



For Release: Tuesday, March 15, 2022

22-369-ATL

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Fatal Occupational Injuries in North Carolina — 2020

Fatal work injuries totaled 189 in 2020 for North Carolina, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that the number of work-related fatalities in North Carolina was up from the previous year. (See [chart 1](#).) Fatal occupational injuries in the state have ranged from a high of 234 in 2000 to a low of 109 in 2013.

Nationwide, a total of 4,764 fatal work injuries were recorded in 2020, an 11-percent decrease from 5,333 in 2019, according to the results from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI). The 4,764 fatal occupational injuries in 2020 represents the lowest annual number since 2013.

Chart 1. Number of fatal occupational injuries by employee status, North Carolina, 2011–20



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

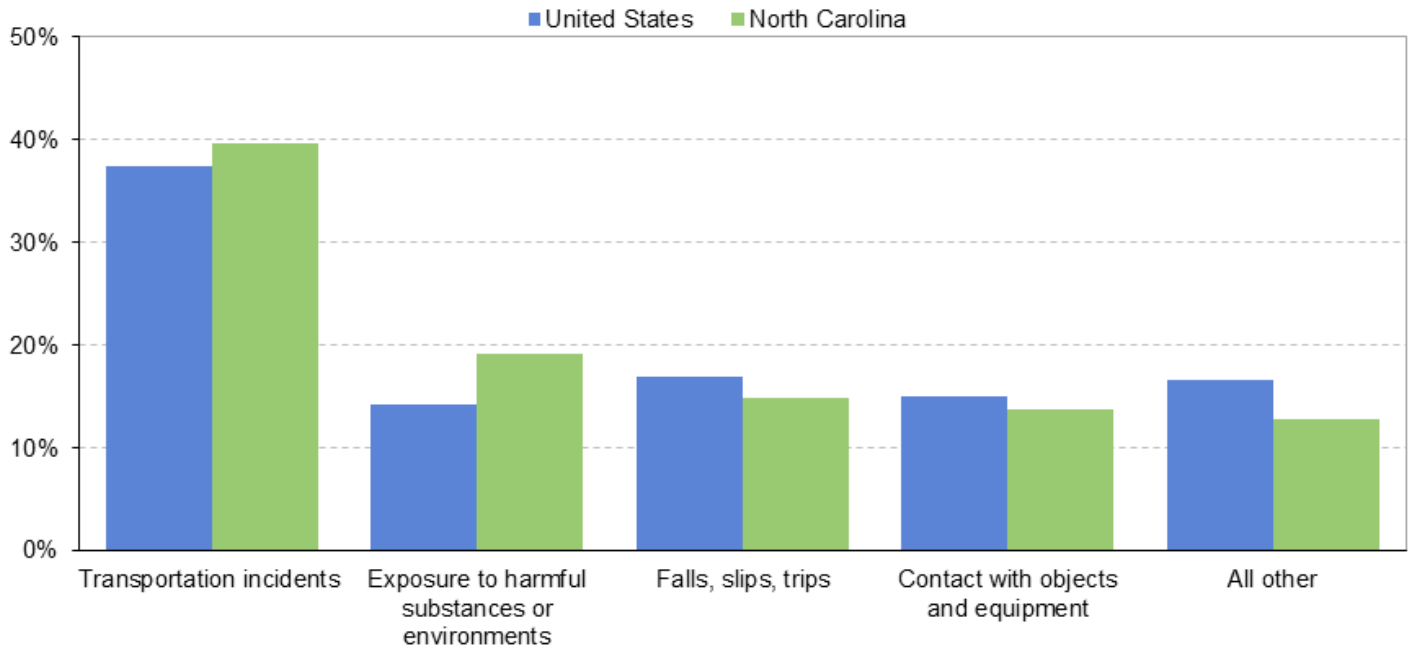
Fatal event or exposure

In North Carolina, transportation incidents resulted in 75 fatal work injuries and exposure to harmful substances or environments accounted for 36 fatalities. These two major categories accounted for 59 percent of all fatal workplace injuries in the state. (See [chart 2](#) and [table 1](#).) Worker deaths from transportation incidents were similar to the previous year, while worker fatalities due to exposure to harmful substances or environments were up from 13.

Falls, slips, and trips was the third-most frequent fatal work event with 28 fatalities, down from 36 in the prior year. Contact with objects and equipment resulted in 26 work-related deaths, compared to 29 in 2019.

Nationally, transportation incidents were the most frequent fatal workplace event in 2020, accounting for 37 percent of fatal work injuries. Falls, slips, and trips was the second-most common fatal event (17 percent).

