

Special Topics in Fatal Occupational Injury

Fatal Injuries among Truck Drivers

Truck drivers suffered nearly 14% of the fatal occupational injuries during 1997 according to CFOI data. The number of fatalities among truck drivers has increased fairly steadily, from 699 in 1992 to 862 in 1997. Over the same period, the fatality rate increased from 26 to 28 per 100,000 workers. In 1997, more than 50% of the fatalities occurred in trucks with trailers or semitrailers (Figure 2–14), and more than 80% occurred in transportation-related incidents (Figure 2–15). Fatalities from jackknifing and from collisions increased by 16% and 9%, respectively, between 1996 and 1997. More than half of the fatal occupational injuries among truck drivers occurred on interstate highways, freeways, expressways, or other State or U.S. highways (Figure 2–16).

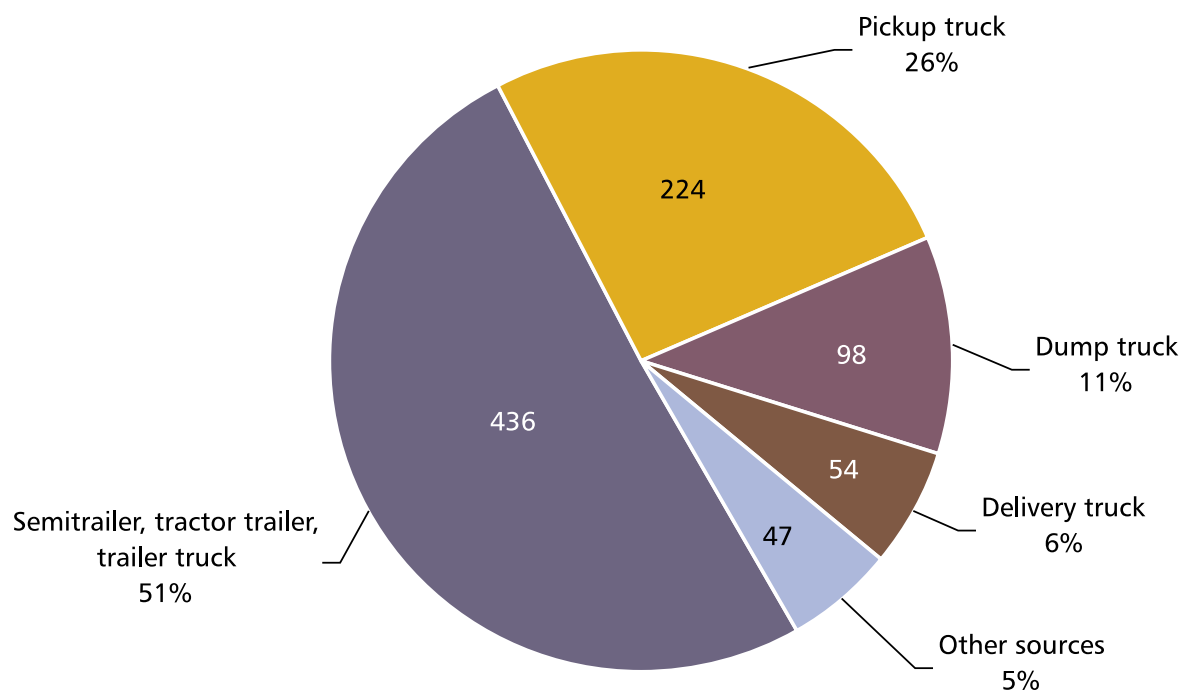


Figure 2–14. Number and distribution of fatal occupational injuries to truck drivers by source of fatal injury, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

