

# News

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: <http://stats.bls.gov/r01news.htm>  
For information: (617) 565-2327  
Media information: (617) 565-2331  
Fax-on-demand: (617) 565-9167  
Fax code: 9700

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## Fatal Work Injuries in New England, 2002

Fatal work injuries in New England totaled 153 in 2002, about the same as in 2001, but well below levels reached in the prior three years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that highway incidents were the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities accounting for 48 deaths, or almost one-third of the New England total. The number of highway incidents in 2002 was double the count recorded the year before. Fatal occupational injuries in New England accounted for about 3 percent of the 5,524 fatalities occurring nationwide. Nationally, workplace fatalities were down 391<sup>1</sup> over the year, reaching the lowest level ever recorded by the fatality census since the program's inception in 1992. Highway incidents were also the most frequent type of fatal event in the nation and represented one-quarter of fatalities nationwide. (See tables A and 1.)

### Profile of fatal work injuries in New England, 2002

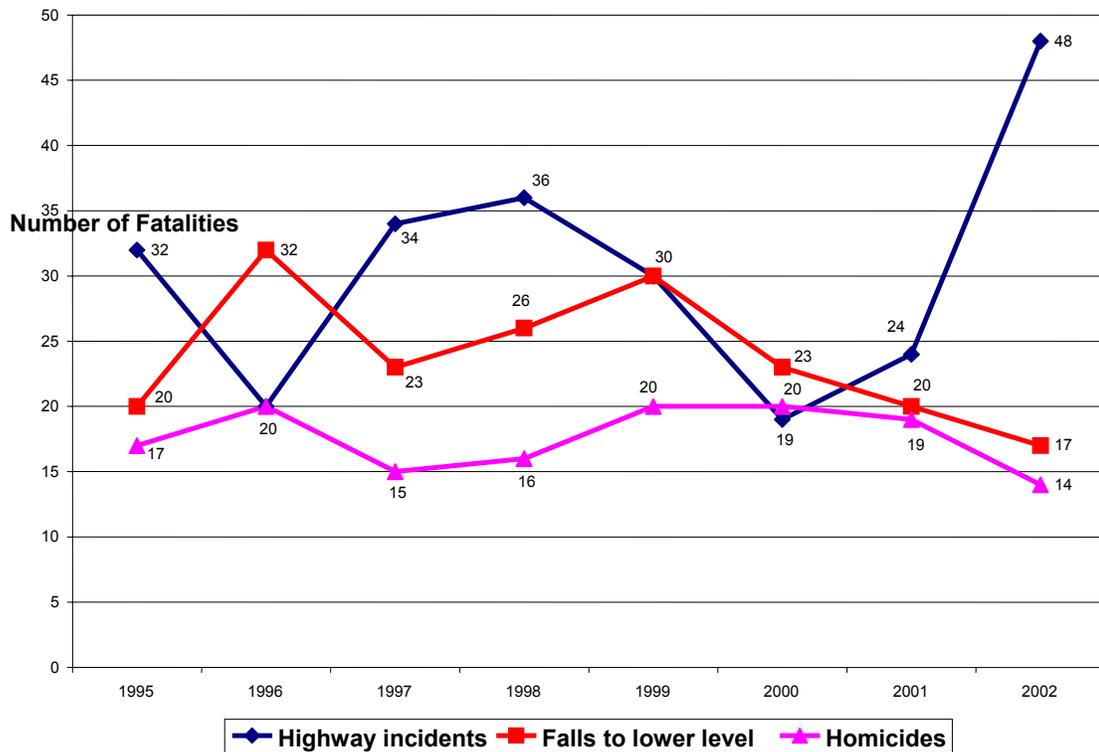
In addition to highway incidents, a number of other events recorded double-digit fatalities in New England. Falls to a lower level (as from a roof or ladder) accounted for 17 deaths and was the second leading cause of work-related fatalities in New England. Homicides ranked third with 14 fatal injuries. Unlike highway incidents, both the number of falls and homicides were down over the year. Together, falls to a lower level and homicides made up one-fifth of New England's fatalities. Still other events resulting in occupational fatalities included workplace suicides (13), being struck by an object (13), getting caught in or compressed by equipment (12), and being struck by a vehicle (10). (See table 1 and chart 2.)