Chart 2. Percent distribution of total fatal occupational injuries by event, United States and North Carolina, 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Industry

The private construction industry sector had the highest number of fatalities in North Carolina with 43, up from 39 in the previous year. Falls, slips, and trips resulted in 15 of the 43 fatalities in the industry. The specialty trade contractors subsector accounted for 29, or 67 percent, of the fatal workplace injuries in the construction industry. (See [table 2.](#))

The private transportation and warehousing industry sector had 26 fatal workplace injuries. Transportation incidents resulted in 17 worker fatalities in the industry. The general freight trucking industry group accounted for 15, or 58 percent, of the fatal injuries in the transportation and warehousing industry.

Occupation

The transportation and material moving occupational group had the highest number of fatal workplace injuries with 45. (See [table 3.](#)) Motor vehicle operators accounted for 33 of the 45 fatalities among transportation and material moving workers. The construction and extraction occupational group had the second highest number of fatal workplace injuries with 38. Carpenters accounted for eight of the work-related deaths within the construction and extraction group.

Additional highlights

- Men accounted for 91 percent of the work-related fatalities in North Carolina, similar to the national share. (See [table 4.](#)) Transportation incidents made up 38 percent of the fatalities for men in North Carolina.
- White non-Hispanics accounted for 66 percent of those who died from a workplace injury. Nationwide, this group accounted for 61 percent of work-related deaths.
- Workers 25-54 years old accounted for 59 percent of the state’s work-related fatalities in 2020, compared to 56 percent of on-the-job fatalities nationally.

- Of the 189 fatal work injuries in North Carolina, 89 percent worked for wages and salaries; the remainder were self-employed. The most frequent fatal event for wage and salary workers and self-employed workers was transportation incidents.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

CFOI reports fatal workplace injuries only. These may include fatal workplace injuries complicated by an illness such as COVID-19. Fatal workplace illnesses not precipitated by an injury are not in scope for CFOI. CFOI does not report any illness related information, including COVID-19. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-on-workplace-injuries-and-illnesses-compensation-and-occupational-requirements.htm.

Technical Note

Background of the program. The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Safety and Health Statistics (OSHS) program, is a count of all fatal work injuries occurring in the U.S. during the calendar year. The CFOI uses a variety of state, federal, and independent data sources to identify, verify, and describe fatal work injuries. This ensures counts are as complete and accurate as possible. For the 2020 national data, over 21,600 unique source documents were reviewed as part of the data collection process. For technical information and definitions for the CFOI, see the BLS Handbook of Methods at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cfoi/home.htm and the CFOI definitions at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfdef.htm.

Federal/State agency coverage. The CFOI includes data for all fatal work injuries, some of which may be outside the scope of other agencies or regulatory coverage. Comparisons between CFOI counts and those released by other agencies should account for the different coverage requirements and definitions used by each agency. For more information on the scope of CFOI, see www.bls.gov/iif/cfoiscope.htm and www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cfoi/concepts.htm.

Acknowledgments. BLS thanks the North Carolina Department of Labor 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 provided 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 Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation divisions); the Federal Railroad Administration; the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor, and industrial relations and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Telecommunications Relay Service: 7-1-1.

Table 1. Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, North Carolina, 2019–20

Event or exposure ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	186	189	100
Violence and other injuries by persons or animals.....	30	--	--
Transportation incidents.....	74	75	40
Aircraft incidents.....	5	2	1
Pedestrian vehicular incident.....	15	17	9
Water vehicle incidents.....	--	4	2
Roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicle.....	43	40	21
Roadway collision with other vehicle.....	25	22	12
Nonroadway incident involving motorized land vehicles.....	8	12	6
Nonroadway noncollision incident.....	6	9	5
Fires and explosions.....	3	--	--
Falls, slips, trips.....	36	28	15
Falls on same level.....	7	6	3
Falls to lower level.....	29	22	12
Other fall to lower level.....	26	19	10
Exposure to harmful substances or environments.....	13	36	19
Exposure to electricity.....	1	6	3
Exposure to other harmful substances.....	12	26	14
Nonmedical use of drugs or alcohol--unintentional overdose.....	8	24	13
Contact with objects and equipment.....	29	26	14
Struck by object or equipment.....	19	19	10
Struck by falling object or equipment--other than powered vehicle.....	12	10	5
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects.....	6	4	2
Caught in running equipment or machinery.....	6	4	2
Overexertion and bodily reaction.....	--	--	--

Footnotes:

(1) Based on the BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System (OIICS) 2.01 implemented for 2011 data forward.

NOTE: Data for all years are final. Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. For complete information on how the data are coded and presented see our definitions page at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfdef.htm. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. CFI fatal injury counts exclude illness-related deaths unless precipitated by an injury event.

