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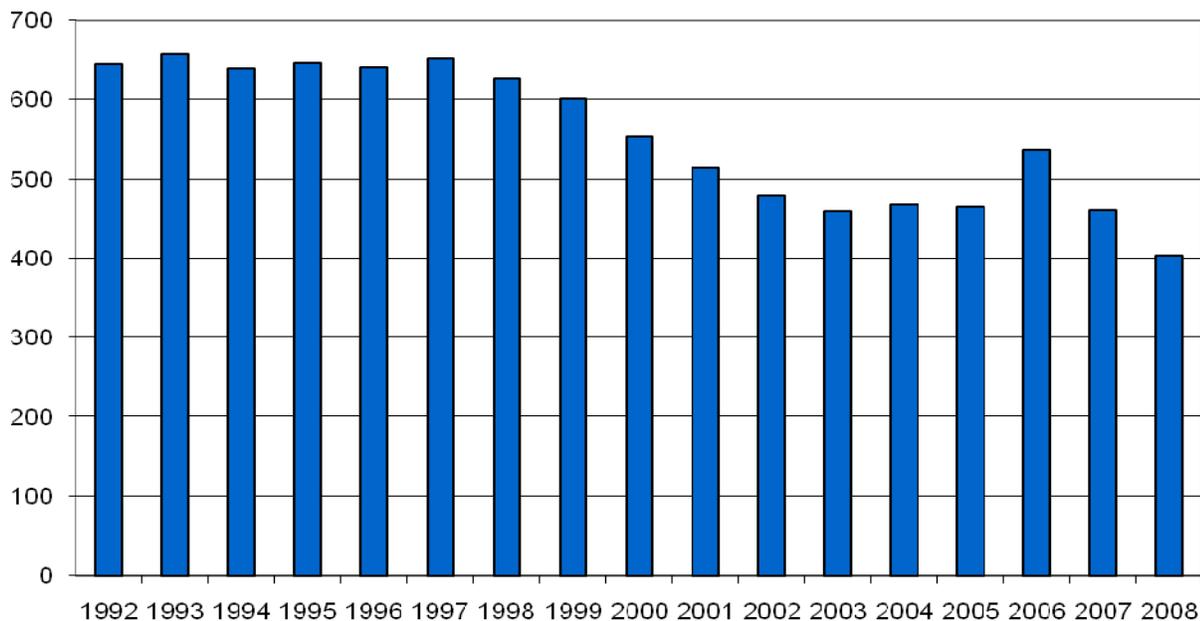
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### WORKPLACE FATALITIES IN CALIFORNIA – 2008

Fatal work injuries in California totaled 404 in 2008 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See chart 1.) Richard J. Holden, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that while these results are preliminary, the 2008 fatality count was the lowest annual total for the State since the Bureau began tracking workplace fatalities in 1992. The 2008 total represents a decrease of 57 from the 461 on-the-job fatalities recorded in 2007. The most frequent type of workplace fatalities in 2008 were highway incidents which resulted in 77 deaths. Other events with more than 30 fatalities included falls to a lower level, homicides, and self-inflicted injuries. These four types of events<sup>1</sup> accounted for just over half of the workplace fatalities in the California. (Final national and State numbers will be released in April 2010.)

**Chart 1. Total workplace fatalities in California: 1992-2008**



<sup>1</sup> Fatal events are categorized into several major groupings including transportation incidents, assaults and violent acts, and falls, among others. These major groups are further broken down into more detailed groups. See the Occupational Injury & Illness Classification System (OIICS) Manual at [www.bls.gov/iif/osh/oic.htm](http://www.bls.gov/iif/osh/oic.htm) for detailed information on the categories of fatalities used in this census.

As noted, highway incidents were the most frequent type of on-the-job fatality in California; this was also true for the nation. The State's 2008 job-related highway fatality count of 77 was unchanged from the series low reported in the previous year. (See table A.) Work-related deaths from highway incidents accounted for 19 percent of California's and 23 percent of the United States' total in 2008.

