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Fatal Occupational Injuries in Nebraska, 2014-2023

A report summarizing fatalities from the
Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)

Occupational Health Surveillance Program
Epidemiology Unit
Division of Public Health
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Introduction

Fatal occupational injuries are work-related injuries that result in death. In 2023, there were 5,283 fatal occupational injuries reported among workers in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1). The impact of these deaths on families, employers, and society is substantial. Significant improvements in worker health and safety have occurred over the past several decades. While rates of non-fatal occupational injuries have declined over the last 10 years, fatal occupational injuries have remained stable since around 2010. Further efforts are needed to prevent these tragic events. This report summarizes fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska from 2014 to 2023. Evaluating occupational fatalities can help identify trends, patterns, and potential priorities for prevention.

Methods

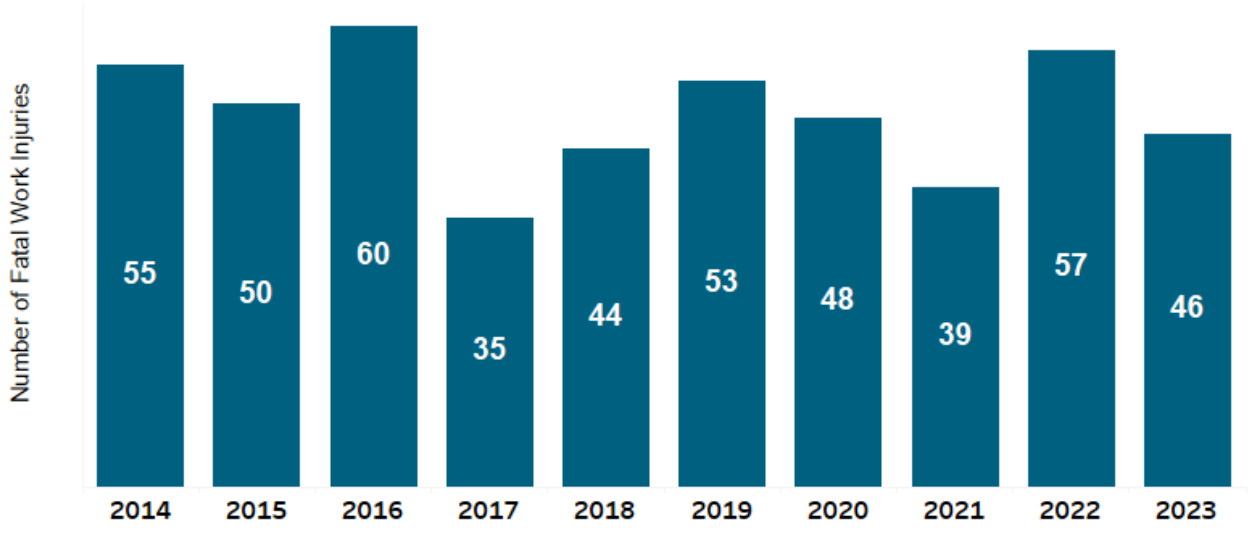
In the United States, fatal occupational injuries are tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) program (1). The CFOI collects data on fatalities in the private sector, small farms, and other industries. In Nebraska, the CFOI is administered by the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court (NWCC). The CFOI counts all fatal traumatic work injuries. Data are collected using a variety of source documents, such as death certificates, workers' compensation claims, and news media reports. A fatal injury is considered work-related if an event or exposure results in the fatal injury of a person 1) on the employer's premises and the person was there to work; or 2) off the employer's premises and the exposure was related to the person's work or status as an employee.

To compile fatal occupational injury data in Nebraska, records from 2014 to 2023 were downloaded from the BLS CFOI state website at https://www.bls.gov/iif/state-data.htm. A descriptive analysis was performed to evaluate fatalities for selected characteristics including year, age, race and ethnicity, injury event, industry and occupation. Fatal occupational injury rates for industry sectors and occupation groups were calculated by dividing the number of deaths in each industry/occupation group by the number of full-time equivalent (FTEs) workers in each group. FTEs were estimated using the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for each year (2).

Fatal Occupational Injury Trends

In Nebraska, 46 fatal occupational injuries were recorded in 2023. From 2014 to 2023, Nebraska recorded a total of 487 fatalities. The number ranged from a low of 35 in 2017 to a high of 60 in 2016. On average, approximately 49 worker fatalities occurred per year, which was about one worker fatality per week occurred over the 10-year period.

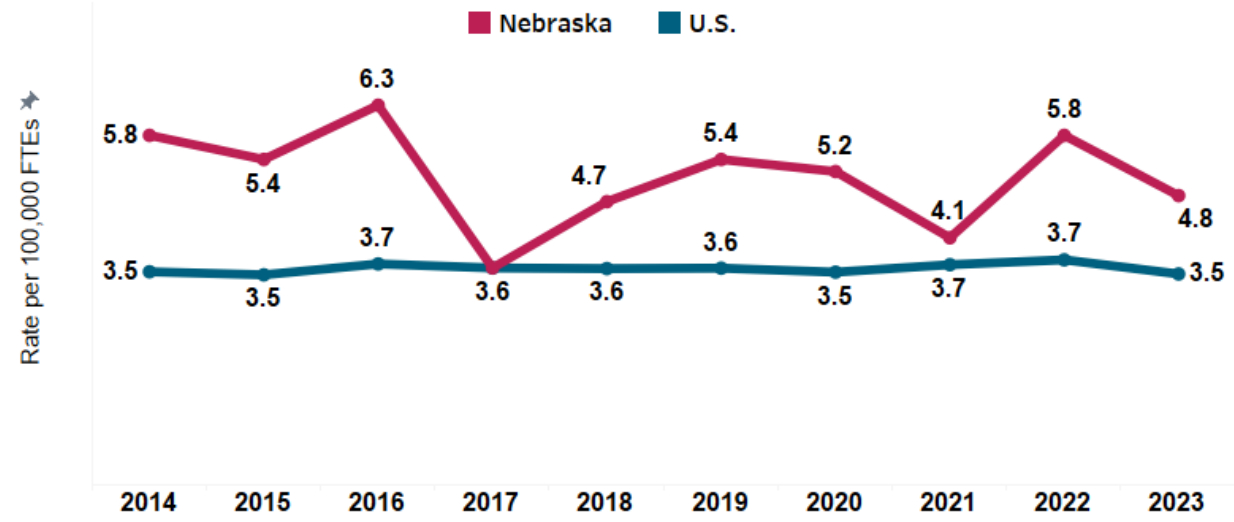
Figure 1: Number of Fatal Occupational Injuries in Nebraska, 2014-2023



Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

The Nebraska fatal occupational injury rate in 2023 was 4.8 deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers (FTEs). Over the 10-year period, average annual rate was 5.1 deaths per 100,000 FTEs. The lowest rate was 3.6 in 2017 and the highest was 6.3 in 2016. The rate for Nebraska was higher than the U.S. rate in all years except 2017, and Nebraska's rate in 2023 was the 15th highest among U.S. states.

Figure 2: Rate of Fatal Occupational Injuries Per 100,000 FTEs, Nebraska and U.S., 2014-2023

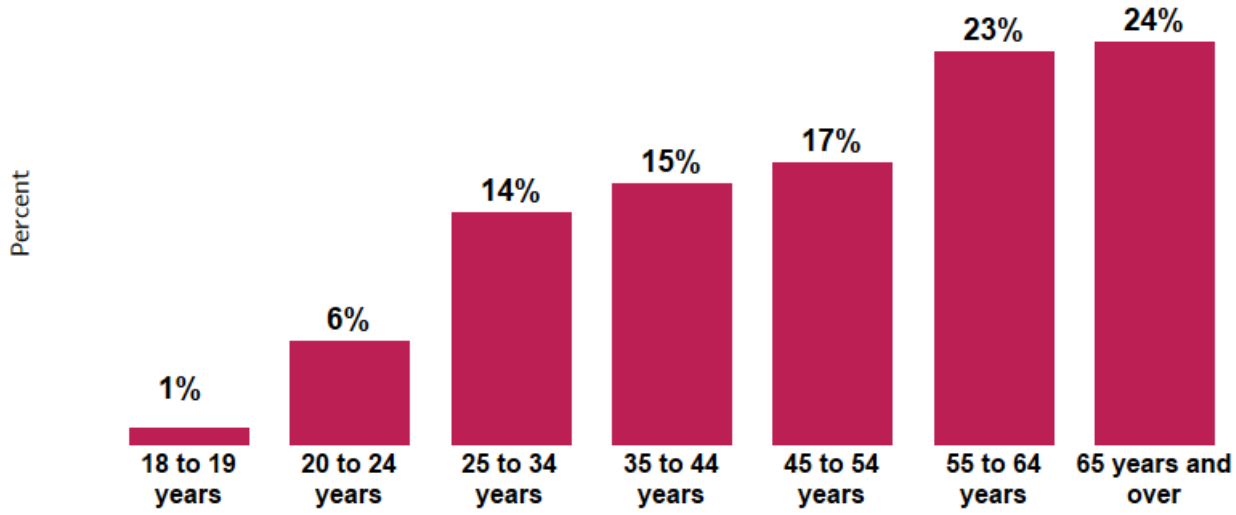


Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Age and Sex

The majority of fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska occurred among older workers. Workers aged 65 years and older accounted for the most approximately 24% of fatalities (n=116), while 23% (n=113) occurred in workers 55-64 years old. Despite nearly half (47%, n=229) of fatal work injuries occurring among workers 55 years and older from 2014 to 2023, only 25% of the workforce was aged 55 years and older (3).

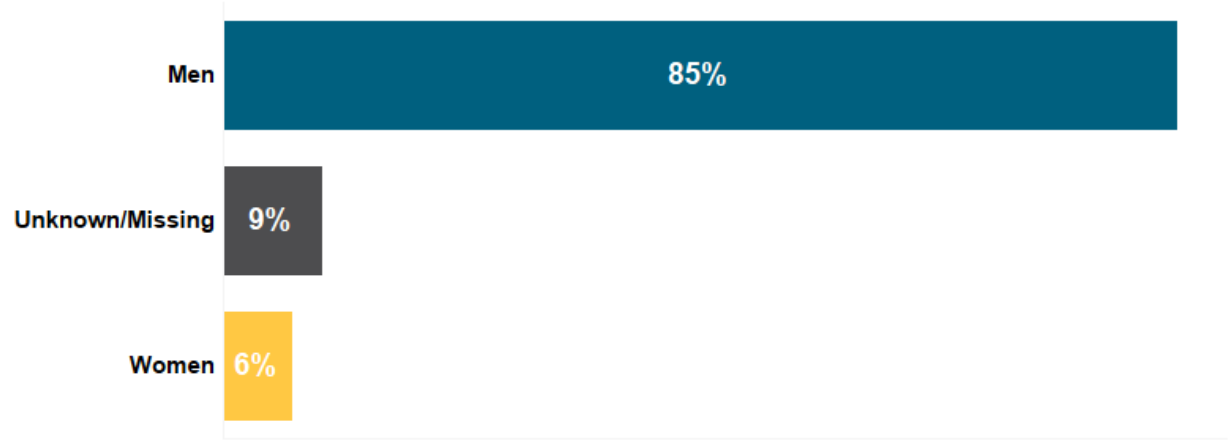
Figure 3: Fatal Occupational Injuries by Age Group, Nebraska, 2014-2023



Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

From 2014 to 2023, 85% (n=414) fatal occupational injuries occurred in male workers, despite males accounting for 53% of the workforce (3). Only 6% (n=30) of fatalities occurred among women, and 9% (n=43) had missing sex or gender.

Figure 4: Fatal Occupational Injuries by Sex, Nebraska, 2014-2023

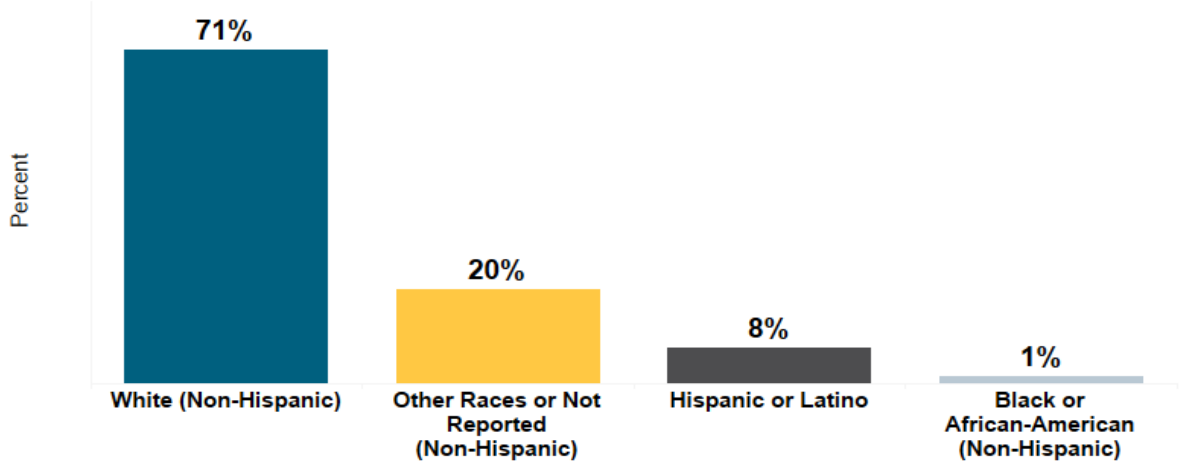


Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Race and Ethnicity

Fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska were most prevalent in White non-Hispanic workers (71%, n=346). Approximately 8% of deaths were among Hispanic or Latino workers (n=37) and 1% (n=7) were among Black or African-American (non-Hispanic) workers. Other races or race not reported (non-Hispanic) accounted for 20% percent of fatalities (n=97).

Figure 5: Fatal Work Injuries by Race/Ethnicity in Nebraska, 2014-2023

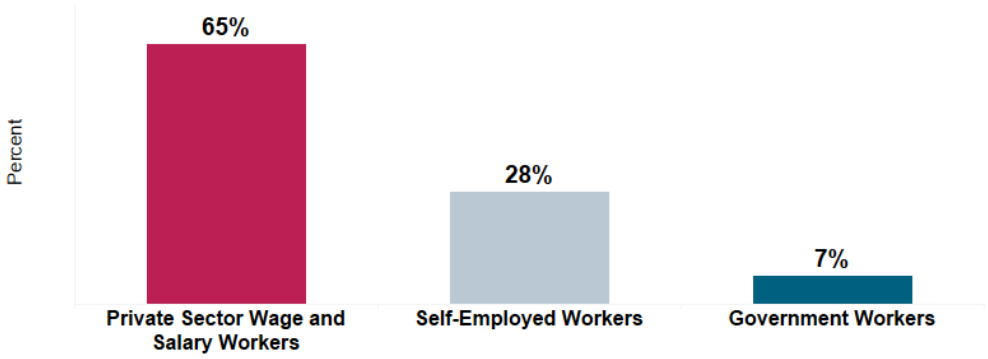


Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Type of Worker

During 2014 to 2023, approximately two-thirds of fatal occupational injuries occurred among Private Sector workers (n=316), while 28% of deaths occurred among self-employed workers (n=137). Seven percent of deaths occurred among government workers (n=34).

Figure 6: Fatal Work Injuries by Worker Type, Nebraska, 2014-2023

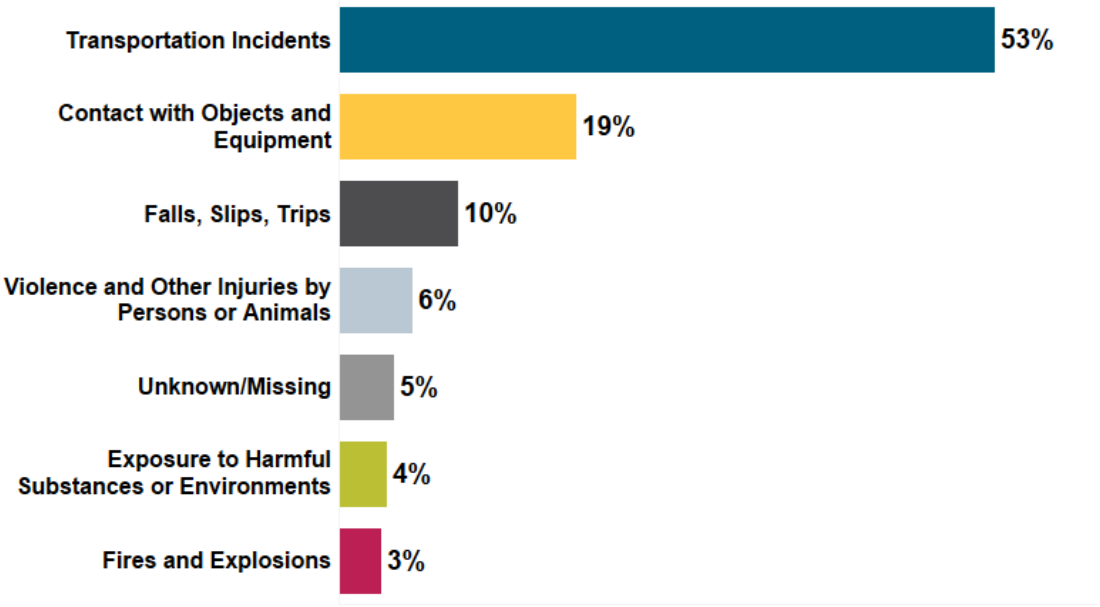


Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Injury Event

In Nebraska, the leading event resulting in a fatal occupation injury from 2014 to 2023 was 'Transportation Incidents' (53%, n=259). The second most common fatal injury event was 'Contact with Objects and Equipment' (19%, n=94), followed by 'Falls, Slips, Trips' (10%, n=47), 'Violence and Other Injuries by Persons or Animals' (6%, n=29), 'Exposure to Harmful Substances or Environments' (4%, n=19), and 'Fires and Explosions' (3%, n=17).

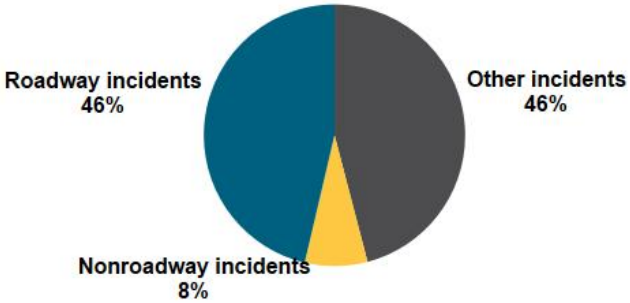
Figure 7: Fatal Occupational Injuries by Injury Event, Nebraska, 2014-2023



Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Out of the 259 transportation-related fatalities between 2014 to 2023, 46% of deaths (n=120) were classified as 'roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles', while 46% (n=119) were also classified as 'other transportation incidents'. The remainder of occupational transportation fatal injuries were classified as non-roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles (8%, n=20).

Figure 8: Fatal Occupational Injuries Due to Transportation Events, Nebraska, 2014-2023



