

# News

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## WORK FATALITIES IN NEW YORK CITY IN 2006

A total of 99 fatal work injuries were reported in New York City in 2006, up from 88 in 2005, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Michael L. Dolfman reported that in 2006, the City had both the highest number of fatal falls to lower levels and the lowest number of homicides, since the fatality census began in 1992. The 13-percent increase in all workplace fatalities for the City in 2006 contrasts with a 1-percent decrease for the nation. (See table A.)

**Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States and New York City, by event or exposure, 2005 and 2006**

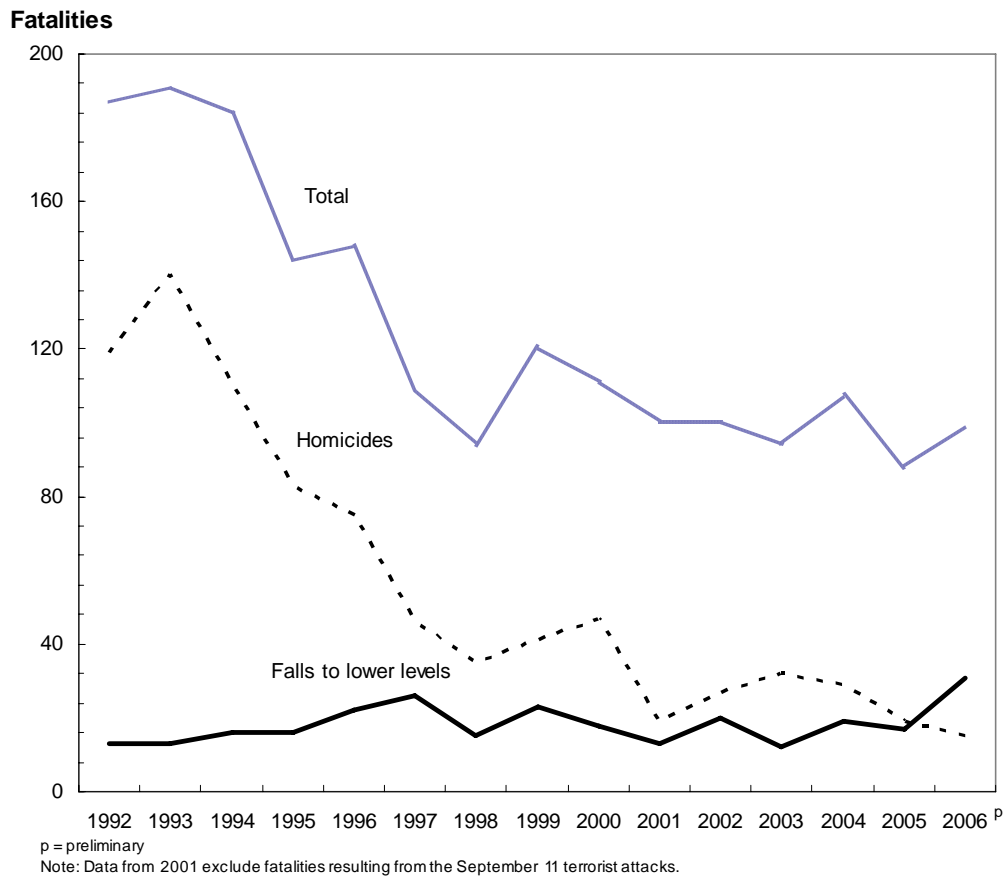
Event or exposure	United States		New York City	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Total.....	5,734	5,703	88	99
Highway.....	1,437	1,329	6	11
Homicides.....	567	516	19	15
Self-inflicted injuries.....	180	199	10	6
Struck by object.....	607	583	7	8
Fall to lower level.....	664	728	17	31
Exposure to caustic, noxious or... allergenic substances.....	136	153	3	7

Falls to a lower level were the most frequent type of fatality in New York City in 2006, accounting for 31 deaths, the highest number since the series began in 1992. (See chart A.) The previous high was 26 in 1997. Homicides were the next most common worker death, with 15, the lowest number in the history of the series. This was the first year since the inception of the BLS census that homicides were not the most frequent type of fatal event in New York City. Eleven workers died in highway incidents, while eight fatalities were due to being struck by an object, and seven fatalities resulted from exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances. At this level of detail, no other type of fatality accounted for more than 6 deaths in 2006. (See table 1.)



