



Occupational Suicides

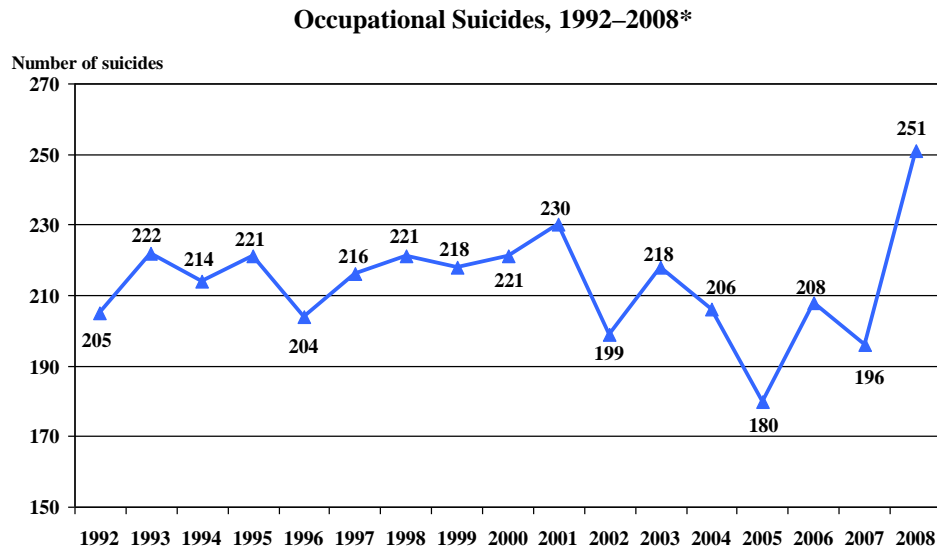
Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

Fact Sheet

August 2009
www.bls.gov

Increase in Occupational Fatalities due to Suicide

Preliminary data from the 2008 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) program reported 251 workplace suicides, their highest level since the inception of the CFOI program in 1992. The 2008 count is 28 percent higher than the 196 suicides recorded in 2007.



*Data for 2008 are preliminary. Data for prior years are revised and final.
NOTE: Data from 2001 exclude fatalities resulting from the September 11 terrorist attacks.
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2009.

BLS advises caution when interpreting these numbers. CFOI generally includes only those cases of suicide that occur at the work site. Suicides occurring outside of the workplace or not on work time may also be included, but only if the program has documentation of the work relationship. Such determinations are extremely difficult and are not undertaken by the program without clear evidence in the source documents. Therefore, the CFOI counts may not be a complete census of work-related suicide.

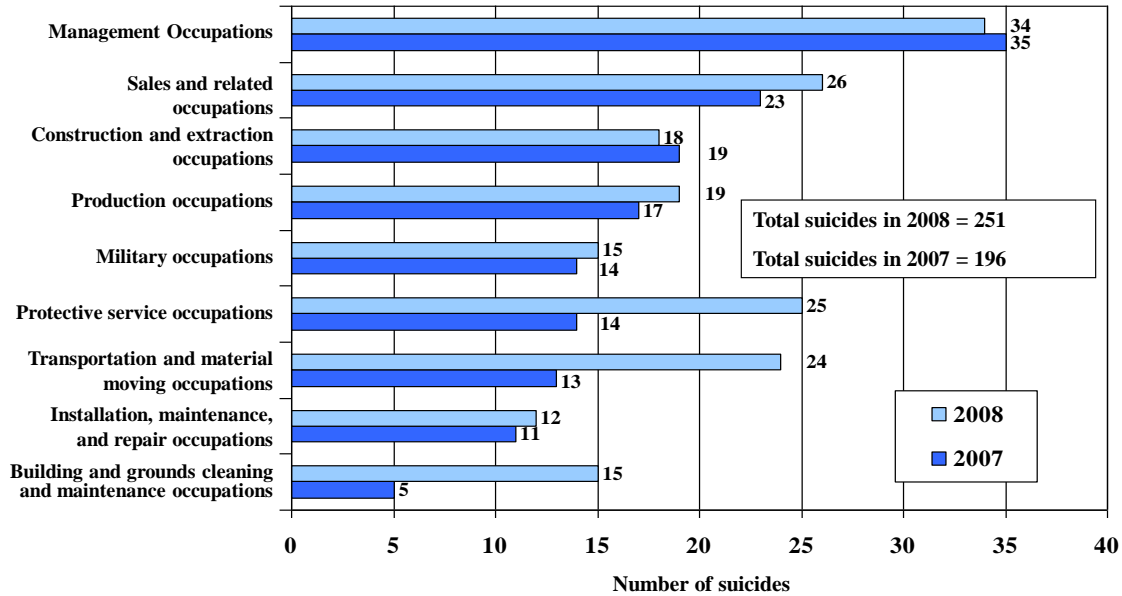
An overview of the demographic characteristics of workers who commit suicide reveals a similar profile over time. Of the 251 suicides in 2008, 236 of them were committed by men (94 percent). Workers age 45-54 accounted for the age group with the highest number of suicides (90 fatalities or 36 percent). Seventy-eight percent (197 suicides) were white workers. The proportion of suicides in each of these groups is notably higher than the proportion of total hours worked—men were 57 percent of the Nation's hours worked, workers 45-54 were 25 percent, and white workers were 69 percent.

The nature of an injury describes the principal physical characteristic of the work-related injury. For suicides in 2008, gunshot wounds (accounting for 130 suicides) and asphyxiations/strangulations or suffocations (accounting for 78 suicides) were the most common occurrences. Gunshot wounds increased 48 percent from 2007 to 2008.

Workers in management occupations account for the largest group of suicides. In 2008 they accounted for 14 percent of suicides (34 fatalities) and in 2007 they accounted for 18 percent of all suicides (35 fatalities). Transportation and material moving occupations, sales and related occupations, and protective service occupations each accounted for 10 percent of total suicides. The occupations that experienced the largest increases in suicides from 2007 to 2008 were protective service occupations (14 to

25 fatalities) and transportation and material moving occupations (13 to 24 fatalities). About a third of the total protective service suicides in 2008 were police officers.

Suicides by Selected Occupations, 2007–08*



*Data for 2008 are preliminary. Data for prior years are revised and final.
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2009.

Almost 80 percent of suicides (199 fatalities) occurred in private industry and most of those (137 fatalities) were in the service-providing industry sector. Fifty-two of the 251 total suicides in 2008 occurred in government.

If you wish to find more information on how cases, occupations, or industries are classified please see the following:

- The Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual, <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshooics.htm>.
- The Standard Occupational Classification Manual, http://www.bls.gov/soc/soc_majo.htm.
- The North American Industry Classification System, <http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm>.