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries for the United States, New England, and New England states, 1998-2002

| State and area   | Year  |       |       |       |       | 1998-2002 average |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
|  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  |                   |
| United States  | 6,055 | 6,053 | 5,920 | 5,915 | 5,524 | 5,893             |
| New England  | 178   | 192   | 186   | 150   | 153   | 172               |
| Connecticut  | 57    | 38    | 55    | 41    | 39    | 46                |
| Maine  | 26    | 32    | 26    | 23    | 30    | 27                |
| Massachusetts  | 44    | 83    | 70    | 54    | 46    | 59                |
| New Hampshire  | 23    | 14    | 13    | 9     | 19    | 16                |
| Rhode Island   | 12    | 11    | 7     | 17    | 8     | 11                |
| Vermont  | 16    | 14    | 15    | 6     | 11    | 12                |
| Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT CMSA <sup>1</sup> | 42    | 53    | 27    | 58    | 50    | 46                |

<sup>1</sup> Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CSMA) is based on definitions from the Office of Management and Budget Number 99-04, June 1999.

**Chart 1: The three most frequent work-related fatal events, 1995-2002**



### State and metropolitan highlights

On-the-job fatality counts were highest in Massachusetts (46) and Connecticut (39), the two states with the largest workforces in New England. Among the other four states, the number of fatal occupational injuries varied widely, from lows of 8 in Rhode Island and 11 in Vermont, to 19 in New Hampshire and 30 in Maine. Rhode Island recorded the largest drop in fatal work injuries, down 9 over the year, followed by Massachusetts, down 8, and Connecticut, with a decline of 2. The other three New England states recorded increases in fatal work injuries. New Hampshire had the largest gain (10), followed by Maine (7) and Vermont (5). (See table 1.)

Workplace fatality data are also available for the Boston-Worcester-Lawrence metropolitan area. Fifty fatal occupational injuries occurred within the metropolitan area's boundaries (which extend into four states—Mass., N.H., Me., and Conn.) in 2002, accounting for approximately one-third of all work-related deaths in New England. Over the year, fatalities were down by 8 in the metropolitan area.

While highway incidents were the leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in New England accounting for 31 percent of the total, there was much variation among the six states. Highway crashes accounted for 73 percent of the fatality count in Maine and 42 percent in New Hampshire, but only 11 percent in Massachusetts. In the Boston-Worcester-Lawrence area, highway incidents made up 22 percent of the fatalities. Falls to a lower level led to 20 percent of work related deaths in Massachusetts, while Connecticut attributed 10 percent to this event. Workers fatalities resulting from being struck by an object accounted for 27 percent of the fatalities in Vermont, but 13 percent in Massachusetts. (See table 6.)

## Background of the program

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, part of the BLS occupational safety and health statistics program, provides the most complete count of fatal work injuries available. The program uses diverse state and federal data sources to identify, verify, and profile fatal work injuries. Information about each workplace fatality (occupation and other worker characteristics, equipment being used, and circumstances of the event) is obtained by cross-referencing source documents, such as death certificates, workers' compensation records, and reports to federal and state agencies. This method assures counts are as complete and accurate as possible.

This is the 11th year that the fatality census has been conducted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The BLS fatality census is a federal/state cooperative venture in which costs are shared equally. Additional state-specific data are available from the participating state agencies listed in Table 7. Another BLS program, the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, profiles worker and case characteristics of nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses that result in lost worktime and presents frequency counts and incidence rates by industry. Copies of the 2001 news release on nonfatal injuries and illnesses are available from BLS by calling (617) 565-2327 or by accessing the website listed. Incidence rates for 2002 by industry will be published in December 2003, and information on 2002 worker and case characteristics will be available in April 2004.

For additional data, access the BLS Internet site:<http://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>. To request a copy of BLS Report 970, released in September 2003, which includes several articles and highlights for the 2001 fatality data e-mail your request to [BLInfoBoston@bls.gov](mailto:BLInfoBoston@bls.gov) or write to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, JFK Federal Building, Room E310, Boston, MA 02203.

