

**Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries
Puerto Rico
2002**

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INTRODUCTION

Every year thousands of workers have work-related accidents. A number of these injuries result in death. It is believed that many of these could have been avoided if the employers and employees involved had followed proper safety measures.

The purpose of this report is to provide information on accidents in Puerto Rico, which resulted in death of workers during 2002. The data is used to identify hazardous industries and occupation; where safety standards are needed, and to develop strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of fatal occupational injuries.

Currently, all 50 states and every U.S. Territory are participants, allowing a national database to be compiled and made available to safety and health researchers, and policymakers concerned with the promotion of safe workplaces. At the local level the information is used by researchers, union officials and safety directors to measure the effectiveness of their individual safety programs and compare their experience with other companies in the same industry.

The Census

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health Statistics of the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources, conduct since 1991 the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The Census provides the most complete count of fatal work related injuries available, since it documents each case with multiple sources. It includes information on all traumatic occupational

fatalities identified, gathering demographic data of the injured worker, such as sex, age, and occupation. It also collects details about each case like the nature and source of the injury, as well as the type of event, and the part of the body affected. The CFOI program covers all workers (private wage and salary workers, the self-employed, and government employees).

Definition

A fatal occupational injury is defined as a death resulting from accidents or other external causes that occurred while the person was in working status. For a fatality to be in scope of CFOI, the deceased must have been employed (working for pay or other compensation) at the time of the incident or engaged in a work activity on or off the employer's premises. The event or exposure must have been related to the person's work or status as an employee.

The employer's premises include buildings, grounds, parking lots and other facilities and property used to carry out business.

This definition includes deaths traditionally associated with workplace factors such as those due to falls, electrocutions, and acute over-exposure to toxic chemicals. Deaths due to homicides, suicides at work, and fatal motor vehicle injuries while traveling on the job, are also included.

To ensure that fatalities are work-related, cases are substantiated with two or more independent source documents. These include death certificates, worker's compensation form, medical examiner reports, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports, newspaper articles, follow back questionnaires, toxicology reports, and other administrative records. Approximately 30 data elements regarding the worker and the events concerning the fatality are collected and coded.

Fatal Occupational Injuries 2002

Overview Results

- In Puerto Rico, there were 38 work-related fatal occupational injuries in 2002, the lowest incidence during a 10 years period. Chart 1 present job related death counts from 1993 to 2002. The highest number of fatalities (85) occurred during 1995. However, during the first 5 years of the period the average number of deaths reached 63 cases, while on the second 5 years period the average dropped to 47 cases.
- Of 38 persons who died in work-related accidents in 2002, ninety five (95) percent of the cases were men. A hundred percent of the fatalities were wage and salary workers.
- Thirty-two percent of all fatalities were among workers 35 to 44 years old (12 cases), followed by 25 to 34 years old (10 cases) with twenty-six percent (chart 2).
- Operators, fabricators and laborers continue with the highest number of all fatalities during the last three years. In 2002, this group reported 14 cases, followed by services (13 cases), and precision production, craft, and repair (8 cases) (chart 3).
- Occupations with the largest number of worker fatalities during 2002 was police and detectives, public sector with 6 cases; construction laborers with 5 cases; followed by truck drivers, and guards and police, except public services with 4 cases, respectively (chart 4).

- Thirteen (93 percent) of 14 cases of assaults and violent acts were due to homicides, specifically by shooting. This was the first leading cause of deaths by occupational injury in Puerto Rico during 2002.
- Contact with objects and equipment, 21 percent (8 cases) of the total (38 cases); transportation accidents, 16 percent (6 cases); and exposure to harmful substances and environments, 16 percent (6 cases) were other events responsible for fatal occupational injuries. Eleven percent (4 cases) was due to other causes or not reported (chart 5).
- Of 38 fatalities, 16 cases occurred in the industrial place or premises (42 percent) followed by public buildings; and streets or highways with 9 cases (24 percent), respectively (chart 6).
- Table 1 and chart present workplace fatalities by highway incidence; homicides and falls from 1993 to 2002. During this period the highest number of fatalities was caused by homicides. The highest incidence was reported in 1993 with 33 cases. Falls were responsible of 11 cases in 1998. Highway accidents were 7 cases in 1995.
- Private industry reported 26 cases of all deaths (38) while government registered 11 cases. In private sector, construction reported the highest proportion of fatal worker injuries with 15 cases, followed by transportation and public utilities; and services with 4 cases, respectively (table 2 and chart).

Chart 1. Fatal work injury counts, Puerto Rico, 1993-2002

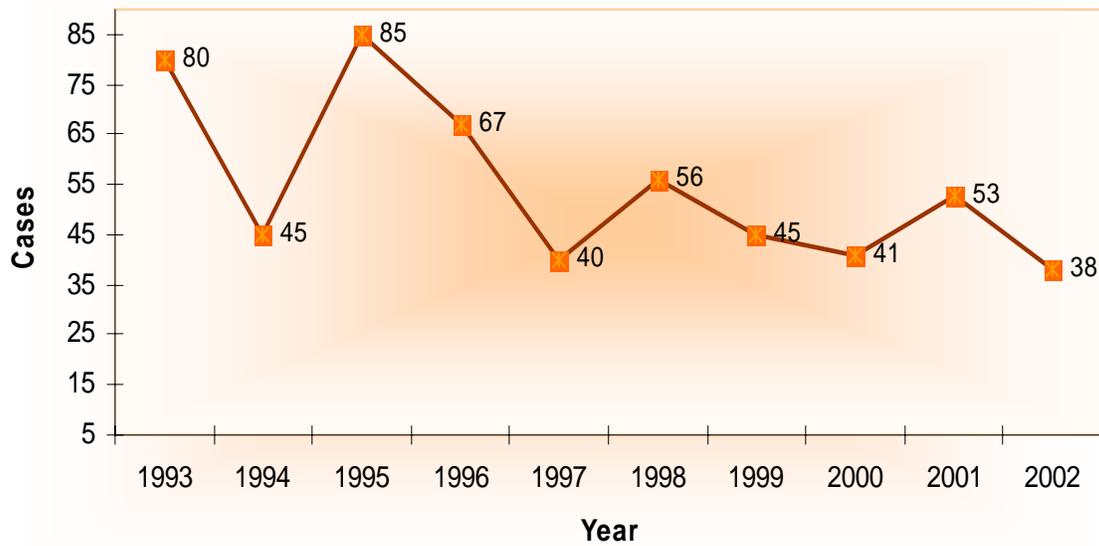
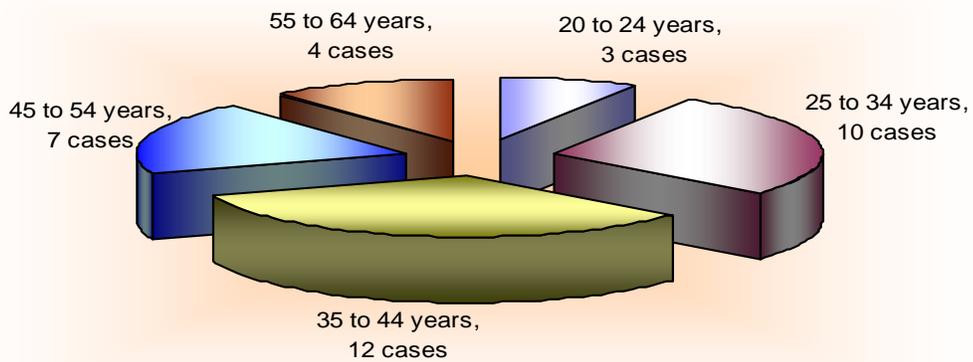


Chart 2. Worker characteristics by age, 2002



Note: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately.
Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Chart 3. Fatal work injuries by occupational group, 2002

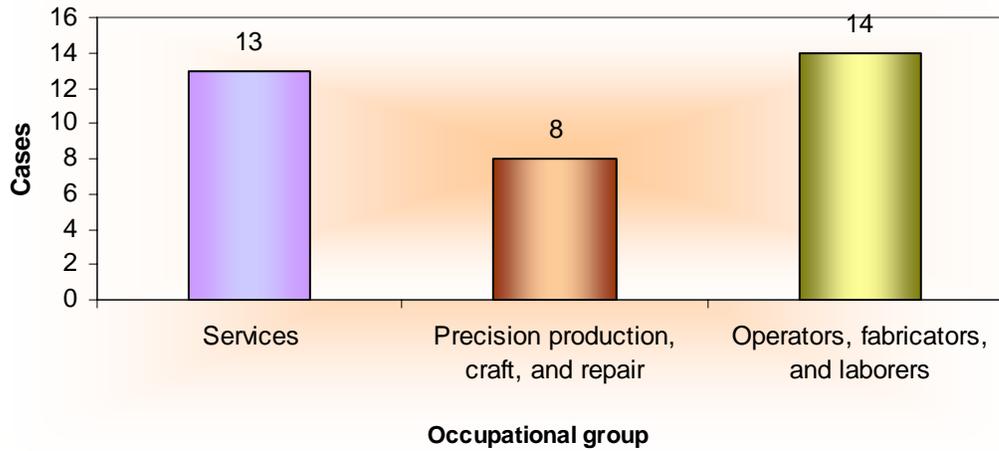
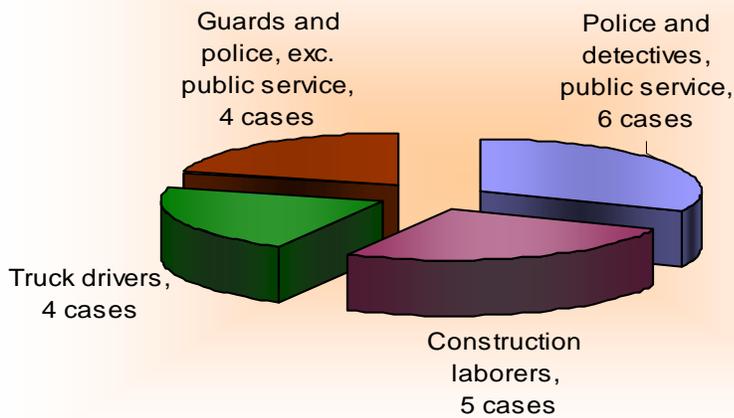


Chart 4. Occupations with the largest number of worker fatalities, 2002



Note: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Chart 5. Workplace fatalities by event or exposure, 2002

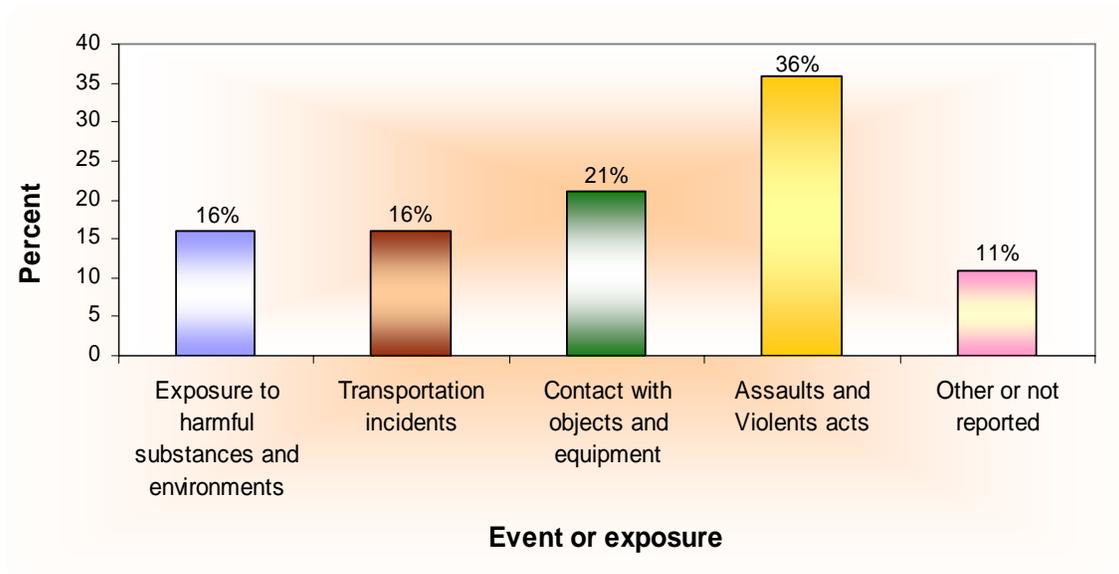


Chart 6. Fatal work injuries by location, 2002

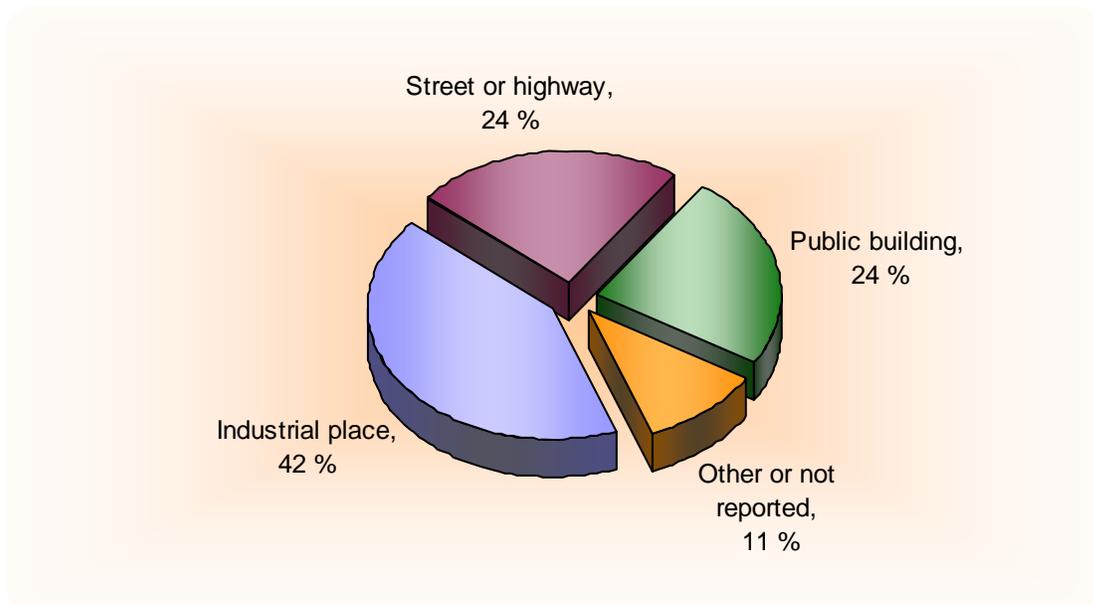


Table 1. Workplace fatalities by highway incidents, homicides, and falls, 1993-2002

Year	Number of Falls	Number of Highway Incidents	Number of Homicides
1993	10	3	33
1994	5	4	18
1995	9	7	30
1996	10	6	21
1997	5	-	9
1998	11	3	19
1999	8	5	11
2000	3	4	15
2001	10	4	18
2002	-	3	14

