

FATAL FALLS IN THE WORKPLACE

Falls continued to rise in 1996, accounting for 11 percent of the fatal work injuries. One-fifth were from or through roofs; falls from scaffolding and from ladders each accounted for about one-seventh. While still relatively small in number, falls from nonmoving vehicles rose by almost two-thirds over the previous year.

The demographics of those sustaining fatal falls mirrored those of all workers fatally injured during the year. They were overwhelmingly white, male, wage and salaried workers and most were in their prime working ages (25 to 54 years old). Over one-fourth of the fatal fall victims, however, were 55 years and older--double that age group's share of the work force.

Not surprisingly, falls accounted for about one-third of the fatal injuries to construction workers, given that working at elevations is common for several of the construction trades, such as roofers and structural metal workers. The construction industry as a whole accounted for half of the fatal falls. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing; manufacturing; and services each contributed about one-tenth of the fatal falls to workers.

FALLS

Job-related fall fatalities by selected characteristics, 1996

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Total	684	100	Total	684	100
Employee status			Occupation		
Wage and salary workers	568	83	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	66	10
Self-employed	116	17	Executive, administrative, and managerial jobs	41	6
			Professional specialty	25	4
Gender			Technical, sales, and administrative support jobs	24	4
Men	656	96	Sales occupations	17	2
Women	28	4	Service occupations	39	6
			Service occupations, except protective and household	29	4
Age			Janitors and cleaners	18	3
16 to 19 years	9	1	Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	73	11
20 to 24 years	32	5	Farm operators and managers	32	5
25 to 34 years	141	21	Farmers, except horticultural	24	4
35 to 44 years	152	22	Other agricultural and related occupations	32	5
45 to 54 years	149	22	Farm occupations, except managerial	10	1
55 to 64 years	129	19	Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	21	3
65 years and over	70	10	Forestry and logging occupations	8	1
			Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	293	43
Race			Mechanics and repairers	32	5
White	599	88	Construction trades	235	34
Black	37	5	Carpenters and apprentices	50	7
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut	4	1	Electricians and apprentices	18	3
Asian and Pacific Islander	9	1	Painters, construction and maintenance	26	4
Other	13	2	Roofers	41	6
Unspecified	22	3	Structural metal workers	41	6
			Precision production occupations	19	3
Hispanic origin			Operators, fabricators, and laborers	179	26
Hispanic	91	13	Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	33	5
			Machine operators and tenders, except precision	12	2
Type of fall			Welders and cutters	17	2
Fall to lower level	607	89	Transportation and material moving occupations	45	7
Fall down stairs or steps	15	2	Truck drivers	34	5
Fall from floor, dock, or ground level	27	4	Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	101	15
Fall through existing floor opening	13	2	Construction laborers	65	10
Fall from loading dock	4	1	Laborers, except construction	28	4
Fall from ground level to lower level	4	1	Military	5	1
Fall from ladder	95	14	Other or unspecified	5	1
Fall from piled or stacked material	4	1			
Fall from roof	148	22	Industry		
Fall through existing roof opening	15	2	Private industry	652	95
Fall through roof surface	21	3	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	74	11
Fall through skylight	16	2	Agricultural production, crops	18	3
Fall from roof edge	46	7	Agricultural production, livestock	13	2
Fall from scaffold, staging	88	13	Agricultural services	37	5
Fall from building girders or other structural steel	38	6	Landscape and horticultural services	33	5
Fall from nonmoving vehicle	55	8	Ornamental shrub and tree services	21	3
Jump to lower level	12	2	Mining	9	1
Fall on same level	49	7	Construction	337	49
Fall to floor, walkway, or other surface	39	6	General building contractors	82	12
Fall onto or against objects	7	1	Residential building construction	34	5
Other or unspecified	16	2	Nonresidential building construction	43	6
			Heavy construction, except building	22	3
			Special trade contractors	230	34
			Plumbing, heating, air-conditioning	14	2
			Painting and paper hanging	28	4
			Electrical work	14	2
			Masonry, stonework, and plastering	24	4
			Carpentry and floor work	17	2
			Roofing, siding, and sheet metal work	65	10
			Miscellaneous special trade contractors	66	10
			Structural steel erection	42	6
			Manufacturing	53	8
			Transportation and public utilities	36	5
			Trucking and warehousing	21	3
			Wholesale trade	27	4
			Retail trade	19	3
			Finance, insurance, and real estate	13	2
			Real estate	11	2
			Services	77	11
			Business services	20	3
			Other or unspecified	7	1
			Government	32	5
			Federal	7	1
			Local	22	3

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Occupational Injuries, 1996

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal