



# **Pipeline Industry and Fires and Explosions in All Industries**

## **Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities**

### **Fact Sheet**

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[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

## **Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities in the Pipeline Industry and Events Involving Fires and Explosions**

The pipeline industry is relatively safe. When pipeline accidents do occur, they often draw more attention because of concerns about rising energy prices than their effect on workers.

The pipeline industry is part of the transportation sector. Pipeline transportation is further divided into Pipeline transportation of crude oil, of natural gas, and other commodities.

### **Fatal Injuries**

There were 10 fatal injuries in the pipeline industry over the 4-year period, from 2003-2006. Most of these fatalities were due to highway incidents or exposure to harmful substances or environments.

The oil and gas pipeline and related structures construction industry had 68 fatalities over the 4-year period, from 2003-2006, with 14 of these fatalities in 2005 caused by fires and explosions, the year which had the most fatalities in this event.

Fires and explosions are often cited in news stories about workplace injuries or fatalities, including the pipeline incident on November 28, 2007, in which two workers died. In all industries, there were a total of 201 fatal injuries due to fires and explosions in 2006.

### **Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses**

The rate of nonfatal injuries and illnesses in pipeline transportation in 2006 was 2.2 cases per 100 full-time workers, one-half the rate for total private industry.

Total nonfatal injury and illness incidence rates in 2006:

- Total private industry: 4.4 cases per 100 full-time workers
- Transportation and warehousing: 6.5 per 100 full-time workers
- Pipeline transportation: 2.2 per 100 full-time workers

More serious injuries and illnesses require days away from work to recuperate. In pipeline transportation, the rate of injuries and illnesses with days away from work was 60 per 10,000 full-time workers in 2006, less than half the rate for the private sector as a whole.

Rates of injuries and illnesses with days away from work in 2006:

- Total private industry: 127.8 cases per 10,000 workers

- Pipeline transportation: 60.0 per 10,000 workers

Although fires and explosions often draw a great deal of attention, they are not common events leading to injuries and illnesses in private sector workplaces. Over the past few years, between 2,270 and 2,600 workers annually, in all private industries, had injuries or illnesses from fires and explosions severe enough that they required days away from work. The occupations with the highest rates of injury due to these events are the construction and extractive occupations and installation, maintenance, and repair occupations, both with 1.1 cases per 10,000 workers.

Fires and explosions rates of cases with days away from work in 2006:

- All occupations: 0.2 cases per 10,000 workers
- Construction and extraction occupations: 1.1 per 10,000 workers
- Installation, maintenance, and repair workers: 1.1 per 10,000 workers

Median days away from work are a measure of the severity of injuries and illnesses. Although workers in pipeline transportation had lower rates of injury than workers in total private industry, their recuperation times when they do get injured are longer, ranging from two to three times the private-industry average for the past few years. Knee injuries made up one-fourth of all injuries in the industry in 2006; knee injuries have a relatively long recuperation period, a median of 14 days away from work in all industries. Injuries and illnesses due to fires and explosions also have a longer recuperation time than injuries and illnesses as a whole.

Median days away from work in 2006:

- Total private industry: 7 days away from work
- Pipeline transportation: 25 days
- Fires and explosions (all industries): 10 days

More information on injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in the pipeline industry or involving fires and explosions is available at [www.bls.gov/iif](http://www.bls.gov/iif) or (202) 691-6170.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), December 5, 2007. Fatality data are from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Nonfatal injury and illness data are from the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.