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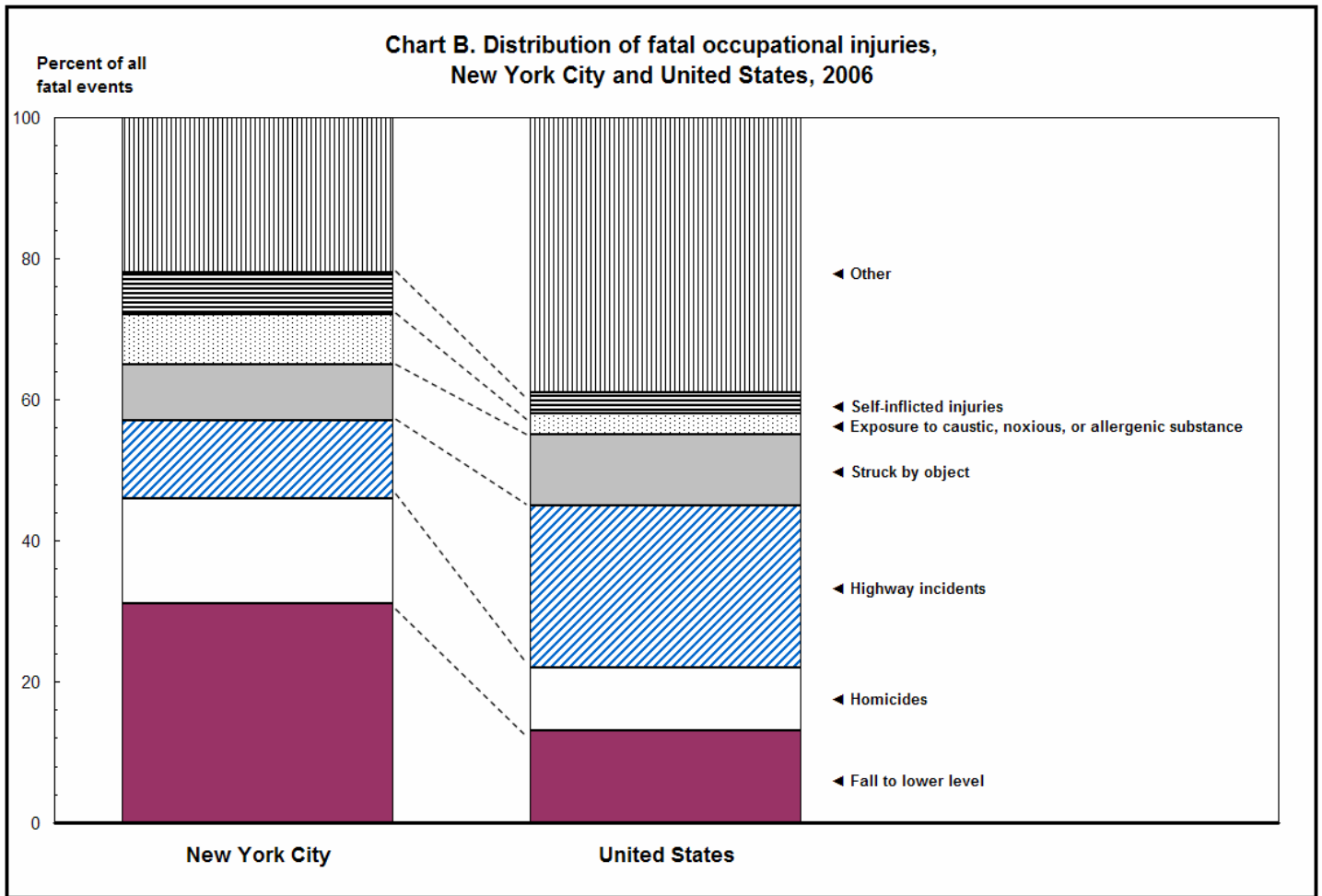
**Chart A. Total work-related fatalities, homicides, and falls to lower level, New York City, 1992-2006**



