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Fatal Work Injuries in Alaska – 2020

Fatal work injuries totaled 31 in 2020 for Alaska, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Chris Rosenlund noted that the number of work-related fatalities in Alaska was down from the previous year. (See [chart 1](#).) Fatal occupational injuries in the state have ranged from a high of 91 in 1992 to a low of 14 in 2015.

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

Chart 1. Number of fatal occupational injuries, Alaska, 2011–20

Year	Total	Wage and salary	Self-employed
2011.....	39	30	9
2012.....	31	26	5
2013.....	32	28	4
2014.....	30	28	2
2015.....	14	12	
2016.....	35	32	3
2017.....	33	25	8
2018.....	32	28	4
2019.....	51	43	8
2020.....	31	24	7

Fatal event or exposure

In Alaska, transportation incidents resulted in 18 fatal work injuries. Violence and other injuries by persons or animals accounted for five fatalities and exposure to harmful substances or environments accounted for four fatalities. These three major categories accounted for 87 percent of all fatal workplace injuries in the state. (See [chart 2](#) and [table 1](#).) Worker deaths from transportation incidents were down from 32 over the year. Worker fatalities due to violence or other injuries by persons or animals were down from 11 and deaths due to exposure to harmful substances or environments were unchanged over the year.

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 Alaska, 2020

Event	United States	Alaska
Transportation incidents.....	37.3	58.1

Chart 2. Percent distribution of total fatal occupational injuries by event, United States and Alaska, 2020 - Continued

Event	United States	Alaska
Violence and other injuries by persons or animals.....	14.8	16.1
Exposure to harmful substances or environments.....	14.1	12.9
Fires and explosions.....	1.5	3.2
All other.....	32.3	9.7

Industry

The private agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry sector had the highest number of fatalities in Alaska with 9, down from 11 in the previous year. (See [table 2.](#)) Transportation incidents resulted in 7 of the 9 fatalities in the industry.

The transportation and warehousing industry sector had 8 fatal workplace injuries, down from 11 in the previous year. The air transportation subsector accounted for 5 of the 8 fatal injuries in this industry.

Occupation

The transportation and material moving occupational group had the highest number of fatal workplace injuries with 10. (See [table 3.](#)) Commercial pilots accounted for 4 of the 10 fatalities among transportation and material moving workers. The farming, fishing, and forestry occupational group had the second highest number of fatal workplace injuries with eight. Within the group, fishing and hunting workers accounted for all eight occupational fatalities.

Additional highlights:

- White non-Hispanics accounted for 74 percent of those who died from a workplace injury. (See [table 4.](#)) Nationwide, this group accounted for 61 percent of work-related deaths.
- Workers 25-54 years old accounted for 52 percent of the state’s work-related fatalities in 2020, compared to 56 percent of on-the-job fatalities nationally.
- Of the 31 fatal work injuries in Alaska, 77 percent worked for wages and salaries; the remainder were self-employed. The most frequent fatal event for both wage and salary workers and self-employed workers was transportation incidents.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and 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 on the BLS website 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 Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 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.

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

Event or exposure ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	51	31	100
Violence and other injuries by persons or animals.....	11	5	16
Intentional injury by person	10	5	16
Intentional injury by other person	2	1	3
Shooting by other person--intentional	2	1	3
Self-inflicted injury--intentional	8	4	13
Transportation incidents.....	32	18	58
Aircraft incidents.....	13	6	19
Aircraft crash during takeoff or landing.....	8	2	6
Aircraft crash during takeoff or landing--between air vehicles.....	--	1	3
Aircraft crash during takeoff or landing--into structure, object, or ground	8	1	3
Other in-flight crash	5	4	13
Other in-flight crash between air vehicles	1	3	10
Other in-flight crash into structure, object, or ground	--	1	3
Water vehicle incidents.....	11	9	29
Capsized or sinking water vehicle	5	4	13
Fires and explosions	--	1	3
Fires	--	1	3
Collapsing building, structure, or structural element during fire	--	1	3
Exposure to harmful substances or environments	4	4	13

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 <https://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 2. Fatal occupational injuries by industry, Alaska, 2020

Industry ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	51	31	100
Private industry ⁽²⁾	40	29	94
Goods producing	--	--	--
Natural resources and mining	11	11	35
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	11	9	29
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction ⁽³⁾	--	2	6
Mining (except oil and gas)	--	2	6
Metal ore mining	--	2	6
Gold ore and silver ore mining	--	2	6
Gold ore mining	--	2	6
Construction	3	3	10
Construction	3	3	10
Specialty trade contractors.....	--	3	10
Service providing ⁽⁴⁾	--	--	--
Trade, transportation, and utilities	--	9	29
Utilities	--	1	3
Utilities	--	1	3
Water, sewage and other systems	--	1	3
Water supply and irrigation systems	--	1	3
Transportation and warehousing.....	11	8	26
Air transportation	4	5	16
Scheduled air transportation	1	1	3
Scheduled air transportation	1	1	3
Scheduled passenger air transportation.....	--	1	3
Nonscheduled air transportation	3	4	13
Nonscheduled air transportation	3	4	13
Nonscheduled chartered passenger air transportation	--	2	6
Nonscheduled chartered freight air transportation	--	1	3
Support activities for transportation.....	--	1	3
Support activities for road transportation.....	--	1	3
Motor vehicle towing.....	--	1	3
Leisure and hospitality.....	1	3	10
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	--	1	3
Amusement, gambling, and recreation industries	--	1	3
Other amusement and recreation industries	--	1	3
Accommodation and food services	1	2	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 <https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdef.htm>.

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

(3) Includes fatal injuries at all establishments categorized as Mining (Sector 21) in the North American Industry Classification System, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in oil and gas extraction.

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

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Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation, Alaska, 2020

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	51	31	100
Food preparation and serving related occupations.....	2	1	3
Supervisors of food preparation and serving workers.....	1	1	3
Supervisors of food preparation and serving workers.....	1	1	3
Chefs and head cooks.....	1	1	3
Personal care and service occupations.....	--	1	3
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	10	8	26
Fishing and hunting workers.....	10	8	26
Fishing and hunting workers.....	10	8	26
Fishing and hunting workers.....	10	8	26
Construction and extraction occupations.....	5	4	13
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	11	10	32
Air transportation workers.....	6	5	16
Aircraft pilots and flight engineers.....	6	5	16
Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers.....	1	1	3
Commercial pilots.....	5	4	13
Motor vehicle operators.....	3	4	13

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 <https://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 <https://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, Alaska, 2019–20

Worker characteristics	2019	2020	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total.....	51	31	100
Employee status			
Wage and salary workers ⁽¹⁾	43	24	77
Self-employed ⁽²⁾	8	7	23
Gender			
Men.....	47	--	--
Women.....	4	--	--
Age ⁽³⁾			
20 to 24 years.....	5	4	13
25 to 34 years.....	13	6	19
35 to 44 years.....	9	3	10
45 to 54 years.....	11	7	23
55 to 64 years.....	10	7	23
65 years and over.....	3	4	13
Race or ethnic origin ⁽⁴⁾			
White, non-Hispanic.....	38	23	74
Black or African-American, non-Hispanic.....	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino.....	--	--	--

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 <https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdef.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.