<sup>1</sup> In 2001, 5,915 fatal work injuries occurred, excluding the 2,886 work-related fatalities that resulted from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

**Table 1. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and New England, 2001-2002**

| Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>                            | Fatalities        |       |                      |                   |      |                      |
|---|-------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------|------|----------------------|
|   | United States     |       |                      | New England       |      |                      |
|   | 2001 <sup>2</sup> | 2002  | Over-the-year change | 2001 <sup>2</sup> | 2002 | Over-the-year change |
| <b>Total</b> .....  | 5,915             | 5,524 | -391                 | 150               | 153  | 3                    |
| <b>Transportation incidents</b> .....                     | 2,524             | 2,381 | -143                 | 52                | 72   | 20                   |
| Highway.....  | 1,409             | 1,372 | -37                  | 24                | 48   | 24                   |
| Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment.....         | 727               | 635   | -92                  | 14                | 17   | 3                    |
| Moving in opposite directions, oncoming.....              | 257               | 202   | -55                  | 5                 | 7    | 2                    |
| Vehicle struck stationary object or equipment.....        | 297               | 326   | 29                   | 8                 | 12   | 4                    |
| Noncollision.....   | 339               | 373   | 34                   | -                 | 18   | 18                   |
| Jackknifed or overturned—no collision.....                | 273               | 312   | 39                   | -                 | 18   | 18                   |
| Nonhighway (farm, industrial premises).....               | 326               | 322   | -4                   | 8                 | 3    | -5                   |
| Worker struck by a vehicle.....                           | 383               | 356   | -27                  | 11                | 10   | -1                   |
| Water vehicle.....  | 90                | 71    | -19                  | 7                 | 6    | -1                   |
| Aircraft.....   | 247               | 192   | -55                  | -                 | 5    | 5                    |
| <b>Assaults and violent acts</b> .....                    | 908               | 840   | -68                  | 29                | 27   | -2                   |
| Homicides.....  | 643               | 609   | -34                  | 19                | 14   | -5                   |
| Shooting.....   | 509               | 469   | -40                  | 11                | 9    | -2                   |
| Stabbing.....   | 58                | 58    | 0                    | 4                 | 5    | 1                    |
| Self-inflicted.....                                       | 230               | 199   | -31                  | 10                | 13   | 3                    |
| <b>Contact with objects and equipment</b> .....           | 962               | 873   | -89                  | 22                | 26   | 4                    |
| Struck by object.....                                     | 553               | 506   | -47                  | 13                | 13   | 0                    |
| Struck by falling object.....                             | 343               | 303   | -40                  | 6                 | 11   | 5                    |
| Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects.....      | 266               | 231   | -35                  | 7                 | 12   | 5                    |
| Caught in running equipment or machinery.....             | 144               | 110   | -34                  | 5                 | 8    | 3                    |
| <b>Falls</b> .....  | 810               | 714   | -96                  | 27                | 17   | -10                  |
| Fall to lower level.....                                  | 700               | 634   | -66                  | 20                | 17   | -3                   |
| Fall from ladder.....                                     | 123               | 126   | 3                    | 3                 | 4    | 1                    |
| Fall from roof.....                                       | 159               | 143   | -16                  | 5                 | 3    | -2                   |
| Fall from scaffold.....                                   | 91                | 87    | -4                   | 4                 | 4    | 0                    |
| <b>Exposure to harmful substances or environment</b> .... | 499               | 538   | 39                   | 12                | 7    | -5                   |
| Contact with electrical current.....                      | 285               | 289   | 4                    | 11                | 4    | -7                   |
| <b>Fires and explosions</b> .....                         | 188               | 165   | -23                  | 6                 | 3    | -3                   |
| <b>Other events or exposures</b> <sup>3</sup> .....       | 24                | 13    | -11                  | -                 | -    | -                    |

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.

<sup>2</sup> Originally, 5,915 fatal work injuries were reported for calendar year 2001. Since then, an additional 5 job-related fatalities were reported, bringing the total fatality count for 2001 to 5,920.

<sup>3</sup> Includes the category "Bodily reaction and exertion."