Over the year, the number of fatal falls to lower levels increased by 14. By itself, this event accounted for all of the increase in work fatalities in New York City in 2006. Highway incidents increased by five, and fatal exposures to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances rose by four. By contrast, homicides declined by four, continuing a downward trend.

As in the past, highway incidents were the most frequent fatal workplace event in the United States, accounting for nearly one out of every four fatal work injuries. (In New York City, 11 percent of all fatalities were attributed to this event.) Nationally, the second most frequent type of fatality was falls to a lower level accounting for 13 percent of the total, followed by being struck by an object (10 percent), homicides (9 percent), and being struck by a vehicle or mobile equipment (7 percent). As these figures suggest, the distribution of fatalities in New York City differed from the national distribution. (See chart B.) In particular, the share of highway fatalities was much lower in the City than for the nation as a whole, while the share of falls to a lower level was higher.

At the national level, fatal work injuries decreased 1 percent from the revised total of 5,734 fatalities recorded in 2005. Fatal highway incidents decreased 8 percent to 1,329 in 2006, the lowest number recorded since 1993, offsetting a 9.6-percent increase in falls to a lower level. Homicides in the nation decreased 9 percent to 516, a new series low.



Profile of fatal work injuries by industry, occupation, and demographic characteristics

*Industry.* Most fatalities in New York City continued to occur in the construction sector, with 43 worker deaths in 2006, up 20 from the prior year. (See table 2.) In construction, falls to a lower level were the most common event, accounting for 56 percent of the sector’s fatalities. In New York City, the construction sector accounted for 43 percent of all fatalities; nationally, construction also led other sectors with 1,226 deaths, accounting for 21 percent of all job-related fatal injuries.

The next highest fatality counts among New York City industry sectors were in retail trade (10) and real estate and rental and leasing (8). Almost 40 percent of the worker deaths in each of these two sectors involved homicides. Transportation and warehousing and wholesale trade followed, each with seven work fatalities. These industries were the only other private industry sectors to experience more than five work deaths in 2006. Government operations (of all industry types) reported six fatalities.

*Occupation.* Two major occupational groups—construction and extraction and transportation and material moving—accounted for more than one-half of all the workplace fatalities in the City. Construction and extraction workers had 44 fatalities, 26 of which were construction laborers. (See table 3.) Falls to lower level were the most frequent type of fatality among construction and extraction workers, accounting for 25 incidents.

Transportation and material moving occupations had 17 deaths. Motor vehicle operators, including 4 truck drivers and 3 taxi drivers, were involved in a total of 11 fatalities. The most frequent events leading to fatalities in transportation and material moving were highway incidents (nine) and struck by object (three). Sales occupations had nine deaths; no other major occupational group suffered more than six deaths.

*Demographics.* Forty-three percent of those fatally injured on-the-job in New York City were Hispanic or Latino. White, non-Hispanics accounted for 28 percent, black non-Hispanics, 21 percent, and Asians, 7 percent. Over the year, worker fatalities among Hispanics increased by 21, while decreasing by 6 for both white non-Hispanics and Asians. The sharp increase in Hispanic worker deaths pushed the death total over 40 for the first time in over 10 years. Nationally, fatalities to Hispanic employees reached a new series high, but they only accounted for 16 percent of all incidents.

## TECHNICAL NOTES

### Definitions

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. Fatalities to volunteer and unpaid family workers who perform the same duties as paid workers are also included in the counts. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's normal commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2006 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or impact from a crash or fall, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event or incident within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work exposures make identification of a universe problematic.

