



Athena Research Corporation
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Selected Summary of Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Report on Workplace Violence in 2005

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Overview

On August 10, 2006, the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its annual report, *The National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2005*, reporting on fatal workplace injuries. The total number of workplace fatalities was 5,702, a decrease of 1% from 2004. Of these, there were 564 workplace homicides, up 1% from 2004. According to the report and supplementary information:

- ◆ Workplace homicides **increased** by 1% from 2004 to 2005.
- ◆ Convenience store homicides **increased** by 37% from 30 in 2004 to 41 in 2005.
- ◆ Gas station homicides **increased** by 8%, from 38 homicides in 2004 to 41 in 2005.
- ◆ The number of *robbery homicides* in the workplace **decreased** by 12% from 240 in 2004 to 211 in 2005.
- ◆ There has been a 48% **decrease** in workplace homicides since 1994, when the number was at an all time high of 1,080 (564 in 2005).
- ◆ Assaults and violent acts accounted for 14% of all workplace fatalities in 2005.
- ◆ Of women, 24% of all workplace deaths were due to homicide in 2005. For men, 9% of all workplace deaths were due to homicide.
- ◆ Workplace suicides **decreased** 14% from 206 in 2004, to 177 in 2005, the lowest number since reporting began.

Workplace Homicides in Selected Industries

Table 1 shows the number of workplace homicides in selected industries with changes over the past year. Total workplace homicide increased from 2004 to 2005 by

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1%. Retail trade homicides increased at a greater rate of 12%. Within retail trade, convenience store homicides increased by 37%. Eating/drinking establishments experienced a 1% increase. Gas/service stations saw an 8% increase. Over the past year, workplace homicides decreased for taxicabs by 38%.

Table 1: Workplace Homicides in Selected Industries

Industry	2004	2005	Percentage Change
Total workplace homicides	559	564	+1%
Retail trade	163	182	+12%
Convenience stores	30	41	+37%
Eating/drinking establishments	67	68	+1%
Gas/service stations	38	41	+8%
Taxicab	37	23	-38%