**Table 2. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by industry, New England, 2002.**

| <b>SIC<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>Industry</b>                                    | <b>Fatalities</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------|
|                        | <b>Total</b> .....                                 | <b>153</b>        | <b>100</b>     |
|                        | <b>Private sector</b> .....                        | <b>146</b>        | <b>91</b>      |
|                        | <b>Agriculture, forestry, and fishing</b> .....    | <b>26</b>         | <b>17</b>      |
| 02                     | Agricultural production, livestock.....            | 3                 | 2              |
| 07                     | Agricultural services.....                         | 6                 | 4              |
| 078                    | Landscape and horticultural services.....          | 6                 | 4              |
| 08                     | Forestry.....                                      | 14                | 9              |
| 085                    | Forestry services.....                             | 14                | 9              |
|                        | <b>Construction</b> .....                          | <b>36</b>         | <b>24</b>      |
| 15                     | General building contractors.....                  | 7                 | 5              |
| 16                     | Heavy construction, except building.....           | 8                 | 5              |
| 162                    | Heavy construction, except highway.....            | 6                 | 4              |
| 17                     | Special trades contractors.....                    | 21                | 14             |
| 176                    | Roofing, siding, and sheet metal work.....         | 4                 | 3              |
| 179                    | Miscellaneous special trade contractors.....       | 8                 | 5              |
|                        | <b>Manufacturing</b> .....                         | <b>18</b>         | <b>12</b>      |
| 24                     | Lumber and wood products.....                      | 6                 | 4              |
| 241                    | Logging.....                                       | 4                 | 3              |
| 34                     | Fabricated metal products.....                     | 3                 | 2              |
|                        | <b>Transportation and public utilities</b> .....   | <b>17</b>         | <b>11</b>      |
| 41                     | Local and interurban passenger transportation..... | 3                 | 2              |
| 42                     | Trucking and warehousing.....                      | 8                 | 5              |
| 421                    | Trucking & courier services, except air.....       | 8                 | 5              |
|                        | <b>Wholesale trade</b> .....                       | <b>8</b>          | <b>5</b>       |
| 50                     | Wholesale trade--nondurable goods.....             | 6                 | 4              |
|                        | <b>Retail trade</b> .....                          | <b>16</b>         | <b>10</b>      |
| 58                     | Eating and drinking places.....                    | 4                 | 3              |
| 59                     | Miscellaneous retail.....                          | 3                 | 2              |
|                        | <b>Services</b> .....                              | <b>21</b>         | <b>14</b>      |
| 75                     | Auto repair, services, and parking.....            | 3                 | 2              |
| 79                     | Amusement and recreation services.....             | 5                 | 3              |
| 80                     | Health services.....                               | 4                 | 3              |
|                        | <b>Government<sup>2</sup></b> .....                | <b>10</b>         | <b>7</b>       |
|                        | State Government.....                              | 4                 | 3              |
|                        | Local Government.....                              | 4                 | 3              |

<sup>1</sup> Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Includes fatalities to workers employed by government (Federal, State and Local) organizations, regardless of industry.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2002.

**Table 3. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by occupation, New England, 2002.**

| <u>Occupation</u> <sup>1</sup>                            | <b>Fatalities</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Total</b> .....  | <b>153</b>        | <b>100</b>     |
| <b>Managerial and professional specialty</b> .....        | <b>22</b>         | <b>14</b>      |
| Executive, administrative, and managerial.....            | 13                | 8              |
| Managers, and administrators, n.e.c. <sup>2</sup> .....   | 7                 | 5              |
| Professional specialty.....                               | 9                 | 6              |
| <b>Technical, sales, and administrative support</b> ..... | <b>14</b>         | <b>9</b>       |
| Technicians and related support occupations.....          | 3                 | 2              |
| Sales occupations.....                                    | 9                 | 6              |
| <b>Service occupations</b> .....                          | <b>8</b>          | <b>5</b>       |
| Protective service occupations.....                       | 3                 | 2              |
| Service occupations, except protective and household..... | 5                 | 3              |
| <b>Farming, forestry, and fishing</b> .....               | <b>30</b>         | <b>20</b>      |
| Farm operators and managers.....                          | 4                 | 3              |
| Other agricultural and related occupations.....           | 7                 | 5              |
| Forestry and logging occupations.....                     | 17                | 11             |
| Fishers, hunters, and trappers.....                       | 3                 | 2              |
| <b>Precision production, craft, and repair</b> .....      | <b>36</b>         | <b>24</b>      |
| Mechanics and repairers.....                              | 10                | 7              |
| Mechanics and repairers, except supervisors.....          | 10                | 7              |
| Construction trades.....                                  | 22                | 14             |
| Roofers.....  | 4                 | 3              |
| <b>Operators, fabricators, and laborers</b> .....         | <b>43</b>         | <b>28</b>      |
| Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors.....        | 4                 | 3              |
| Transportation and material moving occupations.....       | 24                | 16             |
| Truck Drivers.....  | 15                | 10             |
| Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers.....  | 15                | 10             |
| Construction laborers.....                                | 8                 | 5              |
| Laborers, except construction.....                        | 4                 | 3              |

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1990 Occupational Classification System developed by the Bureau of the Census.