Fatalities resulting from falls to a lower level in California decreased from 68 in 2007 to 50 in 2008. Fatal work injuries from falls to a lower level accounted for 12 percent of the State's and 11 percent of the United States' fatal occupational injury count in 2008.

Work-related homicides decreased from 68 in 2007 to 48 in 2008, the lowest level reported since 2004. Homicides accounted for 12 percent of California's fatal work injuries and 10 percent of the nation's in 2008.

Fatalities resulting from self-inflicted injuries in California increased from 26 in 2007 to 31 in 2008 and accounted for 8 percent of the work-related deaths in the State. Nationally, this event accounted for 5 percent of the total.

Other events leading to workplace fatalities in the State in 2008 were being caught or compressed by equipment or objects (29), pedestrian incidents (27), being struck by object or equipment (26), and nonhighway incidents, except rail, air, and water (22). Together, these four events were responsible for 26 percent of all fatal work injuries in California in 2008.

**Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in California by selected event groups: 1992-2008**

Year	Total Fatalities	Highway incidents		Falls to a lower level		Homicides		Self-inflicted injuries	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	644	136	21	44	7	159	25	34	5
1993	657	131	20	39	6	204	31	38	6
1994	639	124	19	61	10	164	26	28	4
1995	646	145	22	44	7	152	24	39	6
1996	641	165	26	53	8	157	24	27	4
1997	651	138	21	72	11	131	20	42	6
1998	626	125	20	68	11	108	17	38	6
1999	602	162	27	56	9	76	13	35	6
2000	553	131	24	63	11	78	14	31	6
2001	515	109	21	76	15	77	15	22	4
2002	478	111	23	43	9	63	13	31	6
2003	459	90	20	62	14	63	14	20	4
2004	467	94	20	66	14	48	10	13	3
2005	465	78	17	49	11	68	15	21	5
2006	537	85	16	88	16	62	12	20	4
2007	461	77	17	68	15	68	15	26	6
2008	404	77	19	50	12	48	12	31	8

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

Nationwide, a total of 5,071 fatal work injuries were recorded in 2008, a decrease of 10 percent from the revised total of 5,657 fatal work injuries reported for 2007. While the 2008 results are considered preliminary, this figure represents the smallest annual total since the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) program was first conducted in 1992. (See table B.) Highway incidents in 2008 accounted for 23 percent of all fatal work injuries and continued to lead all other events in the frequency of on-the-job fatalities. Still, the 2008 count of 1,149 fatal highway incidents was the lowest annual total since the census began in 1992. The 576 fatal falls to a lower level in 2008 was the lowest since 1993

when 534 fatalities were reported; the 2008 total represents a 23-percent decline from 2007. The number of workers (508) who were fatally injured from being struck by an object or equipment in 2008 was slightly higher than the series low recorded in 2007 (504 fatalities) and 16 percent lower than the series high recorded in 2005 (607 fatalities).

Nationally, workplace homicides decreased by 18 percent from 628 in 2007 to 517 in 2008. The 2008 total is the lowest since the census began and has declined 52 percent from the high of 1,080 reported in 1994. Workplace suicides rose from 196 cases in 2007 to 251 cases in 2008, an increase of 28 percent and the highest number ever reported by the fatality census.

**Table B. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States by selected event groups: 1992-2008**

Year	Total Fatalities	Highway incidents		Falls to a lower level		Homicides		Struck by object or equipment	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	6,217	1,158	19	507	8	1,044	17	557	9
1993	6,331	1,242	20	534	8	1,074	17	565	9
1994	6,632	1,343	20	580	9	1,080	16	591	9
1995	6,275	1,346	21	578	9	1,036	17	574	9
1996	6,202	1,346	22	610	10	927	15	582	9
1997	6,238	1,393	22	653	10	860	14	579	9
1998	6,055	1,442	24	625	10	714	12	520	9
1999	6,054	1,496	25	634	10	651	11	585	10
2000	5,920	1,365	23	659	11	677	11	571	10
2001 <sup>1</sup>	5,915	1,409	24	700	12	673	11	553	9
2002	5,534	1,373	25	638	12	609	11	505	9
2003	5,575	1,353	24	604	11	632	11	531	10
2004	5,764	1,398	24	738	13	559	10	602	10
2005	5,734	1,437	25	664	12	567	10	607	11
2006	5,840	1,356	23	738	13	540	9	598	10
2007 <sup>2</sup>	5,657	1,414	25	746	13	628	11	504	9
2008 <sup>3</sup>	5,071	1,149	23	576	11	517	10	508	10

