

The Deadliest Jobs: Fatal Injuries and Suicides

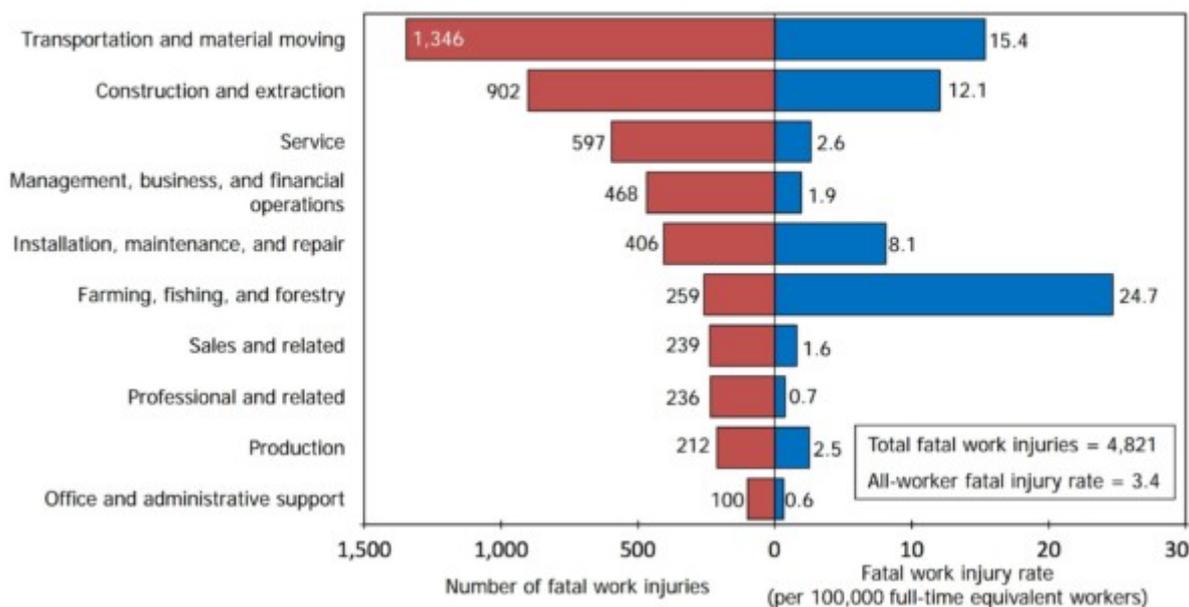


By Alex Berezow, PhD — July 7, 2016

NOTE: The CDC data cited in this article on suicide rates was [retracted](#) [1] on November 16, 2018 due to various flaws committed by the authors. Updated data can be viewed [here](#) [2].

Every year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics releases its most recent data on the deadliest jobs in America. As usual, the "farming, fishing, and forestry" occupation group was by far the deadliest, with a fatal injury rate of 24.7 per 100,000 workers. (Note that the rate of fatal injuries, indicated by the blue bars, is the more relevant statistic. Also note that these numbers do not include the military, volunteers, or people under the age of 16.)

Number and rate of fatal occupational injuries to civilian workers by major occupation group, 2014

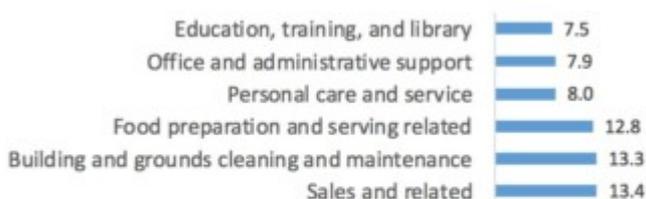


[3] Credit:

Bureau of Labor Statistics

As shown, the four deadliest occupation groups are ranked as follows: **#1.** Farming, fishing, and forestry **#2.** Transportation and material moving **#3.** Construction and extraction **#4.** Installation, maintenance, and repair The danger for these workers, however, does not end when they leave the workplace. Data released last week by the CDC shows that suicide rates tend to be highest among the same occupation groups. (Note that the CDC data also excludes the military and people under the age of 16. Furthermore, it only includes data on 17 states.)

Suicide Rate per 100,000 People by Occupation in 2012



Strikingly, the top three occupation groups with the highest suicide rates are also ranked within the top four deadliest occupation groups: **#1.** Farming, fishing, and forestry **#2.** Construction and extraction **#3.** Installation, maintenance, and repair What explains this? According to the CDC's analysis:

"Occupational groups with higher suicide rates might be at risk for a number of reasons, including job-related isolation and demands, stressful work environments, and work-home imbalance, as well as socioeconomic inequities, including lower income, lower education level, and lack of access to health services."

All of those reasons are plausible, but given the BLS data on the deadliest occupations, it may be that job-related stress is the most important factor. Surely, a job in which a person's life is literally on the line every single day takes an emotional toll, particularly if that worker knows a colleague who has been killed. Such stress may account for the relatively high rate of suicide among the [protective services](#) ^[5] (which include jobs like police officers, security guards, and firefighters), even though that occupational group isn't among the deadliest. **### Sources:** *Bureau of Labor Statistics. Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Charts, 1992-2014. Updated April 21, 2016. (PDF* ^[6]) *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Suicide Rates by Occupational Group — 17 States, 2012." MMWR 65 (25): 641-645. July 1, 2016. (Article* ^[7])

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Links

[1] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6745a6.htm>

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/11/15/suicide-rates-sex-and-occupation-13604>

[3] <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>

[4] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6525a1.htm>

[5] <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes330000.htm>

[6] <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/foi/cfoi/cfch0013.pdf>

[7] <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6525a1.htm>