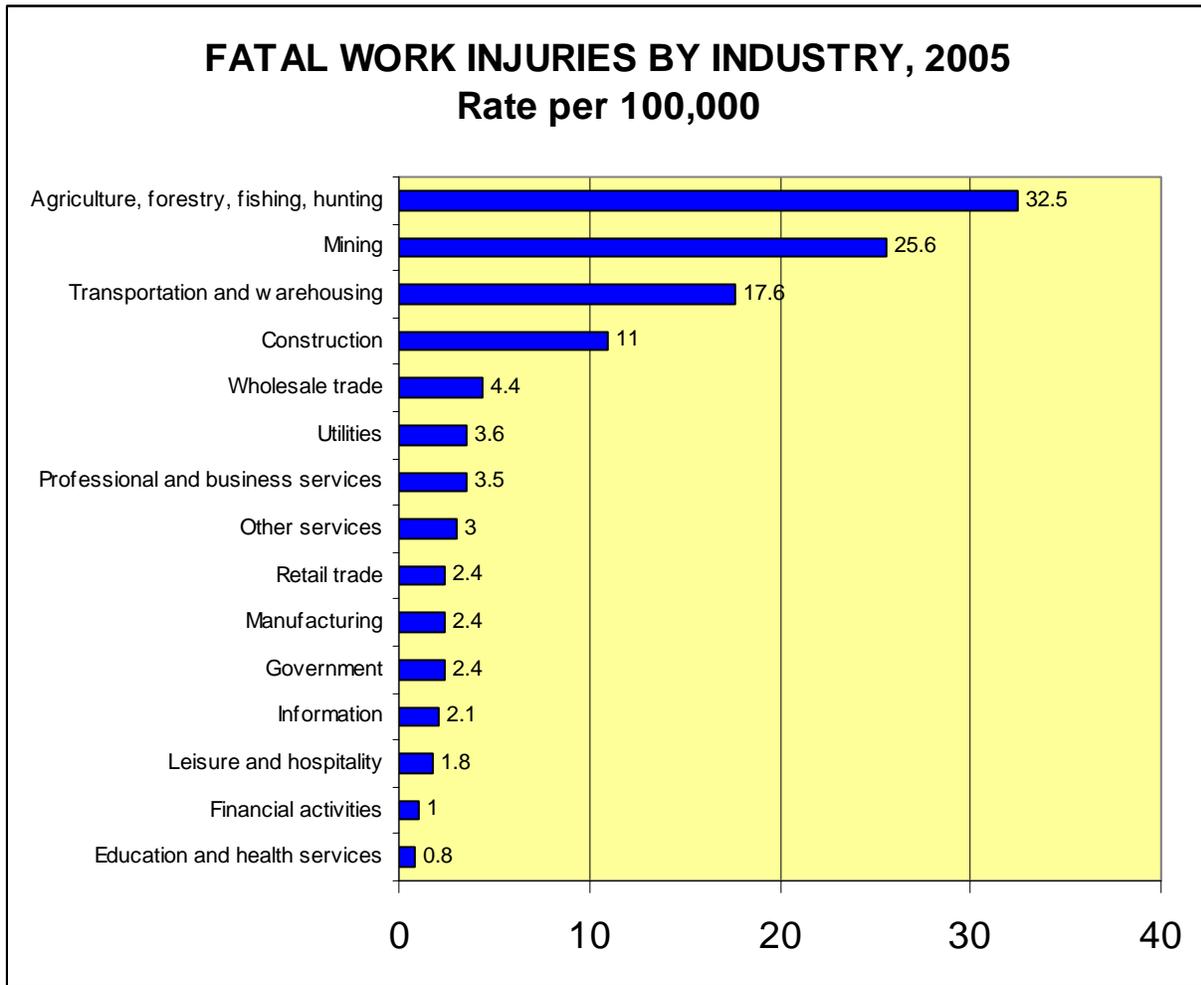
Workplace Deaths Overall

Transportation incidents continued to be the leading cause by far of death in the workplace in 2005, followed by contact with objects. Assaults and violent acts are the third leading cause. In 2005, 43% of all fatal work injuries were the result of transportation incidents (2,480). Contact with objects accounted for 18% of all workplace fatalities at 1,001 incidents. Violent acts accounted for 14% of the fatalities with 787 cases. Of these, 564 (72%) were due to homicide (439 by shooting, 60 by stabbing, 37 by hitting/kicking/beating). There were 177 workplace suicides, accounting for 22% of the fatalities from violent acts.

Industry Differences

Retail trade has more homicides than other industries, but it is not more dangerous overall for fatalities. The industries with larger numbers of fatalities relative to their employment are shown below, rank ordered, with the most dangerous industry listed first, followed by the rates of death per 100,000 employees in the year 2005. The rate of death in the mining industry, for example, is over 10 times that of retail trade. The construction industry accounted for the largest number of fatalities in 2005 with 1,186 deaths, while retail had less than half that number at 397.

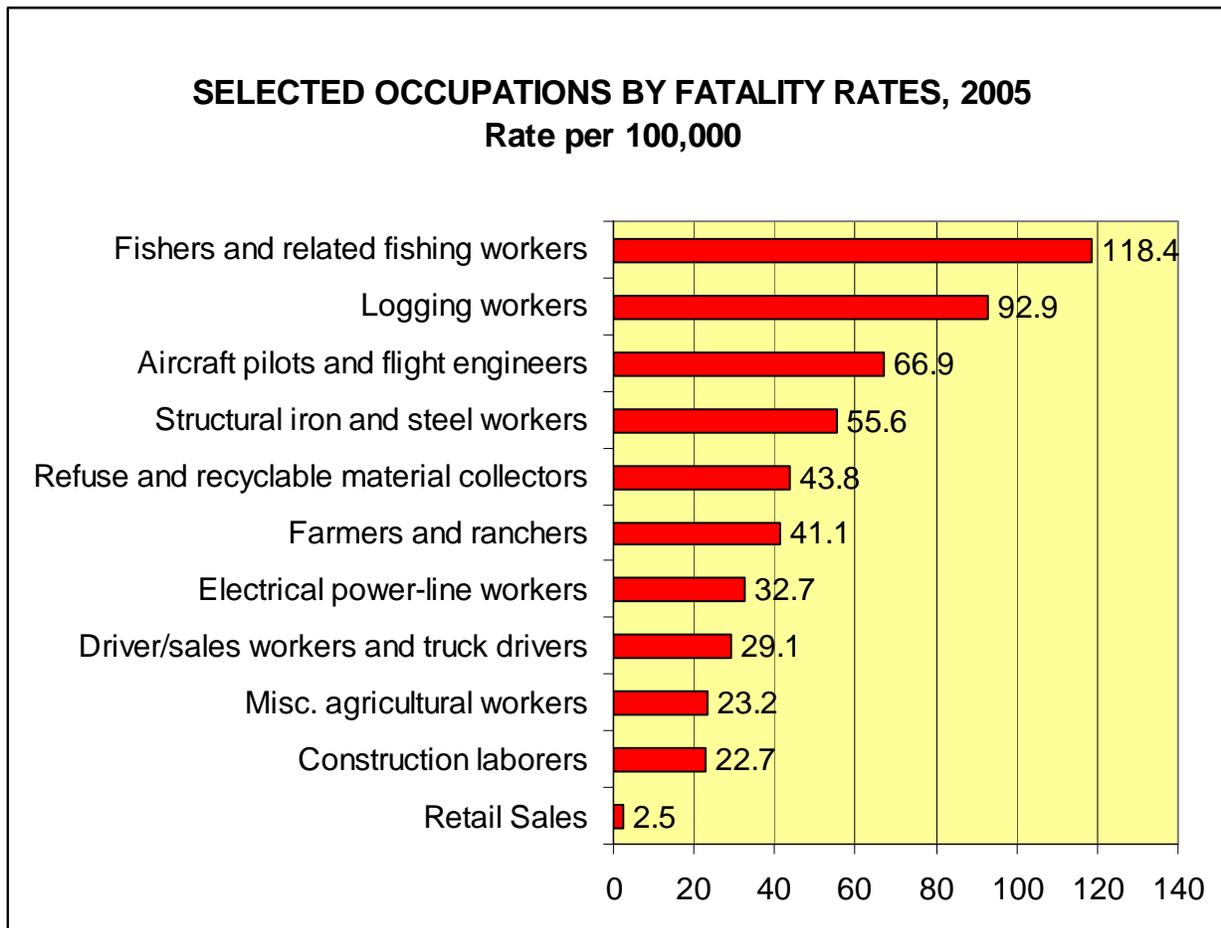
Chart A: Fatal Work Injuries by Industry



