*Connecticut's Work-Related Fatality Fell in 2023*

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Connecticut lost 33 lives to work injuries in 2023, for a rate of 2.0 deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers. This is a decrease from 2022’s 34 deaths and is below Connecticut’s annual average since 1992 of 37 work-related deaths (Chart 1) and the nation’s 2023 rate of 3.5. Only two states – Rhode Island and New Jersey– recorded a rate lower than Connecticut’s (Table 1).

The nation lost 5,283 lives to workplace injuries in 2023, a decrease from 2022’s 5,486 deaths. The fatal injury rate decreased from 3.7 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers in 2022 to 3.5 in 2023. The highest loss was seen in Texas with 564 deaths, followed by California with 439 deaths, and Florida with 306 deaths. High rates were recorded in Wyoming (16.0) and West Virginia (8.3). Rhode Island had six deaths, the lowest recorded number for states.

**Industry**

Nationally, the construction industry recorded the highest number of deaths at 1,075 followed by transportation and warehousing with 930 deaths. Together, these two industries account for 38 percent of deaths.

In Connecticut, the construction industry had 10 deaths followed by the administrative and waste services with seven deaths. Together, these two industries accounted for 52 percent of deaths. The transportation and warehousing industry had five deaths while the government sector had three deaths (Table 2). With an overall rate of 2.0, Connecticut saw a rate of 9.7 in construction and 5.3 in transportation and utilities. Rates for other industry sectors did not meet publishing criteria.

**Worker Characteristics**

Twenty-three of the workers were wage and salary workers; ten were self-employed. Sixty-four percent (21) of deaths were white. Eight were Hispanic or Latino. Nationally, Hispanic or Latino workers made up 23.7 percent of fatal occupational injuries in 2023. Deaths for Black or African American workers dropped to 659 in 2023 from 734 in 2022, a 10.2 percent decrease. Thirty of Connecticut’s deaths were men; nationally 91 percent of 2023’s work-related deaths were men.

**Event**

Historically, the United States loses the most workers to transportation incidents. The year 2023 saw 1,942 lives lost to transportation incidents – 37 percent of all work-related deaths. The falls, slips and trips category was the second most common event with 885 deaths (17 percent). Exposure to harmful substances and environments was the third most common event with 820 deaths (16 percent). Within this category, 512 lives were lost to drug or alcohol overdose. In the violent acts category, workplace homicides claimed 458 lives and suicides claimed 281.

With fourteen deaths, transportation incidents claimed the most lives in Connecticut, accounting for 42 percent of total deaths. Falls, slips, and trips incidents had eight deaths. Both the exposure to harmful substances and environments and contact incidents had four deaths each. The exposure to harmful substances and environments category includes events such as electrocutions, heat exhaustion, and drug overdoses. Contact incidents include events such as contact with animals, trench collapses, and struck by falling objects.

**Occupations**

Transportation and material moving occupations lost 12 lives in Connecticut, accounting for 36 percent of total deaths. Eleven of the transportation and material moving occupations were driver/sales workers and truck drivers (Table 4). Construction and extraction occupations lost seven lives.

Nationally, the transportation and material moving occupational group and the construction and extraction occupational group accounted for 48.3 percent of worker deaths in 2023. Transportation and material moving occupations lost 1,495 workers and construction and extraction occupations lost 1,055 workers. While the overall rate was 3.5 for 100,000 full time equivalent workers, logging workers saw a rate of 98.9. Fishing and hunting workers followed with 86.9. Roofers came in third with a rate of 51.8.

**Identifying Work-Related Deaths**

The CFOI (Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries) program reports fatal work injuries only. CFOI does not report any illness related information, including COVID-19. The CFOI program requires a minimum of two sources to verify a work-related death. The media is often the first notice of a work-related death. Other resources include death certificates, Coast Guard reports, the NHTSA (National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration), and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

While every attempt is made to capture every work-related death, some are missed. The CFOI program uses diverse state, federal, and independent data sources to identify, verify, and describe fatal work injuries. This ensures counts are as complete and accurate as possible.

It is important to note that the Bureau of Labor Statistics holds all information on companies and the deceased in strict confidence. Information is never shared for compliance measures.

OSHA requires all employers to report workplace fatalities within eight hours. Included are small establishments and industries that are normally exempt from OSHA jurisdiction. Natural deaths, such as heart attacks, must also be reported. However, many employers are unaware of this requirement. Additionally, OSHA does not require employers to report all fatalities. Employers are not required to report:

o Street and transportation deaths unless they occur in a construction work zone

o Deaths on commercial or public transportation systems (airplane, subway, bus, train, etc.)

o Deaths occurring more than 30 days after the incident

OSHA does not investigate every work-related death. Homicides and most transportation incidents fall outside OSHA’s jurisdiction. However, OSHA is beginning to investigate some of these incidents to develop training programs. Homicides may be prevented with changes in security cameras and enforcing safety rules. Transportation deaths can be prevented with training programs on distracted driving, sleep deprivation, and safe driving techniques.

**History of the Program**

When President Nixon signed the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA) into law, a census of workplace fatalities did not exist. It was estimated that approximately 14,000 workers were killed on the job annually. While OSHA immediately began investigating workplace deaths, the U.S. Department of Labor did not have a comprehensive statistical program dedicated to documenting workplace deaths.

In 1992, the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) was established to track all work-related deaths and collect the much-needed data. That first year, 6,217 deaths were documented nationally, 42 of which were in Connecticut. Since then, national numbers have dropped by 15 percent to 5,283 deaths in 2023.

Since 1992, the CFOI program has seen several changes. Prior to 2006, rates were calculated per 100,000 workers. Now the rates take into account the number of hours spent in the workplace, resulting in rates per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers. In 2012, the program began documenting contractor status, the use of drugs or alcohol, seat belt use, and union status. In 2015, there was a change in the release of data. Formerly, a preliminary release was made in August or September with revised, final data published in April of the following year. Final data is now released in December – 4 months earlier than in past years. This December release is the only release of CFOI data. Most recently, the coding structure for nature, part of body, event, and sources was changed in 2023.

The program continues to develop to meet the needs of researchers, as the data is beneficial in creating engineering solutions, regulations, and education programs to minimize workplace deaths. n