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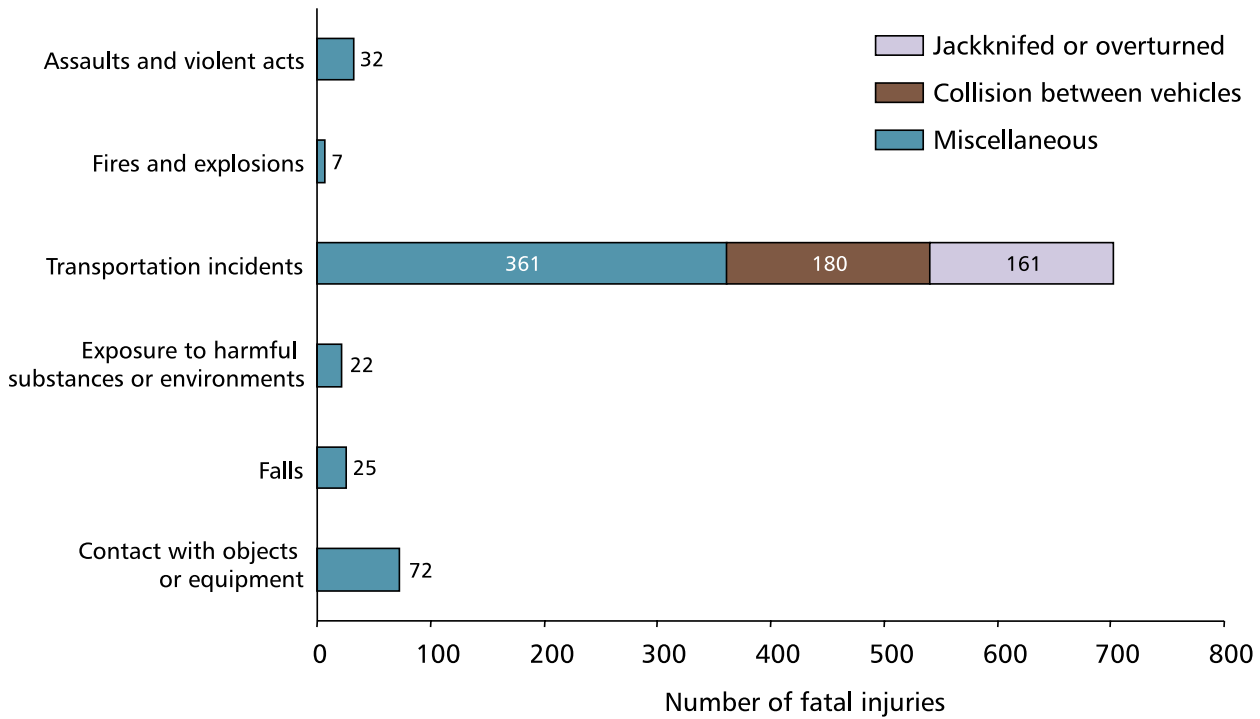


Figure 2-15. Number of fatal occupational injuries to truck drivers by event or exposure, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

