

Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries in Construction and Other Industries

In 2010, the construction industry accounted for 802 (17.1%) of the total 4,690 fatal work injuries in the United States, the lowest annual count ever recorded by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).¹ Even with the lower fatal injury total, construction still had more fatalities than any other industry in 2010 (chart 38a).

Fatal injuries in the construction industry declined 38% between 2006 and 2010 (chart 38b). Among Hispanic construction workers, fatal injuries dropped about 50% from 360 in 2006 to 182 in 2010, corresponding with the decline in Hispanic employment in construction during the period (*see* page 17).

The fatality rate in construction also declined to 9.4 per 100,000 *full-time equivalent workers* (FTEs; *see* Glossary) in 2010, dropping by 34% since 1992 (chart 38c). The rate reduction in recent years could be partially attributed to a disproportionate decrease in high-risk worker groups (fewer younger, less experienced, new immigrant, and Hispanic workers; *see* pages 14, 15, 17, 18, and 41) during the economic downturn. Even so, in 2010, the fatality rate among construction workers was almost three times higher than the rate of 3.6 per 100,000 FTEs for all U.S. workers combined.² The death rate in construction was also steadily higher than manufacturing over time.

Nonfatal injuries and illnesses trended downward as well. In 2010, the number of nonfatal cases had dropped by 54% since 2002, the year when the current Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recording requirements became active (chart 38d).³ Among Hispanic construction workers, cases with days away from work (DAFW; or severe cases) declined 60% between 2006 and 2010.

The rate of DAFW cases in construction was 149.6 per 10,000 FTEs in 2010, remaining 39% higher than the average rate of 107.7 per 10,000 FTEs for all private industries (chart 38e).

The rate in construction also consistently exceeded mining and manufacturing and was higher than agriculture until 2008 (chart 38f). Moreover, construction workers generally have longer recovery times when injured. In 2010, the rate of cases requiring a full month or more away from work was 50 per 10,000 FTEs in construction compared with 30 per 10,000 FTEs for all private industries combined.⁴

The fatality numbers reported in this section were obtained from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) conducted by the BLS. The calculations of death rates include public and private construction sectors and self-employed workers. Thus, the numbers presented here may differ from those in the BLS and other publications that include only fatalities in the private sector. The numbers for FTEs in death rate calculations were obtained from the Current Population Survey (*see* page 10).

The nonfatal injury and illness data were taken from the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII), another BLS survey. The SOII excludes the self-employed and household workers, small farms with fewer than 11 employees, and federal government employees. Prior to 2008, state and local government employees were also excluded.⁵ In addition, illnesses only account for about 3% of nonfatal cases in construction. Since many work-related illnesses have a long latency period, such as asbestosis or cancers, illnesses are potentially undercounted in the SOII data.⁶ Thus, the data presented here primarily refer to injuries among construction workers.

Both the CFOI and SOII have undergone important changes in the last decade, including changes in industrial classification systems and recordkeeping standards for the SOII data collection. Therefore, the injury data reported here may not be directly comparable over time.

1. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Work-related Injuries and Illnesses Database. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed May 2012).

2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Revisions to the 2010 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Counts*. (Table 1.). http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cfoi_revised10.pdf (Accessed October 2012).

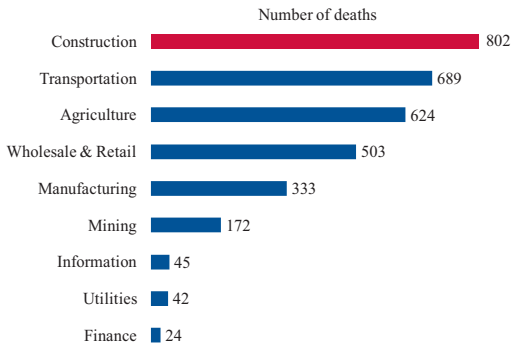
3. Friedman L & Forst L. 2007. The impact of OSHA recordkeeping regulation changes on occupational injury and illness trends in the U.S.: A time-series analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 64:454-460. This study found that the decline in occupational injuries corresponded directly with significant changes in OSHA recordkeeping rules.

4. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Number and Rate of Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses by Selected Industry*. <http://www.bls.gov/data/#injuries> (Accessed December 2011).

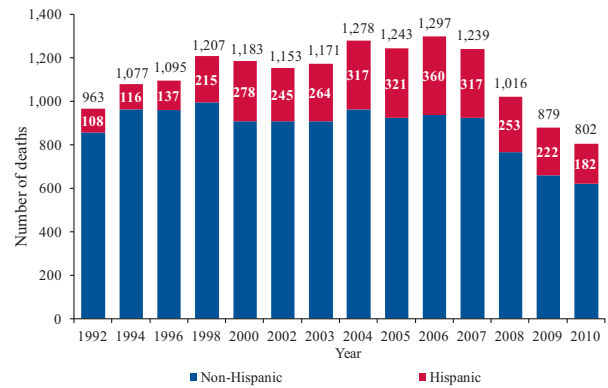
5. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 9: Occupational Safety and Health Statistics*. http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch9.htm#scope_SOII (Accessed December 2011).

