

## Occupational Fatalities Decline in 2002

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Workplace fatalities declined by 7 percent between 2001 and 2002, according to new data from the [BLS Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries](#).<sup>1</sup> In 2002, 5,524 individuals died as a result of fatal work injuries, the lowest number since BLS began recording these data in 1992. Comparisons with 2001 data exclude fatalities that resulted from the September 2001 terrorist attacks; those data were tabulated and [published separately in 2002](#).<sup>2</sup>

One in four workplace fatalities in 2002 resulted from highway incidents, 13 percent were due to falls, and 11 percent were due to homicides. While these three events have been the leading sources of workplace deaths for several years, there was a decline in each category in 2002. The only major category of fatal event that increased in 2002 was exposure to harmful substances or environments; examples of events in this category include electrocutions and heat stroke.

The greatest number of workplace fatalities (1,121) occurred in the construction industry, although the figure was down 9 percent from the previous year. The number of fatalities was down in several other industries as well, including mining (121 fatalities, down from 170 in 2001) and manufacturing (563 fatalities, down from 598 in 2001).

The occupations with the greatest number of workplace fatalities in 2002 were truck drivers, farm occupations, and sales occupations. Among the 808 truck drivers killed in 2002, the majority died as a result of highway incidents. Among sales occupations, the majority were homicide victims, often in convenience stores or restaurants.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2002*, USDL 03-488 (U.S. Department of Labor), September 17, 2003. For more information, visit the BLS [Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries](#) home page, at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> *National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2001*, USDL 02-541 (U.S. Department of Labor), September 25, 2002.