

# *National Profiles*

The National Profiles section presents national data on a variety of subjects, including demographic information about the fatally injured workers and the circumstances of the fatal events. The topics in this section are among the most frequently requested by Census of Fatal Occupational Injury data users. ■ The section begins with worker demographic information including race, gender, and age. Information about frequent fatal events, such as falls, highway incidents, and assaults, is presented next. The section concludes with some additional material of interest, including overviews of selected occupations and a presentation dealing with multiple-fatality incidents.

## **NATIONAL RESULTS**

There were 30,824 fatal work injuries in the United States from 1995 through 1999, an average of about 17 fatal work injuries per day. The annual number of cases declined by about 4 percent over the 5-year period, from a high of 6,275 in 1995 to a low of 6,054 in 1999, although overall employment increased by 6 percent over the same period. Fatal work injury rates declined from 4.9 cases per 100,000 workers in 1995 to 4.5 cases in 1999, indicating that the average U.S. workplace was safer in 1999 than it was in 1995.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW**

Men accounted for more than 92 percent of the fatal work injuries during the 1995-99 period. Fatality rates for male workers were over 10 times higher than the rates for female workers, reflecting the different relative risks of jobs traditionally held by men versus those held by women. In addition, older workers were more likely to be fatally injured on the job than were younger workers. Fatal injury rates for workers aged 55 years and older, for example, were 6 times higher than the rates for those aged 20 to 34.

The number of wage and salary workers fatally injured on the job was more than 4 times the number recorded for self-employed workers (24,729 fatalities versus 6,095 fatalities). However, the fatality *rate* for self-employed workers was nearly 3 times higher, on average, than the fatality rate for wage and salary workers.

## **EVENT OVERVIEW**

Deaths due to transportation incidents led all other fatal events during the 1995-99 period, accounting for 42 percent of the 30,824 cases. The primary fatal events in most of these transportation-related fatalities were highway incidents (54 percent of the 13,056 transportation incidents recorded, or 23 percent overall). Workers who were fatally injured in nonhighway incidents (for example, an overturned tractor) or who were struck by vehicles or mobile equipment together accounted for another 12 percent of all fatal work injuries over the 5-year period.

Assaults and violent acts were the second most frequent event recorded during this period, accounting for 18 percent of all cases, although the number of cases

resulting from assaults and violent acts declined sharply between 1995 and 1999. Workplace homicide, which accounts for the majority of assault and violent acts cases, was down from 1,036 cases in 1995 to 651 cases in 1999, a decline of 37 percent.

Another 4,935 workers were fatally injured after contact with objects or equipment. The majority of these workers (57 percent) died when struck by objects, although another 1,428 workers were killed when caught in or compressed by equipment or objects. The highest number of fatal incidents involving workers who were struck by objects or were caught in or compressed by equipment or objects was found in the manufacturing sector.

There was a total of 3,485 fatal falls recorded for this period, or 11 percent of all recorded fatal work injuries. The number of fatal falls rose 11 percent over the 5-year period, from a 5-year low of 651 cases in 1995 to 721 in 1999. More than half of these fatal falls occurred in the construction industry, and fatal falls represented the most frequent type of fatal event for construction workers.

## **MULTIPLE-FATALITY INCIDENTS**

A total of 1,109 incidents involving the death of more than one worker was recorded over the 5-year period, resulting in the death of 2,949 workers. Almost three-quarters of these multiple-fatality incidents involved the death of two workers, with the remainder involving the deaths of three or more workers. The majority of these incidents (58 percent) were transportation related incidents, usually involving aircraft. Another 19 percent involved homicides.