detailed groups. For example, transportation incidents include highway incidents and aircraft incidents; assaults and violent acts include homicides and self-inflicted incidents; and falls includes falls to lower level (as from a roof or ladder) and falls on same level (as due to grease on floor or ice on sidewalk).

Nationwide, a total of 5,524 fatal work injuries were reported in 2002, a decline of 7 percent from 2001, excluding work-related fatalities that resulted from the September 11 terrorist attacks. The count for 2002 was the lowest ever recorded by the fatality census, which has been conducted yearly since 1992. All but one of the major event categories recorded a decline, the exception being exposure to harmful substances or environments (up 8 percent). At the more detailed level, the number of job-related deaths from highway crashes decreased by 3 percent from 2001, but continued to be the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities. Fatalities resulting from falls to lower level declined for the first time since 1998, from 700 in 2001 to 634 in 2002, a drop of 9 percent. Workplace homicides were down 5 percent in 2002, from 643 in 2001 to 609 in 2002. The number of workplace homicides in 2002 was the lowest recorded in the fatality census and represented a 44 percent decline from the high of 1,080 workplace homicides recorded in 1994. (See table B.)

Additional Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries data is available on the BLS Internet site at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>. Data can be accessed in two ways, through Selective Access, which allows quick access to particular items, or via the special request FTP service, which allows access to an extensive collection of flat text files. The Mid-Atlantic Information Office can provide assistance accessing these files by calling (215) 597-3282.

Table B. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States by selected event groups, 1992-2002

Year	Total fatalities	Highway crashes		Falls to lower level		Homicides	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	6,217	1,158	19	507	8	1,044	17
1993	6,331	1,242	20	534	8	1,074	17
1994	6,632	1,343	20	580	9	1,080	16
1995	6,275	1,346	21	578	9	1,036	17
1996	6,202	1,346	22	610	10	927	15
1997	6,238	1,393	22	653	10	860	14
1998	6,055	1,442	24	625	10	714	12
1999	6,054	1,496	25	634	10	651	11
2000	5,920	1,365	23	659	11	677	11
2001 ¹	5,915	1,409	24	700	12	643	11
2002	5,524	1,372	25	634	11	609	11

¹The BLS national news release issued September 25, 2002 reported a total of 5,900 fatal work injuries for calendar year 2001. Since then, an additional 15 job-related fatalities were identified, bringing the total job-related fatality count for 2001 to 5,915. Totals for 2001 exclude fatalities due to the events of September 11, 2001 which claimed the lives of 2,886 persons in work status.

Key characteristics of workplace fatalities in West Virginia:

- Ninety-eight percent of those who died from a workplace injury were white, non-Hispanic (39); the leading cause of death was transportation incidents. (See table 2.)
- Workers 25-54 years old -- the prime working age group -- made up over two-thirds of the State's work-related fatalities in 2002. (See table 2.)
- Eighty-five percent of workers killed on-the-job in West Virginia worked for wages and salaries, the rest were self-employed. Wage and salary workers died primarily from transportation incidents. (See table 2.)

Key characteristics of workplace fatalities in West Virginia: (continued)

- Three industry divisions accounted for 58 percent of the workplace fatalities in the State -- transportation and public utilities, mining, and manufacturing. Workplace fatalities in all three of these industry divisions decreased over the year: transportation and public utilities declined from 15 in 2001 to 9 in 2002; mining declined from 13 in 2001 to 7 in 2002; and manufacturing went from 9 in 2001 to 7 in 2002. (See table 3.) Work-related deaths in transportation and public utilities were mainly due to transportation incidents, while most mining and manufacturing deaths were caused by contact with objects and equipment.
- Truck drivers (12), mining machine operators (5), and timber cutting and logging occupations (4) accounted for over one-half of all work-related deaths in the State. The primary cause of death for truck drivers was transportation incidents, while most mining machine operators and all timber cutting and logging workers died due to contact with objects and equipment. (See table 4.)

TECHNICAL NOTES

Definitions

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2002 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or kinetic energy from a crash, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event, incident, or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work make identification of a universe problematic.

Measurement techniques and limitations

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources--including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports--as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

Federal/state

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether they are covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or are outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation.

Fatalities occurring in activities regulated by federal agencies other than OSHA accounted for about 15 percent of the fatal work injuries in 2002. Fatalities occurring among several other groups of workers are generally not covered by any federal or state agencies. These groups include self-employed and unpaid family workers, which accounted for about 19 percent of the fatalities; laborers on small farms, accounting for about 1 percent of the fatalities; and state and local government employees in states without OSHA-approved safety programs, which accounted for about 4 percent. (Approximately one-half of the states have approved OSHA safety programs, which cover state and local government employees.)