<sup>1</sup> Totals for 2001 exclude fatalities from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

<sup>2</sup> Totals for 2007 are revised and final. The BLS national news release issued August 20, 2008, reported a total of 5,488 fatal work injuries for calendar year 2007. Since then, an additional 169 job-related fatalities were identified, bringing the total job-related fatality count for 2007 to 5,657.

<sup>3</sup> Totals for 2008 are preliminary.

### Key characteristics of fatal work injuries in California

- Men accounted for 93 percent (376) of the work-related fatalities in California. Transportation incidents, which include highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail fatalities, accounted for 37 percent of these deaths. Assaults and violent acts made up 21 percent of the fatal injuries to men, while contact with objects and equipment made up 16 percent. Twenty-eight women were fatally injured on the job, with 14 of these deaths resulting from transportation incidents.
- Forty-three percent of those who died from a workplace injury in California were white, non-Hispanic (174); 40 percent were Hispanic or Latino (163), 8 percent were Asian (33), and 6 percent were black, non-Hispanic (26). Transportation incidents were the most frequent type of fatality for white, non-Hispanic workers; Hispanic or Latino workers; and black, non-Hispanic workers. Among Asians, assaults and violent acts was the most frequent type of fatal event.

## **Key characteristics of fatal work injuries in California - continued**

- Workers 25-54 years old—the prime working age group—made up 66 percent, or 268, of the State’s work-related fatalities in 2008. Nationally, 63 percent of worker deaths belonged to this age group.
- Eighty-three percent of workers killed on the job worked for wages and salaries, the rest were self-employed. The leading cause of death for wage and salary workers as well as self-employed workers was transportation incidents.
- Two industry sectors made up 29 percent of the workplace fatalities in the State— construction (63) and transportation and warehousing (56). Falls accounted for 23 of the fatal occupational injuries in construction, while transportation incidents resulted in 38 work-related deaths in the transportation and warehousing sector.
- Workers in transportation and material moving occupations had the highest number of workplace fatalities at 91, followed by those in the construction and extraction occupations with 60. Combined these two occupational groups accounted for 37 percent of all fatal work injuries in California. Transportation incidents were the most frequent cause of fatal injuries in the transportation and material moving occupations, while in the construction and extraction occupations, falls were the most frequent event.

Additional Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries data are available on the BLS Internet site at [www.bls.gov/iif/](http://www.bls.gov/iif/). Data can be accessed in two ways, through Create Customized Tables, 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. For personal assistance or further information on the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Western Information Office at 415-625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT. Information on the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and other programs and surveys are available on our Web site at [www.bls.gov/ro9/](http://www.bls.gov/ro9/).

## Technical Note

### Background of the program

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, part of the BLS occupational safety and health statistics program, compiles a count of all fatal work injuries occurring in the U.S. in each calendar year. The program uses diverse State, federal, and independent data sources to identify, verify, and describe fatal work injuries. This assures counts are as complete and accurate as possible.

For technical information about the CFOI program, please go to the BLS Handbook of Methods on the BLS web site here: [http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch9\\_a1.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch9_a1.htm). The technical information and definitions for the CFOI Program are in Chapter 9, Part III of the BLS Handbook of Methods.

### 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.

### Acknowledgments

BLS thanks the California Department of Industrial Relations 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 entities 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 Federal Railroad Administration; 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.

Detailed statistics on fatal occupational injuries in California can be obtained from tables at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2008/iiffi06.htm>.