



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Internet: <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/home.htm>

INFORMATION: Gerald Perrins
(215) 597-3282

PLS - 3998

FOR RELEASE:

MEDIA CONTACT: Sheila Watkins
(215) 861-5600

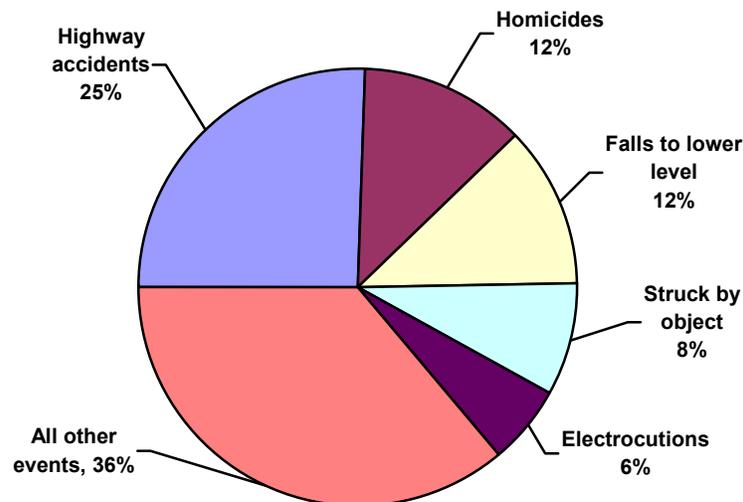
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2004

FATAL WORK INJURIES IN THE SOUTHEAST, 2002

Fatalities resulting from work-related injuries in the Southeast¹ totaled 1,612 in 2002, 71 fewer (-4.2 percent) than in 2001, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the number of job-related fatalities in the Southeast has declined for three consecutive years, dropping 9.5 percent since 1999. A reduction in the number of fatal work injuries from highway crashes (-15) was the largest contributor to the decline for 2002. Still, fatality counts rose in a few categories, the largest of which was homicides (7). The total number of work-related deaths in the Southeast accounted for about 29 percent of the 5,524 casualties occurring nationwide. Nationally, fatal work injuries were down 391 over the year, with falls to a lower level leading the decline. (See table 1.)

Highway crashes made up the largest portion of job-related fatalities (411) in the Southeast in 2002, accounting for about 25 percent of all fatal work injuries, about the same percentage as in 2001. Worksite homicides (197) and deaths resulting from a fall to a lower level (192), each accounted for 12 percent of fatal work injuries. These three events together accounted for nearly half of all fatal workplace injuries in the Southeast, about the same as for the nation as a whole. (See table 1 and chart below.)

Chart 1. Leading causes of fatal workplace injuries in the Southeast, 2002



¹ The 2002 Southeast CFOI release includes all of the South Atlantic Census Division (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the East South Central Census Division (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.).

Two other events resulted in more than 200 deaths in the Southeast. Being struck by an object accounted for 137 deaths or about 8 percent of the total. Another 5.7 percent (92 workers) died from electrocutions. Fatalities from both events were nearly identical to those reported in 2001.

State and metropolitan highlights

In the Southeast, the largest number of fatal work injuries occurred in Florida (354) followed by Georgia (197) and North Carolina (169). These three states also have the largest number of workers in the region. On the other hand, Delaware and the District of Columbia, the jurisdictions with the smallest workforces, had the lowest count of on-the-job fatal injuries at 11 and 8, respectively. Georgia recorded the largest drop in fatal work injuries (-40) followed by Alabama (-36) and North Carolina (-34). Increases in fatal work injuries were highest in Kentucky (+41), and Maryland (+38). Four of the remaining eight jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Delaware, Tennessee, and Virginia), had small numerical changes in the number of fatalities. In each of the past four years, Virginia was the only state in the Southeast to show a decrease in the number of workplace fatalities, dropping nearly 20 percent since 1998 (from 177 to 142). (See table 2.)

Causes of fatal work-related injuries varied across the 13 states. Highway crashes accounted for 33 percent of all on-the-job fatalities in Mississippi, but 22 percent in both Maryland and Virginia. In Maryland, 22 percent of workplace deaths were also due to homicides, while in Kentucky and North Carolina, homicides accounted for only 8 percent. Falls to a lower level comprised 17 percent of work related deaths in North Carolina while, Tennessee attributed only 5 percent to this event. (See table 3.)

Fatal workplace injury data are also available for four metropolitan areas in the Southeast in 2002 -- Atlanta, Georgia; Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida; and Washington-Baltimore, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia-West Virginia. Of the four, the Washington-Baltimore area had the highest number of on-the-job deaths at 122, while the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area recorded the fewest at 26. Homicides accounted for the largest share of workplace fatalities in the Atlanta area, while highway crashes made up the largest percentage in the Tampa and Washington-Baltimore areas. (See table 4.)