### Measurement techniques and limitations

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources--including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports--as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

### Identification and verification of work-related fatalities.

In 2006, there were 81 cases included at the national level for which work relationship could not be verified with a second document; however, the information on the initiating source document for these cases was sufficient to determine that the incident was likely to be job-related. Data for these fatalities are included in the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries counts. An additional 46 fatalities submitted by states were not included because the initiating source document had insufficient information to determine work relationship and could not be verified by either an independent source document or a follow-up questionnaire.

States may identify additional fatal work injuries after data collection closeout for a reference year. In addition, other fatalities excluded from the published count because of insufficient information to determine work relationship may subsequently be verified as work related. States have up to seven months to update their initial published state counts. This procedure ensures that fatality data are disseminated as quickly as possible and that legitimate cases are not excluded from the counts. Thus, each year's report should be considered

preliminary until final data are issued. Over the last 5 years, increases in the published counts based on additional information have averaged fewer than 27 fatalities per year or less than 0.5 percent of the revised total. The BLS news release issued August 10, 2006, reported a total of 5,702 fatal work injuries for 2005. Since then, a net addition of 32 fatal work injuries were identified, bringing the total for 2005 to 5,734. Revised counts for 2006 will be available in April 2008.

### **Federal/state agency coverage**

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether the decedent was working in a job covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or was outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used by each agency.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation.

Fatalities occurring among several other groups of workers are generally not covered by any federal or state agencies. These groups include self-employed and unpaid family workers, which accounted for about 18 percent of the fatalities; laborers on small farms, accounting for about 1 percent of the fatalities; and state and local government employees in states without OSHA-approved safety programs, which accounted for about 4 percent. (Approximately one-half of the states have approved OSHA safety programs, which cover state and local government employees.)

### **Acknowledgements**

BLS thanks the participating states, New York City, and the District of Columbia for their efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries, and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

**Table 1. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by event or exposure, 2005 and 2006**

Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>	2005	2006	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total .....	88	99	100
Transportation incidents .....	18	14	14
Highway incidents .....	6	11	11
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment .....	4	6	6
Vehicle struck stationary object, equipment on side of road .....	–	3	3
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment .....	10	–	–
Assaults and violent acts .....	29	21	21
Homicides .....	19	15	15
Shooting .....	13	10	10
Stabbing .....	3	3	3
Self-inflicted injury .....	10	6	6
Suicide, attempted suicide .....	10	6	6
Contact with objects and equipment .....	11	14	14
Struck by object .....	7	8	8
Struck by falling object .....	6	7	7
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials .....	–	5	5
Caught in or crushed in collapsing structure .....	–	4	4
Falls .....	17	34	34
Fall to lower level .....	17	31	31
Fall from floor, dock, or ground level .....	6	4	4
Fall from ladder .....	–	8	8
Fall from roof .....	–	6	6
Fall from scaffold, staging .....	6	8	8
Exposure to harmful substances or environments .....	9	10	10
Contact with electric current .....	3	–	–
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances .....	3	7	7
Inhalation of substance .....	3	–	–
Ingestion of substance .....	–	6	6
Fires and explosions .....	4	6	6
Fire--unintended or uncontrolled .....	4	6	6
Fire in residence, building, or other structure .....	4	6	6

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual. Includes other events and exposures, such as bodily reaction, in addition to those shown separately.  
(See note at end of tables.)

**Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by industry, 2005 and 2006**

Industry <sup>1</sup>	NAICS code <sup>1</sup>	2005	2006	
		Number	Number	Percent
Total .....		88	99	100
Private industry .....		79	93	94
Goods producing .....		28	46	46
Construction .....	23	23	43	43
Construction of buildings .....	236	4	9	9
Residential building construction .....	2361	3	5	5
Nonresidential building construction .....	2362	—	4	4
Specialty trade contractors .....	238	18	33	33
Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors .....	2381	11	18	18
Building equipment contractors .....	2382	4	3	3
Building finishing contractors .....	2383	—	5	5
Other specialty trade contractors .....	2389	3	5	5
Manufacturing .....	31-33	5	3	3
Service producing .....		51	47	47
Trade, transportation, and utilities .....		24	24	24
Wholesale trade .....	42	4	7	7
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods .....	423	3	6	6
Retail trade .....	44-45	9	10	10
Building material and garden supply stores .....	444	—	3	3
Food and beverage stores .....	445	3	3	3
Transportation and warehousing .....	48-49	11	7	7
Truck transportation .....	484	3	3	3
Transit and ground passenger transportation .....	485	4	3	3
Financial activities .....		—	8	8
Real estate and rental and leasing .....	53	—	8	8
Real estate .....	531	—	8	8
Professional and business services .....		3	4	4
Administrative and waste services .....	56	—	3	3
Educational and health services .....		—	4	4
Health care and social assistance .....	62	—	3	3
Leisure and hospitality .....		3	5	5
Accommodation and food services .....	72	3	3	3
Food services and drinking places .....	722	3	3	3
Other services, except public administration .....	81	17	—	—
Repair and maintenance .....	811	7	—	—
Personal and laundry services .....	812	7	—	—
Government <sup>2</sup> .....		9	6	6

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2002 North American Industry Classification System.

<sup>2</sup> Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry. (See note at end of tables.)



**Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by occupation, 2005 and 2006**

Occupation <sup>1</sup>	2005	2006	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total .....	88	99	100
Management occupations .....	3	3	3
Protective service occupations .....	7	4	4
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations .....	3	6	6
Building cleaning and pest control workers .....	–	5	5
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners .....	–	5	5
Personal care and service occupations .....	6	–	–
Sales and related occupations .....	7	9	9
Supervisors, sales workers .....	–	3	3
Retail sales workers .....	4	4	4
Construction and extraction occupations .....	24	44	44
Supervisors, construction and extraction workers .....	–	5	5
Construction trades workers .....	23	37	37
Construction laborers .....	16	26	26
Electricians .....	–	3	3
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	6	–	–
Vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics, installers, and repairers .....	4	–	–
Production occupations .....	4	4	4
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	23	17	17
Motor vehicle operators .....	13	11	11
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer .....	5	4	4
Taxi drivers and chauffeurs .....	4	3	3
Material moving workers .....	5	4	4
Laborers and material movers, hand .....	4	–	–

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification system.  
(See note at end of tables.)

**Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by selected demographic characteristics, 2005 and 2006**

Characteristic	2005	2006	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total .....	88	99	100
<b>Employee status</b>			
Wage and salary <sup>1</sup> .....	76	86	87
Self-employed <sup>2</sup> .....	12	13	13
<b>Sex</b>			
Male .....	82	95	96
Female .....	6	4	4
<b>Age<sup>3</sup></b>			
18 - 19 years .....	3	—	—
20 - 24 years .....	6	6	6
25 - 34 years .....	19	25	25
35 - 44 years .....	20	25	25
45 - 54 years .....	23	24	24
55 - 64 years .....	11	11	11
65 years and over .....	5	6	6
<b>Race or ethnic origin<sup>4</sup></b>			
White, non-Hispanic .....	34	28	28
Black, non-Hispanic .....	19	21	21
Asian .....	13	7	7
Hispanic or Latino .....	22	43	43

<sup>1</sup> May include volunteers and workers receiving other types of compensation.

<sup>2</sup> Includes self-employed workers, owners of unincorporated businesses and farms, paid and unpaid family workers, members of partnerships, and may include owners of incorporated businesses.

<sup>3</sup> Because there may have been no incidents reported for some ages or because the data do not meet publication criteria, information is not available for all age groups. In addition, some fatalities may have had insufficient information with which to determine the age of the decedents.

<sup>4</sup> Persons identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. The race categories shown exclude Hispanic and Latino workers.

NOTE: Data for 2006 are preliminary. Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Dashes indicate no data reported or data do not meet publication criteria.