Acknowledgments

BLS thanks the West Virginia Department of Labor for their efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries, and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

TABLE 1. Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure and major private industry division, West Virginia, 2002

Event or exposure ¹	Total fatalities (number)	Private Industry ² (percent)								
		Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining ³	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation and public utilities	Wholesale trade	Retail trade	Finance, insurance, and real estate	Services
Total	40	--	17.5	12.5	17.5	22.5	12.5	--	--	--
Transportation incidents	18	--	--	--	--	44.4	--	--	--	--
Highway incident	12	--	--	--	--	66.7	--	--	--	--
Highway incident, unspecified	4	--	--	--	--	100.0	--	--	--	--
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Noncollision incident	4	--	--	--	--	75.0	--	--	--	--
Jack-knifed or overturned--no collision	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Contact with objects and equipment	13	--	46.2	--	38.5	--	--	--	--	--
Struck by object	5	--	--	--	60.0	--	--	--	--	--
Struck by falling object	4	--	--	--	75.0	--	--	--	--	--
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	4	--	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other cave-in	4	--	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Falls	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fall to lower level	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

² Classified according to the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987*

³ Includes fatalities at all establishments categorized as Mining (Division B) in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 Edition, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in Oil and Gas Extraction.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified."

Data for 2002 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries by worker characteristics and event or exposure, West Virginia, 2002

Worker characteristics	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure ¹ (percent)					
		Transportation incidents ²	Assaults and violent acts ³	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful substances or environments	Fires and explosions
Total	40	45.0	--	32.5	7.5	--	--
Employee Status							
Wage and Salary Workers ⁴	34	52.9	--	32.4	--	--	--
Self-employed ⁵	6	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age							
Under 16 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
16 to 17 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
18 to 19 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
20 to 24 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
25 to 34 years	7	--	--	42.9	--	--	--
35 to 44 years	9	44.4	--	--	--	--	--
45 to 54 years	12	41.7	--	41.7	--	--	--
55 to 64 years	8	62.5	--	--	--	--	--
65 years and over	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Race or Ethnic Origin							
White, non-Hispanic	39	43.6	--	33.3	7.7	--	--
Black, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
American Indian or Alaska Native	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian or Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

² Includes highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail fatalities.

³ Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and assaults by animals.

⁴ May include volunteers and other workers receiving compensation.

⁵ Includes paid and unpaid family workers, and may include owners of incorporated businesses, or members of partnerships.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria.

Data for 2002 are preliminary.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

TABLE 3. Fatal occupational injuries by industry, West Virginia, 1997 to 2002

Industry ¹	1997 (number)	1998 (number)	1999 (number)	2000 (number)	2001 (number)	2002	
						Number	Percent
Total	53	57	57	46	63	40	100.0
Private Industry	50	50	50	40	59	38	95.0
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	--	4	--	--	--	--	--
Agricultural production-crops	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Mining²	6	7	9	12	13	7	17.5
Coal mining	6	6	9	11	12	7	17.5
Bituminous coal and lignite mining	6	6	9	11	12	7	17.5
Bituminous coal underground mining	4	6	8	--	--	7	17.5
Construction	12	7	4	6	10	5	12.5
General building contractors	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, except building	6	--	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, except highway	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, n.e.c.	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
Special trade contractors	3	5	3	3	10	--	--
Manufacturing	6	11	13	5	9	7	17.5
Lumber and wood products	6	8	10	3	8	6	15.0
Logging	6	8	9	--	7	6	15.0
Transportation and public utilities	11	14	12	4	15	9	22.5
Trucking and warehousing	3	12	8	4	5	9	22.5
Trucking and courier services, except air	3	12	8	4	5	9	22.5
Local trucking without storage	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Trucking, except local	--	--	3	--	--	--	--
Transportation by air	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Air transportation, nonscheduled	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	--	--	--	--	6	--	--
Sanitary services	--	--	--	--	3	--	--
Wholesale trade	--	--	--	--	--	5	12.5
Retail trade	7	4	5	7	3	--	--
Automotive dealers and service stations	3	--	3	--	--	--	--
New and used car dealers	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Services	5	--	3	4	6	--	--
Government³	3	7	7	6	4	--	--
Federal Government (including resident armed forces)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
State Government	--	--	4	--	--	--	--
Public Administration	--	--	3	--	--	--	--
Local Government	--	4	3	3	--	--	--
Public Administration	--	3	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Classified according to the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987*

² Includes fatalities at all establishments categorized as Mining (Division B) in the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 Edition*, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in Oil and Gas Extraction.

³ Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown

separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria.

n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified."

Data for 2002 are preliminary; data for previous years are final.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

TABLE 4. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation and event or exposure, West Virginia, 2002

Occupation ¹	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure ² (percent)					
		Transportation incidents ³	Assaults and violent acts ⁴	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful substances or environments	Fires and explosions
Total	40	45.0	--	32.5	7.5	--	--
Farming, forestry, and fishing	6	--	--	100.0	--	--	--
Forestry and logging occupations	4	--	--	100.0	--	--	--
Timber cutting and logging occupations	4	--	--	100.0	--	--	--
Precision production, craft, and repair	11	--	--	54.5	--	--	--
Construction trades	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
Extractive occupations	6	--	--	83.3	--	--	--
Mining machine operators	5	--	--	80.0	--	--	--
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	16	81.3	--	--	--	--	--
Transportation and material moving occupations	13	92.3	--	--	--	--	--
Motor vehicle operators	12	91.7	--	--	--	--	--
Truck drivers	12	91.7	--	--	--	--	--
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3	--	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Based on the 1990 Occupational Classification System developed by the Bureau of the Census.

² Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

³ Includes highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail fatalities.

⁴ Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and assaults by animals.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

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SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries