



Athena Research Corporation
September 27, 2007

Selected Summary of Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Report on Workplace Violence in 2006

*Sandra J. Erickson, MFS
Research Associate*

*Rosemary J. Erickson, Ph.D.
President*

Selected Summary of Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Report on Workplace Violence in 2006

Sandra J. Erickson, MFS¹ and Rosemary J. Erickson, Ph.D.²

ATHENA RESEARCH CORPORATION

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

Overview

On August 9, 2007, the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its annual report, *The National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2006*, reporting on fatal workplace injuries. The total number of workplace fatalities was 5,703, a decrease of a half percent from 2005. Of these, there were 516 workplace homicides. According to the report and supplementary information:

- ◆ Workplace homicides **decreased** by 9% from 2005 to 2006.
- ◆ Convenience store homicides **decreased** by 17% from 42 in 2005 to 35 in 2006.
- ◆ Gas station homicides **decreased** by 5%, from 41 homicides in 2005 to 39 in 2006.
- ◆ There has been a 50% **decrease** in workplace homicides since 1994, when the number was at an all time high of 1,080 (516 in 2006).
- ◆ Assaults and violent acts accounted for 13% of all workplace fatalities in 2006.
- ◆ Of women, 56% of all workplace deaths were due to homicide in 2006. For men, less than 1% of all workplace deaths were due to homicide.
- ◆ Workplace suicides **increased** 11% from 180 in 2005, to 199 in 2006.

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 decreased from 2005 to 2006 by 9%. Retail trade homicides decreased at a greater rate of 9%. Within retail trade, convenience store homicides decreased by 17%. Eating/drinking establishments experienced a 29% increase. Gas/service stations saw a 5% decrease. Over the past year, workplace homicides increased for taxicabs by 17%.

¹ Sandra J. Erickson holds a Masters in Forensic Science and is a research associate with Athena Research Corporation.

² Rosemary J. Erickson holds a Ph.D. in Sociology: Justice and is president of Athena Research Corporation.

Table 1: Workplace Homicides in Selected Industries

Industry	2005	2006	Percentage Change
Total workplace homicides	564	516	- 9%
Retail trade	182	138	- 25%
Convenience stores	41	35	- 17%
Eating/drinking establishments	68	88	+ 29%
Gas/service stations	41	39	- 5%
Taxicab	23	27	+ 17%

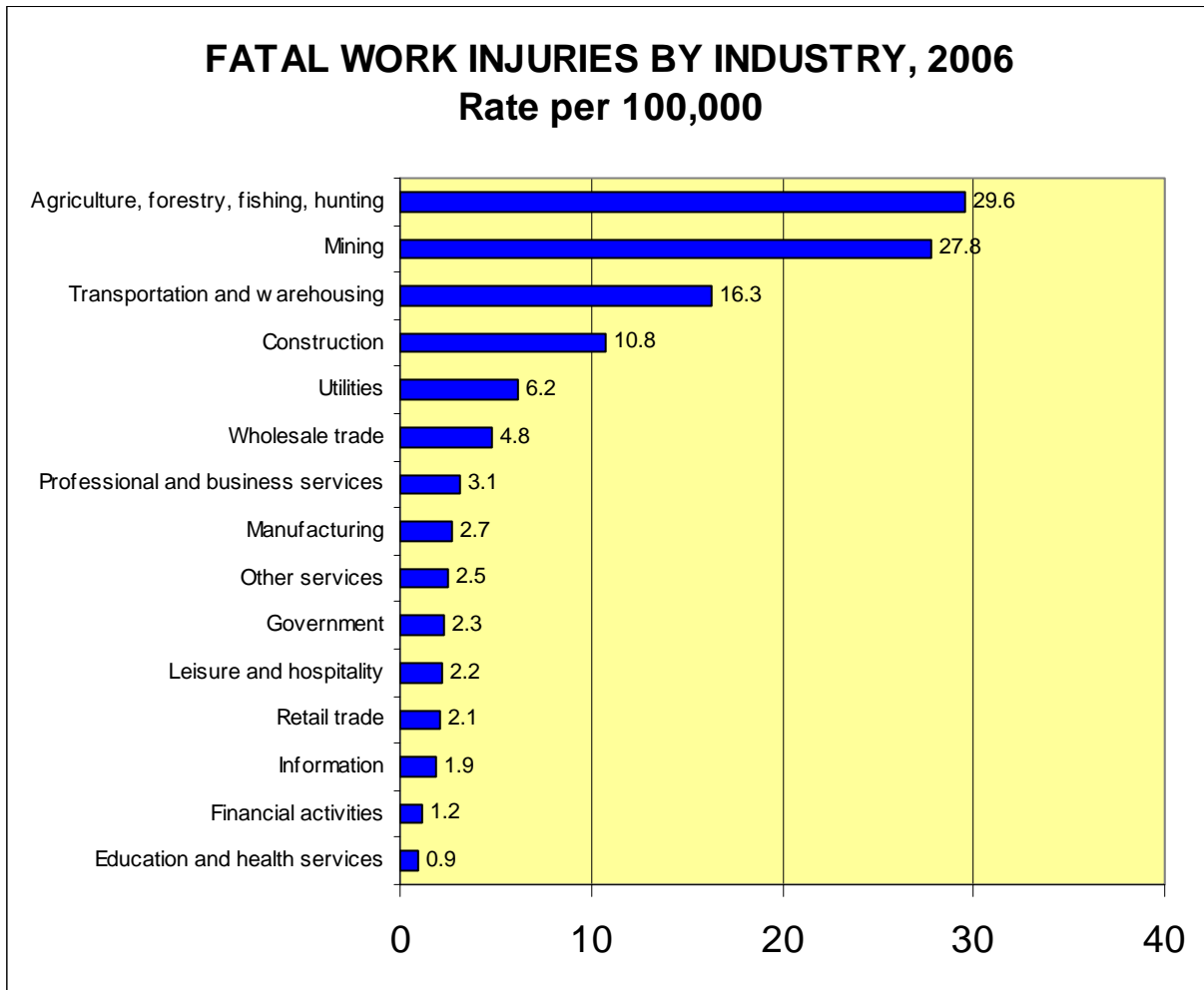
Workplace Deaths Overall

Transportation incidents continued to be the leading cause by far of death in the workplace in 2006, followed by falls and then struck by objects. Assaults and violent acts are the fourth leading cause. In 2006, nearly one-fourth of all fatal work injuries were the result of highway transportation incidents (1,329). That was the lowest annual total since 1993. Contact with objects accounted for 17% of all workplace fatalities at 983 incidents. Violent acts accounted for 13% of the fatalities with 754 cases. Of these, 516 (68%) were due to homicide (417 by shooting and 38 by stabbing). There were 199 workplace suicides, accounting for 26% 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 2006. As shown in Chart A, the most dangerous industry is agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting. The rate of death in the mining industry, for example, is over 10 times that of retail trade. That number more than doubled over the previous year due to the Sago Mine disaster and other coal mining incidents. The construction industry accounted for the largest number of fatalities in 2006 with 1,226 deaths, while retail had less than one-third that number at 351.

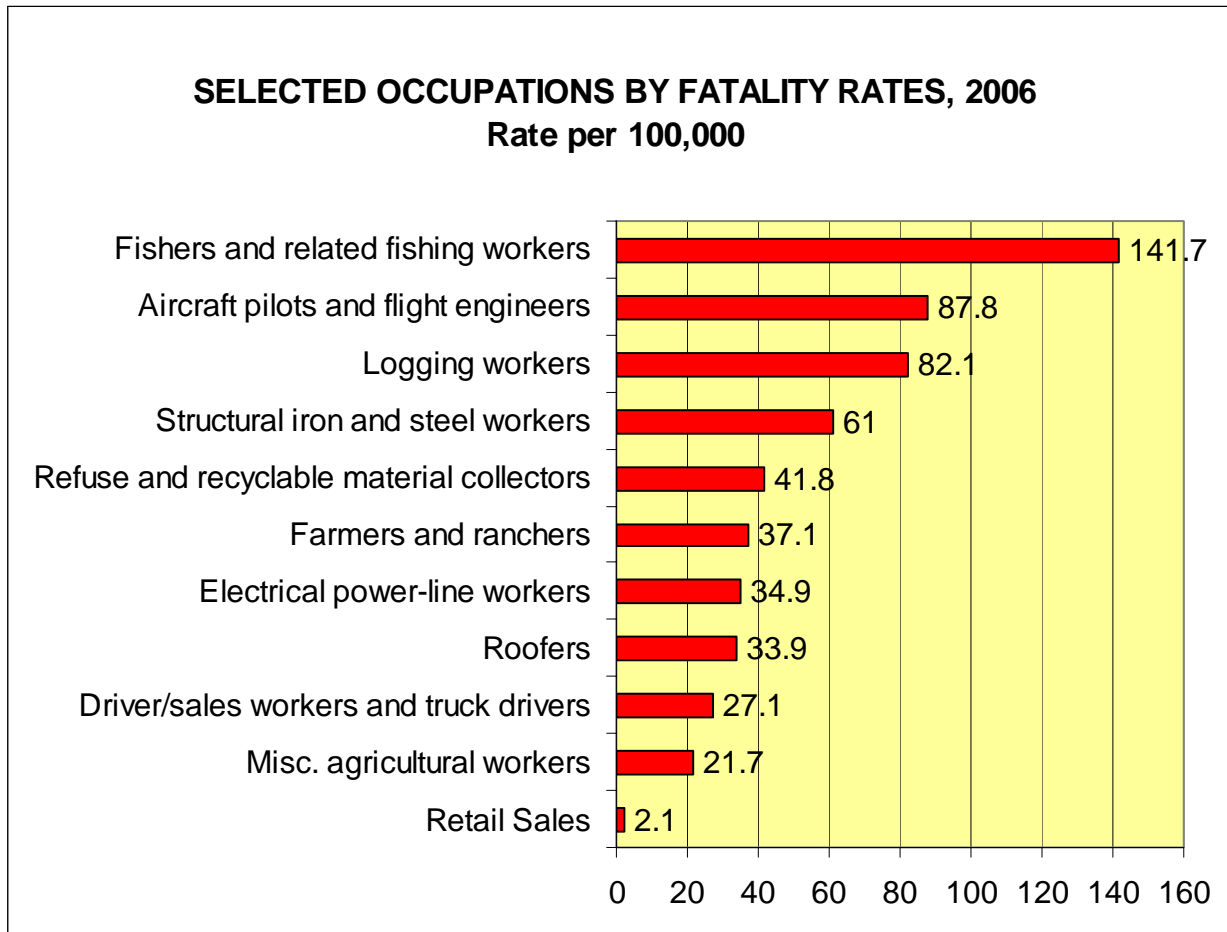
Chart A: Fatal Work Injuries by Industry



The Most Dangerous Occupations

Fishers and fishing workers experienced the highest fatality rate in 2006, at 141.7 per 100,000 employed. Aircraft pilots and flight engineers had fatalities at the rate of 87.8 per 100,000. Logging workers experienced 82.1 fatalities per 100,000. Below is a list of BLS-selected occupations showing fatality rates in 2006. For informational purposes, we have included the retail sales fatality rate. By comparison, it is approximately 75 times safer to be in retail sales than to be a fisherman, as shown in Chart B below.

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 92% of the workplace deaths and women only 8% in 2006. 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 5,275 fatalities for men and 428 for women. The number of fatalities decreased 9% among workers 25 years of age and younger. In the 55 years and older category, the number of fatalities was up but the rate was down.

Conclusion

The number of workplace fatalities declined by less than 1% from 2005 to 2006, but the number of job-related **homicides** decreased by 9%. Homicides were down 25% in retail trade overall, with convenience stores seeing a 17% reduction and gas stations a 5% reduction. On September 24, 2007 the FBI released figures for the nation as a

whole, showing a 1.9% increase in murder in 2006. One reason given for the decrease in homicide 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. Workplace homicides increased 29% in eating/drinking establishments and 17% among cab drivers. Employers must remain vigilant about security to keep employees as safe as possible.

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 2006*, and the BLS News Release.