<sup>2</sup> Not elsewhere classified.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2002.

**Table 4. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by selected demographic characteristics, New England, 2002.**

| <u>Demographic Characteristics</u>         | <b>Fatalities</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Employee status</b>                     |                   |                |
| Wage and salary workers <sup>1</sup> ..... | 124               | 81             |
| Self-employed <sup>2</sup> .....           | 27                | 18             |
| <b>Gender</b>                              |                   |                |
| Women.....                                 | 10                | 7              |
| Men.....                                   | 143               | 93             |
| <b>Age</b>                                 |                   |                |
| Under 24 years.....                        | 9                 | 6              |
| 25-34.....                                 | 28                | 18             |
| 35-44.....                                 | 50                | 33             |
| 45-54.....                                 | 28                | 18             |
| 55-64.....                                 | 29                | 19             |
| 65 years and over.....                     | 9                 | 6              |
| <b>Race</b>                                |                   |                |
| White.....                                 | 127               | 83             |
| Black.....                                 | 7                 | 5              |
| Other or unknown.....                      | 19                | 12             |
| <b>Hispanic origin</b>                     |                   |                |
| Hispanic.....                              | 26                | 17             |

<sup>1</sup> Includes unknown employment status.

<sup>2</sup> 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. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2002.

**Table 5. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and New England, 2002**

| Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>                       | Fatalities    |         |             |         |        |         |               |         |
|--|---------------|---------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|---------------|---------|
|  | United States |         | Connecticut |         | Maine  |         | Massachusetts |         |
|  | Number        | Percent | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent | Number        | Percent |
| <b>Total</b>   | 5,524         | 100     | 39          | 100     | 30     | 100     | 46            | 100     |
| <b>Transportation incidents</b>                      | 2,381         | 43      | 18          | 46      | 25     | 83      | 14            | 30      |
| Highway  | 1,372         | 25      | 9           | 23      | 22     | 73      | 5             | 11      |
| <b>Assaults and violent acts</b>                     | 840           | 15      | 7           | 18      | -      | -       | 9             | 20      |
| Homicides  | 609           | 11      | 3           | 8       | -      | -       | 5             | 11      |
| <b>Contact with objects and equipment</b>            | 873           | 16      | 5           | 13      | -      | -       | 11            | 24      |
| Struck by object                                     | 506           | 9       | -           | -       | -      | -       | 6             | 13      |
| <b>Falls</b>   | 714           | 14      | 4           | 10      | -      | -       | 9             | 20      |
| Fall to lower level                                  | 634           | 13      | 4           | 10      | -      | -       | 9             | 20      |
| <b>Exposure to harmful substances or environment</b> | 538           | 10      | 4           | 10      | -      | -       | -             | -       |
| Contact with electrical current                      | 289           | 5       | -           | -       | -      | -       | -             | -       |
| <b>Fires and explosions</b>                          | 165           | 3       | -           | -       | -      | -       | -             | -       |

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 5. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and New England, 2002**

| Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>                       | Fatalities    |         |              |         |         |         |
|--|---------------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | New Hampshire |         | Rhode Island |         | Vermont |         |
|  | Number        | Percent | Number       | Percent | Number  | Percent |
| <b>Total</b>   | 19            | 100     | 8            | 100     | 11      | 100     |
| <b>Transportation incidents</b>                      | 9             | 47      | 3            | 38      | 3       | 27      |
| Highway  | 8             | 42      | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| <b>Assaults and violent acts</b>                     | -             | -       | 5            | 62      | -       | -       |
| Homicides  | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| <b>Contact with objects and equipment</b>            | 5             | 3       | -            | -       | 4       | 36      |
| Struck by object                                     | -             | -       | -            | -       | 3       | 27      |
| <b>Falls</b>   | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| Fall to lower level                                  | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| <b>Exposure to harmful substances or environment</b> | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| Contact with electrical current                      | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |
| <b>Fires and explosions</b>                          | -             | -       | -            | -       | -       | -       |

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structure.

NOTE: Totals may include categories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Dashes indicate less than 0.5 percent or data that are not available or that do not meet criteria.

