

FATAL ELECTROCUTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE PROFILED

Job-related electrocutions dropped below 300 for the first time in the five-year period and accounted for 5 percent of worker deaths in 1996. Construction trade workers, such as painters, electricians, and carpenters, accounted for a large portion of the decline from the 1995 total. Two-fifths of the worker deaths from electrocution resulted from the worker or equipment being used coming in contact with overhead power lines.

The construction industry accounted for about two-fifths of the fatal contacts with electric current. Construction workers came into contact with overhead power lines while on bucket trucks, cranes, bulldozers, scaffolds, and ladders. Several were electrocuted while in crawl spaces under houses or in ceilings or while drilling through paneling.

Services and agriculture, forestry, and fishing each accounted for about one-tenth of the job-related electrocutions. Service workers were typically electrocuted while installing or repairing machines, appliances, or other equipment such as neon signs and billboards. Several workers in agriculture, forestry, and fishing were electrocuted when equipment they were moving, such as irrigation pipes or grain augers, came into contact with a power line or when they were trimming trees. Several farmers were struck by lightning. Electricians and their apprentices accounted for almost one-fifth of the electrocutions; mechanics and repairers accounted for one-tenth.

Electrocuted workers were virtually all males and slightly younger than the victims of other types of fatal work injuries.

ELECTROCUTIONS

Job-related electrocutions by selected characteristics, 1996

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Total	279	100	Total	279	100
Employee status			Occupation		
Wage and salary workers	242	87	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	8	3
Self-employed	37	13	Technical, sales, and administrative support jobs	8	3
			Service occupations	10	4
Gender			Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	34	12
Men	276	99	Farm operators and managers	10	4
Women	3	1	Other agricultural and related occupations	22	8
			Farm occupations, except managerial	11	4
Age			Farm workers	10	4
16 to 19 years	9	3	Related agricultural occupations	11	4
20 to 24 years	36	13	Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	10	4
25 to 34 years	102	37	Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	149	53
35 to 44 years	74	27	Mechanics and repairers	30	11
45 to 54 years	41	15	Mechanics and repairers, except supervisors	26	9
55 to 64 years	13	5	Electrical and electronic equipment repairers	7	3
65 years and over	3	1	Construction trades	111	40
			Construction trades, except supervisors	107	38
Race			Electricians and apprentices	49	18
White	235	84	Electrical power installers and repairers	23	8
Black	24	9	Operators, fabricators, and laborers	66	24
Other	7	3	Transportation and material moving occupations	17	6
Unspecified	13	5	Motor vehicle operators	10	4
			Truck drivers	10	4
Hispanic origin			Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	45	16
Hispanic	37	13	Construction laborers	26	9
			Laborers, except construction	13	5
			Other or unspecified	4	1
Type of electric current			Industry		
Machine, tool, appliance, or light fixture	45	16	Private industry	266	95
Wiring, transformers, or other electrical components	69	25	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	35	13
Contact with overhead power lines	116	42	Agricultural services	20	7
Contact with underground, buried power lines	5	2	Landscape and horticultural services	15	5
Struck by lightning	18	6	Mining	4	1
Other or unspecified	26	9	Construction	126	45
			General building contractors	12	4
Location			Heavy construction, except building	23	8
Home	55	20	Heavy construction, except highway	18	6
Farm	31	11	Water, sewer, and utility lines	16	6
Industrial place and premises	111	40	Special trade contractors	91	33
Construction site (includes major renovations)	41	15	Plumbing, heating, air-conditioning	12	4
Factory, plant	24	9	Electrical work	35	13
Street and highway	28	10	Roofing, siding, and sheet metal work	16	6
Local road or street	16	6	Manufacturing	25	9
Public building	23	8	Transportation and public utilities	39	14
Other or unspecified	31	11	Electric, gas, and sanitary services	23	8
			Electric services	19	7
			Wholesale trade	3	1
			Retail trade	7	3
			Services	22	8
			Other or unspecified	5	2
			Government		
			Local	13	5
				10	4

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

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1996