

Fatal Occupational Injuries Associated with Golf Courses and Country Clubs, 2001-2006

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Golf courses are typically thought of as places of recreation and sport. From 2001 to 2006, however, a total of 106 workers died either at or working for a golf course (henceforth to be referred to as golf-course-related fatalities).¹ Although golf-course-related fatalities accounted for a relatively small percentage of the total number of workplace fatalities from 2001 to 2006, they have trended upward in recent years. As can be seen in the tabulation below, from 2001 to 2003, the average number of golf-course-related fatalities per year was 15, and from 2004 to 2006, the average number of fatalities was 20:

Year	Fatalities
2001	13
2002	21
2003	11
2004	22
2005	24
2006 ²	15

Employment at golf courses and country clubs increased by 18 percent from 2001 to 2006, while total employment increased just 3 percent over the same period.³ Note that employment at golf courses and country clubs varies depending on the time of year. Employment is highest in the summer months and lowest during the winter months. Not surprisingly, as the following tabulation shows, golf-course-related occupational fatalities follow a similar pattern, with more fatalities occurring during the summer months:

Month ⁴	Fatalities
January	7
February	6
March	4
April	9
May	11
June	15
July	10
August	9
September	13
October	7

Month ⁴	Fatalities
November	6
December	9

Of those killed in golf-course-related occupational injuries, 93 percent were male. Hispanic or Latino workers, who constituted 15 percent of all workplace fatalities from 2001 to 2006, accounted for 33 percent (35 fatalities) of all workers killed in golf-course-related fatalities. In addition, among all fatalities at golf courses over the period, 35 of the decedents were born outside of the United States, most frequently (21) in Mexico.

As the following tabulation shows, the most common event⁵ leading to golf-course-related fatalities during the 2001-06 period involved nonhighway vehicle accidents--19 overturned vehicle incidents and 14 other nonhighway incidents:

Event	Fatalities
Overturned vehicle (nonhighway)	19
Other nonhighway incident (excluding overturned vehicle)	14
Fall to a lower level	8
Highway incident	7
Homicide	6
Trench collapse	6
Struck by falling object	6
Suicide	5
Drowning, submersion	5
Airplane accident	5

In 9 of the 19 cases of golf-course-related occupational fatalities involving nonhighway vehicle overturns, the vehicle that the decedent overturned was a riding lawnmower. In 3 of these cases, the decedent drowned after his or her vehicle flipped into a body of water. In 9 cases, a decedent was driving or riding in a golf cart at the time of the fatal incident. Of the 5 aircraft incidents, 3 of the decedents were killed when their aircraft crashed at a golf course. Of the 6 homicides, 4 occurred during the commission of a robbery.

Not surprisingly, as the following tabulation demonstrates, the decedents in golf-course-related occupational fatalities were commonly employed in the golf course and country club industries.⁶

Industry	Fatalities
Golf courses and country clubs	72
Golf course construction ⁷	6
Landscaping, tree and lawn care	5

Similarly, as one might expect, the following tabulation shows that the most common occupation among workers killed in golf-course-related incidents over the 2001-06 period was landscaping.⁸

Occupation	Fatalities
Landscaping occupations	51
Laborers	10
Golf course owner/manager	4

Landscaping occupations accounted for 48 percent of all golf-course-related fatalities over the period, but landscapers accounted for only 3 percent of all occupational fatalities during that same period.

Finally--and not surprisingly--California and Florida, both renowned as prime golfing destinations, had the highest number of golf-course-related fatalities:

State	Fatalities
California	16
Florida	16
South Carolina	8
Nevada	7
North Carolina	5
Texas	5

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Notes

1 Data from 2006 are preliminary. Data from previous years are revised and final. All data are taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics [Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries \(CFOI\)](#) program. In this analysis, a worker is considered to be working for a golf course if he or she was employed in particular industries or if the fatality occurred at a golf course or country club. For 2001 and 2002, when the CFOI program used the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system to define industry, a decedent working in SIC 7992, public golf courses, was included. Those working in SIC 7997, membership sports and recreation clubs, were included unless the case narrative clearly indicated that the person was working for another type of sports club--for example, a gun or shooting club. From 2003 to 2006, when the CFOI program used the [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#) to define industry, a decedent working in NAICS 713910, golf courses and country clubs, was included. In addition, cases with variants of the following terms were examined to determine if they should be included: *golf, course, country club, water hazard, sand trap, bunker, driving range, clubhouse, locker room, pro shop, putting green, flagstick, putter, fairway wood, teebox, dogleg, and cartpath*. Note that fatalities incurred by workers either at or working for miniature golf courses are *not* included in these counts.

2 Data from 2006 are preliminary. For more information, see note 1.

3 Employment data are taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \(QCEW\)](#). Data are for NAICS 713910, golf courses and country clubs, and includes both public and private sector workers. For more information, see the QCEW page on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

4 This is the month the fatal injury was incurred, which may differ from the month when the decedent actually died.

5 The CFOI program uses the [Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System \(OIICS\)](#) to define the event that precipitated the fatal injury as well as the source of the fatal injury. For more information, see the OIICS page on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshoiics.htm>.

6 For data from 2001 and 2002, the CFOI program used the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system to define industry and the Census Bureau's occupational coding system to define occupation. For data from 2003 to 2006, the CFOI program used the [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#) to define industry and the [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\)](#) system to define occupation. The CFOI program considers there to be a break in series due to industry classification differences between the SIC system and NAICS and due to

occupation classification differences between the Census Bureau's occupation codes and the SOC occupation codes; CFOI generally encourages users not to make comparisons over time involving two different classification systems. In this analysis, however, the author determined that the industry and occupation codes were compatible enough to be combined across coding systems.

⁷ Although there is not a specific industry code for golf course construction in either the SIC or NAICS coding structures, the CFOI program tracks the "Actual Industry" in which a person works. This Actual Industry field is a text field that can be used to provide more detail on a particular case. In these 6 cases, the Actual Industry narrative was "golf course construction" or some variant thereof.

⁸ See note 6.

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