### CFOI participating state agencies and telephone numbers

| State                | Agency   | Telephone number |
|----------------------|--|------------------|
| Alabama              | Department of Labor                            | (334) 242-3460   |
| Alaska               | Department of Labor and Workforce Development  | (907) 465-4539   |
| Arizona              | Industrial Commission of Arizona               | (602) 542-3739   |
| Arkansas             | Department of Labor                            | (501) 682-4542   |
| California           | Department of Industrial Relations             | (415) 703-4776   |
| Colorado             | Department of Public Health                    | (303) 692-2173   |
| Connecticut          | Labor Department                               | (860) 566-4380   |
| Delaware             | Department of Labor                            | (302) 761-8223   |
| District of Columbia | Center for Health Statistics                   | (202) 442-5920   |
| Florida              | Department of Labor and Employment Security    | (850) 922-8953   |
| Georgia              | Department of Labor                            | (404) 679-0687   |
| Hawaii               | Department of Labor and Industrial Relations   | (808) 586-9001   |
| Idaho                | Industrial Commission                          | (208) 334-6090   |
| Illinois             | Department of Public Health                    | (217) 782-5750   |
| Indiana              | Department of Labor                            | (317) 232-2668   |
| Iowa                 | Division of Labor Services                     | (515) 281-5151   |
| Kansas               | Department of Health and Environment           | (785) 296-1058   |
| Kentucky             | Labor Cabinet                                  | (502) 564-3070   |
| Louisiana            | Department of Labor                            | (225) 342-3126   |
| Maine                | Bureau of Labor Standards                      | (207) 624-6440   |
| Maryland             | Division of Labor and Industry                 | (410) 767-2356   |
| Massachusetts        | Department of Public Health                    | (617) 624-5627   |
| Michigan             | Department of Consumer and Industry Services   | (517) 322-5258   |
| Minnesota            | Department of Labor and Industry               | (651) 284-5568   |
| Mississippi          | Department of Health                           | (601) 576-7186   |
| Missouri             | Department of Health                           | (573) 751-6155   |
| Montana              | Department of Labor and Industry               | (406) 444-3297   |
| Nebraska             | Workers' Compensation Court                    | (402) 471-3547   |
| Nevada               | Division of Industrial Relations               | (775) 684-7081   |
| New Hampshire        | Department of Public Health                    | (603) 271-4647   |
| New Jersey           | Department of Health and Senior Services       | (609) 984-1863   |
| New Mexico           | Occupational Health and Safety Bureau          | (505) 827-4230   |
| New York State       | Department of Health                           | (518) 402-7900   |
| New York City        | Department of Health                           | (212) 788-4585   |
| North Carolina       | Department of Labor                            | (919) 733-0337   |
| North Dakota         | Bureau of Labor Statistics                     | (312) 353-7200   |
| Ohio                 | Department of Health                           | (614) 466-4183   |
| Oklahoma             | Department of Labor                            | (405) 528-1500   |
| Oregon               | Department of Consumer and Business Services   | (503) 947-7051   |
| Pennsylvania         | Department of Health                           | (717) 783-2548   |
| Rhode Island         | Department of Health                           | (401) 222-2812   |
| South Carolina       | Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation | (803) 734-4298   |
| South Dakota         | Bureau of Labor Statistics                     | (312) 353-7200   |
| Tennessee            | Department of Labor and Workforce Development  | (615) 741-1749   |
| Texas                | Workers' Compensation Commission               | (512) 804-4637   |
| Utah                 | Labor Commission                               | (801) 530-6823   |
| Vermont              | Department of Labor and Industry               | (802) 828-5076   |
| Virginia             | Department of Labor and Industry               | (804) 786-6427   |
| Washington           | Department of Labor and Industries             | (360) 902-5512   |
| West Virginia        | Department of Labor                            | (304) 558-7890   |
| Wisconsin            | Department of Workforce Development            | (608) 266-7850   |
| Wyoming              | Bureau of Labor Statistics                     | (816) 426-2483   |

## 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.

### Identification and verification of work-related fatalities

States may identify additional fatal work injuries after data collection closeout for a reference year. In addition, other fatalities excluded from the published count because of insufficient information to determine work relationship may subsequently be verified as work-related. States have up to one year to update their initial published state counts. This procedure ensures that fatality data are disseminated as quickly as possible and that no legitimate case is excluded from the counts. Thus, each year's report should be considered preliminary until the next year's data are issued. Increases in the published counts based on additional information have averaged less than 100 fatalities per year or less than 1.5 percent of the total.

### Federal/state agency coverage

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.)

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