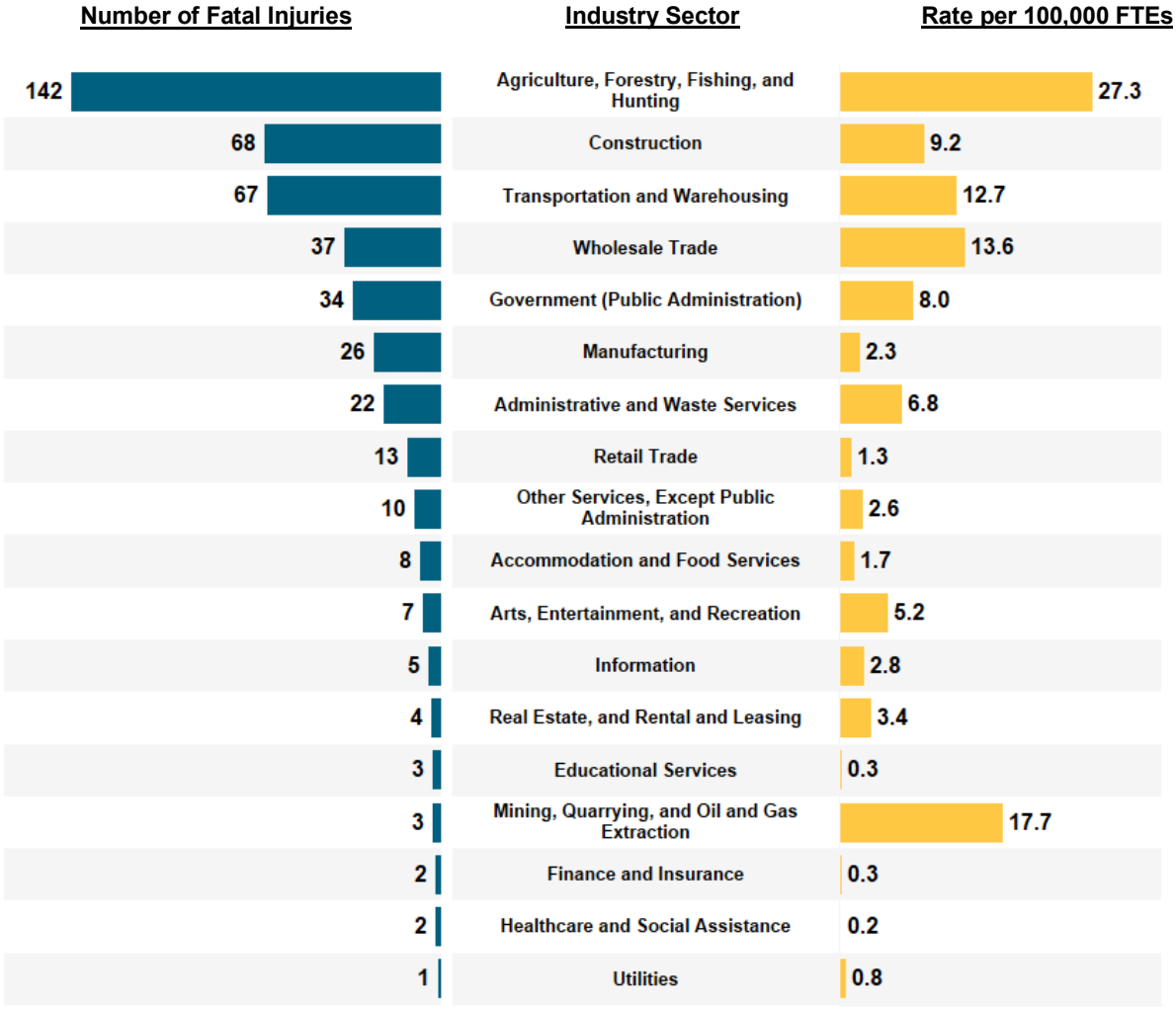
Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Industry Sector

Among fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska over the 10-year period, workers employed in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry sector accounted for the highest number of deaths, with 142 (29%) fatal injuries reported. The Construction industry sector accounted for the second highest number of deaths (14%, n=68), followed by the Transportation and Warehousing (14%, n=67), Wholesale Trade (8%, n=37), and Government (7%, n=34).

The 10-year average rate of fatal work injuries was highest among the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry sector, which was 27.3 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers (FTEs). This average rate was approximately five times higher than the Nebraska rate for all workers (5.1 deaths per 100,000 FTEs). Fatality rates were higher than the statewide average rate in industry sectors of Mining, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Construction, Government, Administrative and Waste Services, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors.