6. Ruser JW. 2008. Examining evidence on whether BLS undercounts workplace injuries and illnesses. *Monthly Labor Review*, 131(8):20-32.

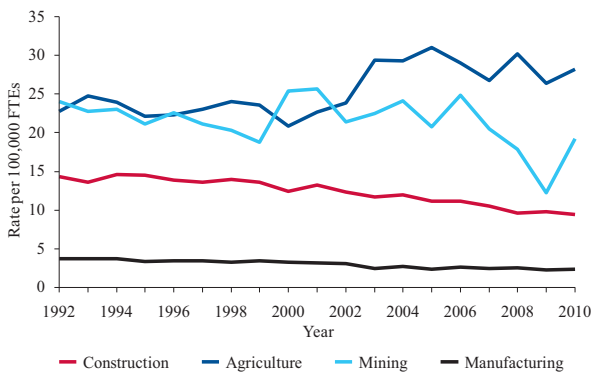
38a. Number of fatalities, by major industry, 2010 (All employment)



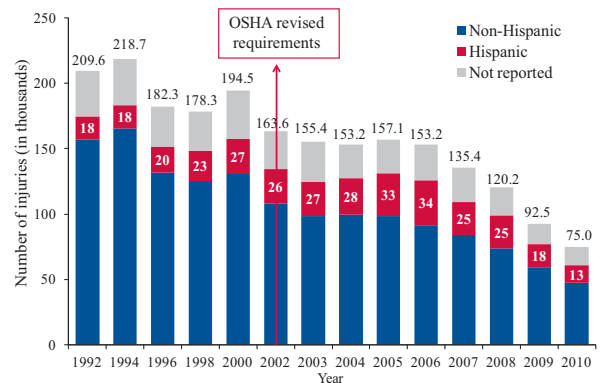
38b. Number of fatalities in construction, 1992-2010 (All employment)



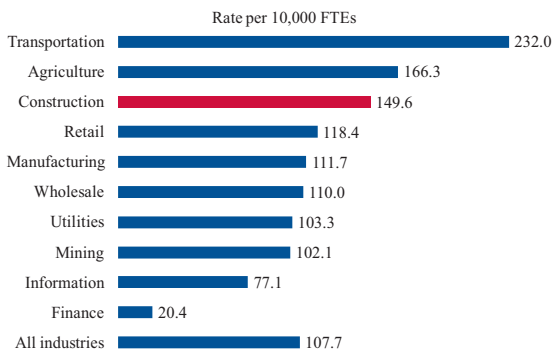
38c. Rate of fatalities, selected industries, 1992-2010 (All employment)



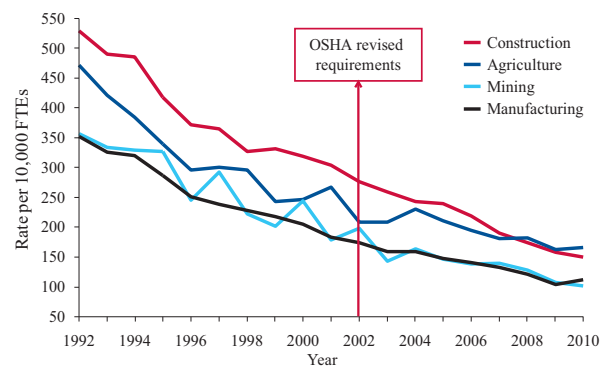
38d. Number of nonfatal injuries resulting in days away from work in construction, 1992-2010



38e. Rate of nonfatal injuries resulting in days away from work, by major industry, 2010



38f. Rate of nonfatal injuries resulting in days away from work, selected industries, 1992-2010



Note: All charts - Because workers may work part-time in construction, safety and health statistics are defined in terms of FTEs to allow comparisons between industries. Full-time work is defined as 2,000 hours worked per year (see Glossary).
 Chart 38c - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Work-related Injuries and Illnesses Database. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed May 2012).
 Chart 38d - Annually, about 17% of nonfatal cases had no racial/ethnic identifiers.
 Charts 38d and 38f - Effective January 1, 2002, OSHA revised its requirements for recording occupational injuries and illnesses. Due to the revised recordkeeping rule, the estimates since the 2002 survey are not comparable with those from previous years.
 Charts 38d-38f - Data cover private wage-and-salary workers only.

Source: Charts 38a and 38b - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Work-related Injuries and Illnesses Database. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed May 2012).
 Chart 38c - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Work-related Injuries and Illnesses Database. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed May 2012) and Current Population Survey. Calculations by CPWR Data Center.
 Charts 38d and 38f - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1992-2010 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed November 2011).
 Chart 38e - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/> (Accessed November 2011).