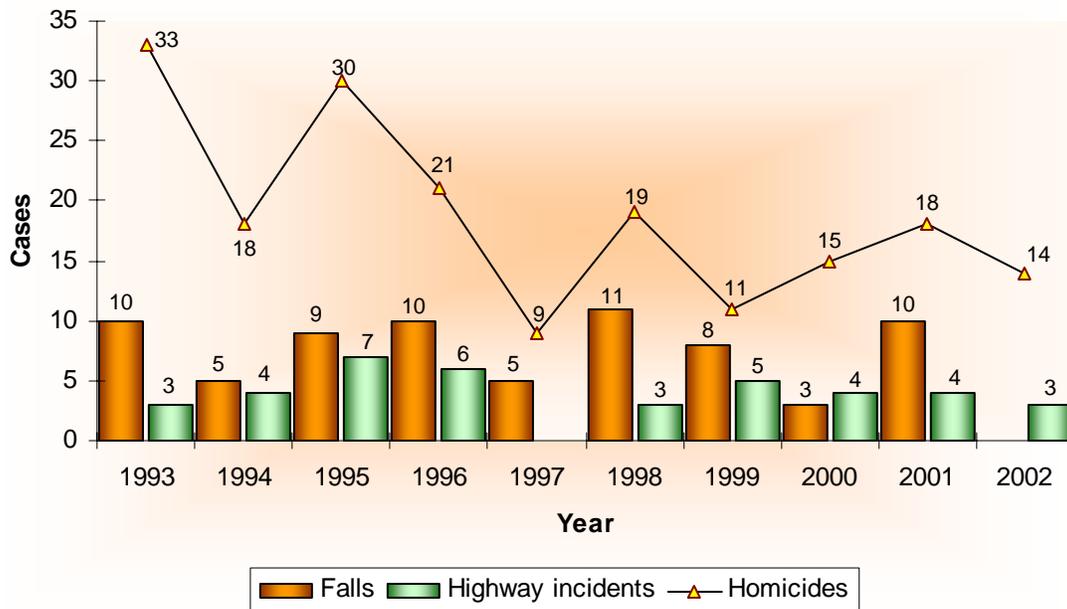
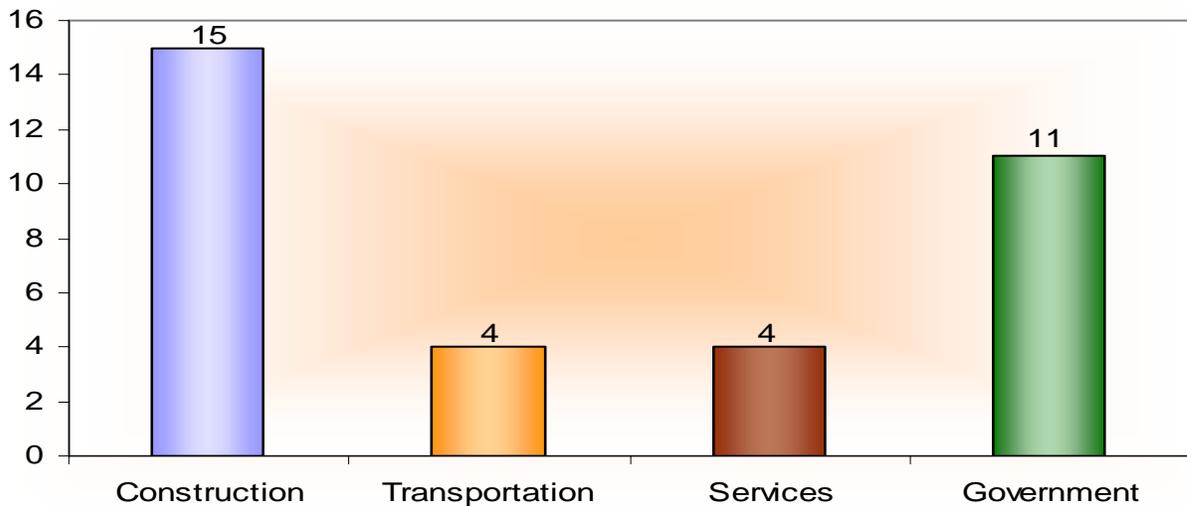


Table 2. Number of fatal occupational injuries by industry division, 2002

Industry	Number of Fatalities	Number of Fatalities Private Sector	Number of Fatalities Government
Total	38	26	11
Construction	15	15	-
General building contractors	8	8	-
Residential building construction	4	4	-
Single-family homes	3	3	-
Special trade contractors	5	5	-
Miscellaneous special trade contractors	3	3	-
Transportation and public utilities	5	4	-
Retail trade	3	-	-
Services	5	4	-
Business services	3	3	-
Public administration	8	-	-



Note: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

For more information you can contact the:

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