Figure 9: Number and Rates of Fatal Occupational Injuries by Industry Sector, Nebraska, 2014-2023



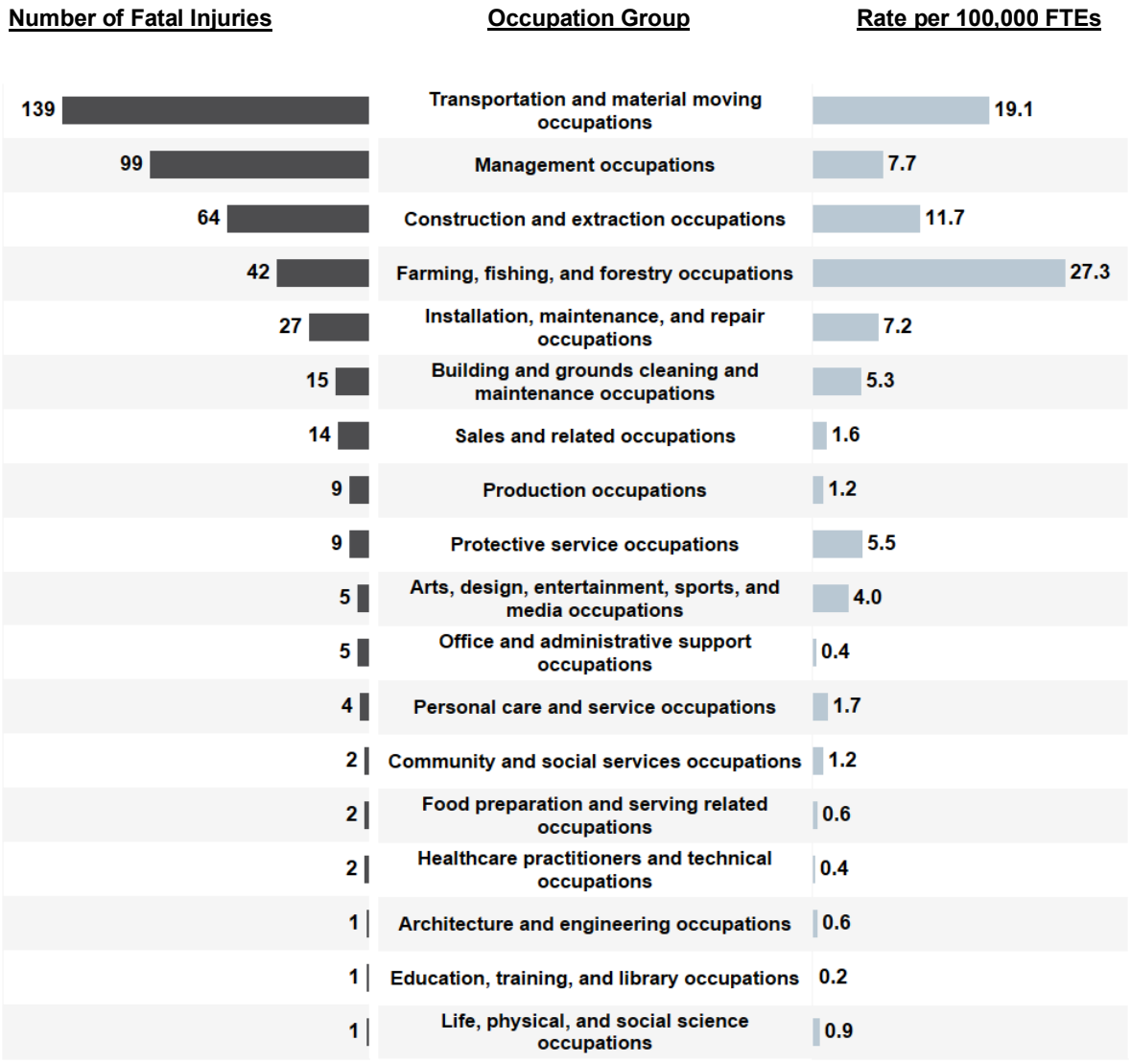
Data Source: DHHS analysis of Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data

Occupation Group

From 2014 to 2023, the Transportation and Material Moving occupation group had the highest number of fatal worker injuries in Nebraska (29%, n=139). Management occupations accounted for the second highest number of deaths (20%, n=99), followed by the Construction and Extraction occupations (13%, n=64).

The 10-year average rate of fatal occupational injuries was highest among workers employed in Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations, which was 27.3 deaths per 100,000 FTEs. After Farming occupations, fatality rates higher than the Nebraska rate included Transportation and Material Moving occupations, Construction and Extraction occupations, Management occupations, Installation, Maintenance, and Repair occupations, Building and Grounds Maintenance occupations, and Protective Service occupations.

Figure 10: Number and Rates of Fatal Occupational Injuries by Occupation Group, Nebraska, 2014-2023



Source: DHHS analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) data.

Summary

This report summarizes an analysis of aggregated fatal occupational injury data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) program. Between 2014 to 2023, 487 workers in Nebraska died as a result of a fatal work injury. The majority of fatalities occurred among men and workers aged 55 years and older. Approximately half of worker fatalities involved transportation incidents, 1 in 5 were due to contact with objects or equipment, and 1 in 10 were due to falls, slips, or trips. Industry-specific fatal work injury rates were highest in Agriculture, Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Construction sectors. Occupation-specific rates were highest among workers in Farming, Transportation and Material Moving, and Construction and Extraction occupation groups.

Limitations

There are several limitations with the data and findings presented in this report. Aggregated fatal injury data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) were used for this report. Therefore, results are descriptive and provide only a snapshot of fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska. Aggregated data limits more detailed analysis and interpretations when compared to using record-level data. Additional study of occupational fatal injuries using additional data sources is recommended to better understand the causes and risk factors contributing to worker deaths.

Comparing Nebraska's fatal injury rates with the national rate and across other states should be made with caution. For example, differences in rate calculations at different geography levels mean both the numerator and denominator may include a different group of workers. Additionally, large differences in the industry composition of employment by state may affect the overall state fatal injury rate.

Data presented in this report were aggregated and combined across years, and these data may be different than reported results on the U.S. BLS website. The methodology to calculate fatal occupational injury rates within industries and occupations used in this report is different than the methodology used by the BLS. Therefore, rates presented here may differ from the published rates. For more information regarding the BLS methodology and limitations, visit the BLS website at https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cfoi/calculation.htm.

Prevention

Fatal work injuries are preventable events. Worker safety is a shared responsibility between employers, workers and other occupational health and safety stakeholders. Results in this report highlight an opportunity to prevent occupational deaths through safety interventions focused on populations with higher risk of a fatal work injury.

For example, safety programs tailored to older workers can include creating age-specific safety training for supervisors and workers, medical assessments to better understand factors that increase risk to injury, and providing reasonable accommodations for older worker groups (4). Examples of interventions aimed at preventing transportation-related fatalities include increasing seat belt use among workers, reducing crash response times in rural settings, and implementing rollover protection structures for agricultural vehicles (5–7).

Prevention efforts can also be focused on specific industries and occupations. Employers and workers can participate in the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction to help prevent falls from roofs and ladders, a common cause of injury among construction workers (8). Efforts to prevent deaths among agricultural workers can be designed to address common causes of traumatic injury on farms, such as injuries due to farm vehicles (tractors, trucks, all-terrain vehicles), farm machinery, and grain bin engulfments (9–13).

Additional Resources

- For more information and data on fatal occupational injuries, visit the BLS Website at: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm
- For Nebraska CFOI reports published by the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court (NWCC), visit: https://www.newcc.gov/resources/court-forms-and-publications/bureau-of-labor-statistics-reports.
- For additional worker health and safety data, visit the CDC NIOSH Worker Health Charts Page: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/NIOSH-WHC/topic
- To learn more about occupational safety and health, visit the CDC National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health at: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.html

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Contact Information

Contact Information:

Nebraska DHHS Epidemiology Unit
dhhs.epi@nebraska.gov
402-471-2937

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