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries by industry, North Carolina, 2019–20

Industry ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	186	189	100
Private industry ⁽²⁾	170	173	92
Goods producing.....	--	--	--
Natural resources and mining.....	11	18	10
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.....	11	18	10
Crop production.....	4	8	4
Construction.....	39	43	23
Construction.....	39	43	23
Construction of buildings.....	--	7	4
Heavy and civil engineering construction.....	5	7	4
Specialty trade contractors.....	--	29	15
Manufacturing.....	--	21	11
Service providing ⁽³⁾	--	--	--
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	--	42	22
Utilities.....	--	2	1
Wholesale trade.....	5	3	2
Retail trade.....	8	11	6
Transportation and warehousing.....	--	26	14
Truck transportation.....	--	18	10
General freight trucking.....	--	15	8
Information.....	--	--	--
Financial activities.....	--	--	--
Professional and business services.....	--	--	--
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services.....	25	23	12
Administrative and support services.....	--	22	12
Services to buildings and dwellings.....	--	16	8
Landscaping services.....	--	14	7
Educational and health services.....	--	4	2
Health care and social assistance.....	--	4	2
Leisure and hospitality.....	17	--	--
Accommodation and food services.....	14	8	4
Other services, except public administration.....	9	6	3
Government ⁽⁴⁾	16	16	8
Federal government.....	--	3	2
State government.....	4	1	1
Local government.....	10	12	6

Footnotes:

(1) CFOI has used several versions of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) since 2003 to define industry. For complete information on the version of NAICS used in this year, see our definitions page at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdef.htm

(2) Cases where ownership is unknown are included in private industry counts.

(3) Cases where industry is unknown are included in the service sector counts.

(4) Includes fatal injuries to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry. Cases classified as foreign government and other government are included in all government counts, but not displayed separately.

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Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation, North Carolina, 2019–20

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	186	189	100
Management occupations	10	11	6
Business and financial operations occupations	--	--	--
Computer and mathematical occupations	--	--	--
Architecture and engineering occupations	--	--	--
Life, physical, and social science occupations.....	3	--	--
Community and social service occupations	--	--	--
Legal occupations	--	--	--
Educational instruction and library occupations	--	--	--
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	--	--	--
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations.....	--	--	--
Healthcare support occupations.....	--	--	--
Protective service occupations.....	7	9	5
Food preparation and serving related occupations	7	3	2
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	18	19	10
Grounds maintenance workers	16	12	6
Personal care and service occupations.....	--	--	--
Sales and related occupations	9	5	3
Office and administrative support occupations.....	5	--	--
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	6	11	6
Construction and extraction occupations	34	38	20
Construction trades workers.....	29	35	19
Carpenters.....	--	8	4
Carpet, floor, and tile installers and finishers.....	--	1	1
Construction laborers	10	5	3
Drywall installers, ceiling tile installers, and tapers	3	3	2
Electricians	1	3	2
Painters and paperhangers.....	--	3	2
Roofers.....	6	5	3
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	16	20	11
Production occupations	5	12	6
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	59	45	24
Motor vehicle operators.....	43	33	17
Material moving workers	9	11	6
Industrial truck and tractor operators.....	--	3	2
Laborers and material movers.....	--	6	3

Footnotes:

(1) CFOI has used several versions of the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) system since 2003 to define occupation. For complete information on the version of SOC used in this year, see our definitions page at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfdef.htm. Cases where occupation is unknown are included in the total.

NOTE: Data for all years are final. Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. For complete information on how the data are coded and presented see our definitions page at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfdef.htm. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. CFOI fatal injury counts exclude illness-related deaths unless precipitated by an injury event.

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries by selected demographic characteristics, North Carolina, 2019–20

Worker characteristics	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	186	189	100
Employee status			
Wage and salary workers ⁽¹⁾	156	168	89
Self-employed ⁽²⁾	30	21	11
Gender			
Men.....	173	172	91
Women.....	13	17	9
Age ⁽³⁾			
20 to 24 years.....	11	11	6
25 to 34 years.....	24	40	21
35 to 44 years.....	25	35	19
45 to 54 years.....	35	36	19
55 to 64 years.....	49	36	19
65 years and over.....	38	26	14
Race or ethnic origin ⁽⁴⁾			
White, non-Hispanic.....	120	124	66
Black or African-American, non-Hispanic.....	40	31	16
Hispanic or Latino.....	19	30	16

Footnotes:

(1) May include volunteers and workers receiving other types of compensation. Cases where employment status is unknown are included in the counts of wage and salary workers.

(2) Includes self-employed workers, owners of unincorporated businesses and farms, paid and unpaid family workers, and may include some owners of incorporated businesses or members of partnerships.

(3) Information may not be available for all age groups.

(4) Persons identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. The race categories shown exclude data for Hispanics and Latinos. Cases where ethnicity is unknown are included in counts of non-Hispanic workers.

NOTE: Data for all years are final. Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. For complete information on how the data are coded and presented see our definitions page at www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfdef.htm. Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. CFOI fatal injury counts exclude illness-related deaths unless precipitated by an injury event.