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 eleventh 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 below. 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 2002 news release on nonfatal injuries and illnesses are available from BLS by calling (215) 597-3282 or by accessing the website listed below. Incidence rates for 2002 by industry were 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 961 which includes several articles and highlights 2001 fatality data, e-mail your address to BLSinfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov or write to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Suite 610E—The Curtis Center, Philadelphia, PA 19106-3305.

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.

In 2002, there were 108 cases included for which work relationship could not be independently verified; however, the information on the initiating source document for these cases was sufficient to determine that the incident was likely to be job related. Data for these fatalities, which primarily affected self-employed workers, are included in the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries counts. An additional 16 fatalities submitted by states were not included because the initiating source document had insufficient information to determine work relationship and could not be verified by either an independent source document or a follow-up questionnaire.

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 final data are issued. Over the last 5 years, increases in the published counts based on additional information have averaged less than 20 fatalities per year or less than 0.3 percent of the revised total. The BLS national news release issued September 25, 2002, reported a total of 5,900 fatal work injuries for 2001 (excluding work-related fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks on September 11). Since then, an additional 15 fatal work injuries were identified, bringing the total for 2001 to 5,915.

Beginning in 2004, BLS will release final updated numbers earlier than in past years. Previously, updated numbers were released along with the following year's data in the annual news release. Updated numbers will now be released on the BLS internet in the late spring, or about 3 or 4 months earlier than in past years.

Federal/state agency coverage

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether the decedent was working in a job covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or was 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 by each agency.

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 participating states, New York City, and the District of Columbia 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.

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 Financial Services	(850) 413-1611
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 ext. 281
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	U.S. Department of Labor	(312) 353-7253
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	U.S. Department of Labor	(312) 353-7253
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	Department of Employment, Research and Planning	(307) 473-3819

Table 1. Number of fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2001-2002

Event or exposure ^{1/}	Fatalities					
	United States			Southeast		
	2001 ^{2/}	2002	Over-the-year change	2001	2002	Over-the-year change
Total ^{3/}	5915	5524	-391	1683	1612	-71
Transportation incidents	2524	2381	-143	734	695	-39
Highway	1409	1372	-37	426	411	-15
Assaults and violent acts	908	840	-68	242	246	4
Homicides	643	609	-34	190	197	7
Self-inflicted injury	228	199	-29	44	37	-7
Contact with objects and equipment	962	873	-89	252	233	-19
Struck by object	553	506	-47	135	137	2
Falls	810	714	-96	228	211	-17
Fall to lower level	700	634	-66	200	192	-8
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	499	538	39	158	170	12
Electrocutions	285	289	4	89	92	3
Fires and explosions	188	165	-23	42	34	-8

^{1/} Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.

^{2/} The BLS 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 from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

^{3/} Numbers may not add to totals because data are not available or do not meet publication criteria.

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries for the United States and states in the Southeast, 1998-2002

State	Year					1998-2002 average
	1998	1999	2000	2001 ^{1/}	2002	
United States	6055	6054	5920	5915	5524	5894
Southeast	1776	1781	1697	1683	1612	1710
Alabama	135	123	103	138	102	120
Delaware	11	14	13	10	11	12
District of Columbia	13	14	13	11	8	12
Florida	384	345	329	368	354	356
Georgia	202	229	195	237	197	212
Kentucky	117	120	132	105	146	124
Maryland	78	82	84	64	102	82
Mississippi	113	128	125	111	94	114
North Carolina	228	222	234	203	169	211
South Carolina	111	139	115	91	107	113
Tennessee	150	154	160	136	140	148
Virginia	177	154	148	146	142	153
West Virginia	57	57	46	63	40	53

^{1/} The BLS 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 from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2002

Event or exposure ^{1/}	Fatalities							
	United States		Alabama		Delaware		District of Columbia	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	5524	100	102	100	11	100	8	100
Transportation incidents	2381	43	36	35	5	46	-	-
Highway	1372	25	27	27	4	36	-	-
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water	322	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aircraft	192	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	356	6	6	6	-	-	-	-
All other	139	3	3	3	-	-	-	-
Assaults and violent acts	840	15	19	19	-	-	-	-
Homicides	609	11	17	17	-	-	-	-
Self-inflicted injury	199	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contact with objects and equipment	873	16	23	23	-	-	-	-
Struck by object	506	9	13	13	-	-	-	-
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	231	4	3	3	-	-	-	-
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	116	2	5	5	-	-	-	-
Falls	714	13	11	11	-	-	-	-
Fall to lower level	634	11	11	11	-	-	-	-
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	538	10	13	13	-	-	-	-
Electrocutions	289	5	7	7	-	-	-	-
All other	249	5	6	6	-	-	-	-
Fires and explosions	165	3	-	-	-	-	-	-

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2002

Event or exposure ^{1/}	Fatalities							
	Florida		Georgia		Kentucky		Maryland	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	354	100	197	100	146	100	102	100
Transportation incidents	167	47	83	42	70	48	37	36
Highway	92	26	50	25	36	25	22	22
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water	17	5	9	5	27	19	-	-
Aircraft	19	5	10	5	-	-	-	-
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	33	9	13	7	4	3	7	7
All other	6	2	1	1	3	2	8	8
Assaults and violent acts	52	15	34	17	17	12	23	23
Homicides	41	12	28	14	11	8	22	22
Self-inflicted injury	10	3	6	3	5	3	-	-
Contact with objects and equipment	29	8	22	11	20	14	15	15
Struck by object	14	4	10	5	13	9	9	9
Caught in or compressed by equipment or Objects	10	3	5	3	6	4	-	-
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	4	1	7	4	-	-	-	-
Falls	49	14	30	15	20	14	15	15
Fall to lower level	45	13	29	15	17	12	12	12
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	52	15	23	12	15	10	9	9
Electrocutions	27	8	17	9	6	4	6	6
All other	25	7	6	3	9	6	3	3
Fires and explosions	4	1	5	3	3	2	3	3

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2002

Event or exposure ^{1/}	Fatalities							
	Mississippi		North Carolina		South Carolina		Tennessee	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	94	100	169	100	107	100	140	100
Transportation incidents	46	49	76	45	39	36	68	49
Highway	31	33	46	27	25	23	35	25
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water	-	-	8	5	-	-	15	11
Aircraft	-	-	5	3	-	-	5	4
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	7	7	15	9	9	8	10	7
All other	8	9	2	1	5	5	3	2
Assaults and violent acts	15	16	15	9	22	21	27	19
Homicides	11	12	13	8	19	18	21	15
Self-inflicted injury	4	4	-	-	-	-	4	3
Contact with objects and equipment	10	11	31	18	24	22	24	17
Struck by object	7	7	19	11	15	14	16	11
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	-	-	6	4	-	-	6	4
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	-	-	6	4	5	5	-	-
Falls	10	11	28	17	13	12	8	6
Fall to lower level	8	9	28	17	11	10	7	5
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	7	7	15	9	9	8	10	7
Electrocutions	4	4	7	4	-	-	8	6
All other	3	3	8	5	9	8	2	1
Fires and explosions	6	6	4	2	-	-	3	2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in the United States and the Southeast, 2002

Event or exposure ^{1/}	Fatalities			
	Virginia		West Virginia	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	142	100	40	100
Transportation incidents	50	35	18	45
Highway	31	22	12	30
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water	9	6	-	-
Aircraft	-	-	-	-
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	5	4	-	-
All other	5	4	6	15
Assaults and violent acts	22	16	-	-
Homicides	14	10	-	-
Self-inflicted injury	8	6	-	-
Contact with objects and equipment	22	16	13	33
Struck by object	16	11	5	13
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	4	3	4	10
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	-	-	4	10
Falls	24	17	3	8
Fall to lower level	21	15	3	8
Exposure to harmful substances or environment	17	12	-	-
Electrocutions	10	7	-	-
All other	7	5	-	-
Fires and explosions	6	4	-	-

^{1/} 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.

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in selected metropolitan areas, 2002

Metropolitan area	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure ^{1/} (percent)				
		Transportation incidents (percent)		Assaults and violent acts (percent)		
		Total	Highway	Total	Homicides	Self-Inflicted Injury
Atlanta, Georgia	90	32.2	16.7	27.8	24.4	-
Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Florida	26	42.3	-	23.1	19.2	-
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida	41	56.1	34.1	14.6	14.6	-
Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.V.	122	27.0	18.0	22.1	17.2	4.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries by detailed event or exposure in selected metropolitan areas, 2002 continued

Metropolitan area	Event or exposure sector ^{1/} (percent)			
	Contacts with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful substances or environment	Fires and explosions
Atlanta, Georgia	13.3	14.4	10.0	-
Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Florida	-	-	-	-
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida	-	-	14.6	-
Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.V.	17.2	20.5	11.5	-

^{1/} 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 publication criteria.