The Most Dangerous Occupations

Fishers and fishing workers experienced the highest fatality rate in 2005, at 118.4 per 100,000 employed. Logging workers experienced 92.9 fatalities per 100,000. Fatalities were significantly higher for farming, forestry, and fishing occupations in 2005. Below is a list of BLS-selected occupations showing fatality rates in 2005. For informational purposes, we have included the retail sales fatality rate. By comparison, it is ten times safer to be in retail sales than to be a construction laborer.

Chart B: Selected Occupations by Fatality Rates



Demographic Characteristics

Males make up 54% of the workplace, and women make up 46%. Men, however, accounted for 93% of the workplace deaths, and women only 7% in 2005. Far more men than women die on the job -- more than ten times as many -- because men are in the more dangerous occupations and there are more males than females in the workforce. There were 5,300 fatalities for men and 402 for women. Increased numbers of fatalities were noted in two age groups: 19 years of age and younger (up 18%), and 55 years of age or older (up 1.6%).

Conclusion

The number of workplace fatalities declined by 1% from 2004 to 2005, but the number of job-related **homicides** increased by 1%. That increase is lower than preliminary figures for 2005 released by the FBI earlier this summer for the nation as a whole. The FBI data shows that murder increased nationwide by 4.8%. However, when looking at homicides in retail trade, that increase was 12%, and convenience

stores showed an increase of 37%. Year-to-date statistics indicate violent crime is on the rise across the country. Factors which are likely contributing to an increase in violence include:

- More people in the crime-committing age group of 18 to 24 years of age. There were 25,112,000 people aged 18-24 in 1995 (accounting for 9.55% of the total population) and 29,307,000 in 2005 (accounting for 9.88% of the population).
- Increasing numbers of people living in poverty. In 2005, 36,950,000 were living below the poverty level, accounting for 12.6% of the total population. In 2000, 31,581,000 were living below the poverty level, accounting for 11.3% of the total population.
- An emphasis on terrorism as compared to common crime.
- Budget cuts, resulting in fewer police on the streets.
- Complacency, following the decreasing crime numbers of the 1990s.

One reason given for the decrease in crime in retail trade in previous years has been the strategy to reduce violent events. That strategy has been in place for nearly three decades in certain retail settings, particularly convenience stores. It incorporates the validated crime-reducing measures of good cash control; limiting escape routes; maintaining good visibility throughout the store; adequate lighting inside and outside stores; and training employees in safety and anti-violence measures. These figures indicate that it may be time to redouble those efforts.

Data Collection Methods

The BLS CFOI data for workplace injuries utilizes a combination of data-gathering techniques. The BLS relies on death certificates, worker's compensation reports and claims, reports to regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, police reports and news reports. The report above is extrapolated by the authors from the BLS CFOI report entitled: *The National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2005*, and the BLS News Release.