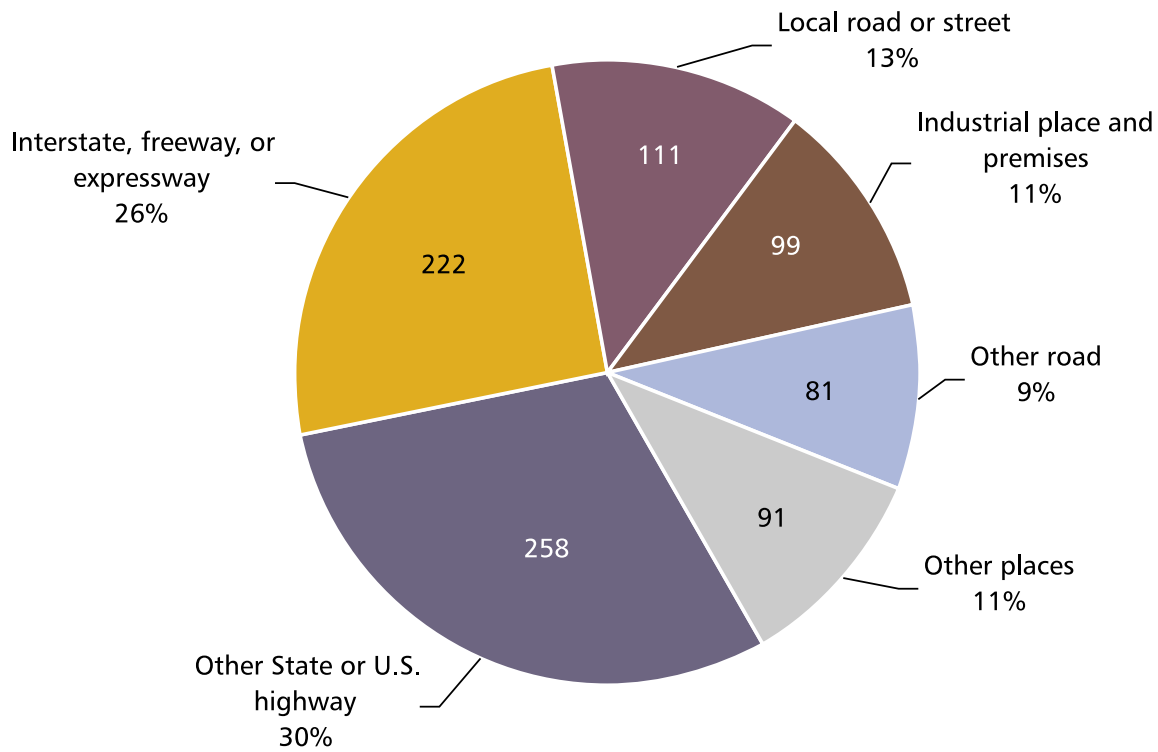


Figure 2-16. Number and distribution of fatal occupational injuries to truck drivers by location of fatal injury, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

Homicides

Homicides, the second leading cause of fatal occupational injuries, declined by 7% from 1996 to 1997. Taxi drivers had the highest rate of homicide (Figure 2–17); the highest number of homicides occurred in retail trade in grocery stores and eating and drinking establishments (Figure 2–18). Eighty percent of workplace homicides resulted from shootings [CFOI 1999]. Robbery was the primary motive for occupational homicide when a motive could be ascertained from the source documents (Figure 2–19).

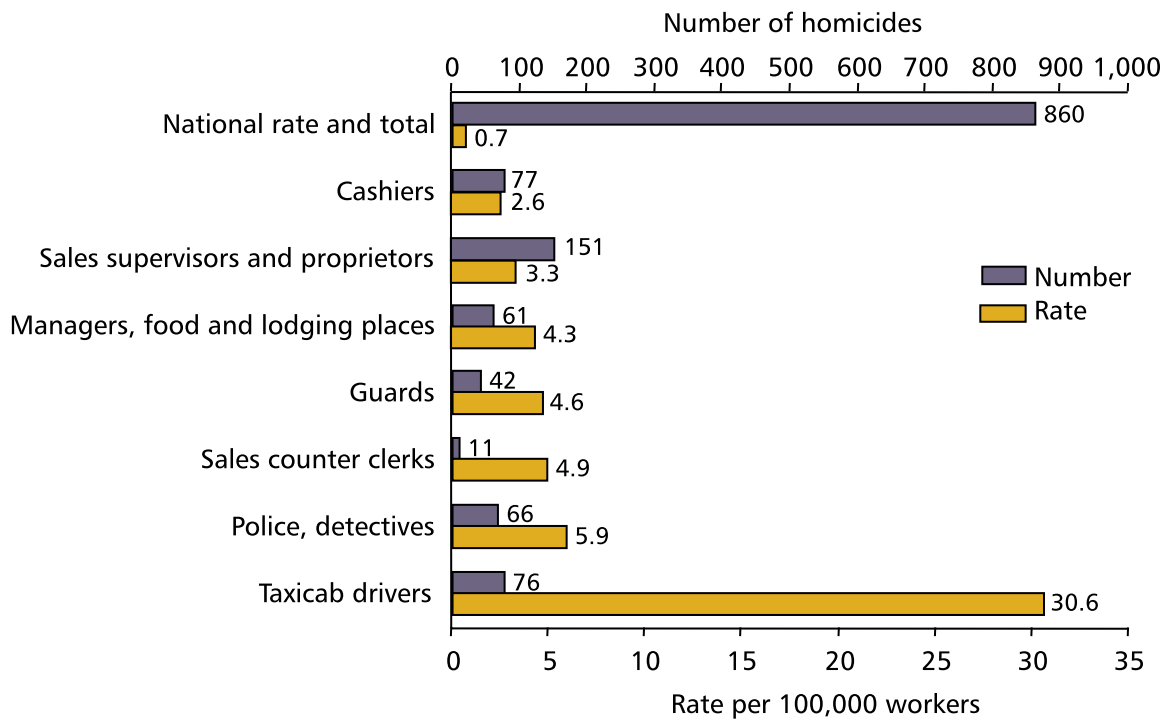


Figure 2–17. Number and incidence rate of homicides for high-risk occupations, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

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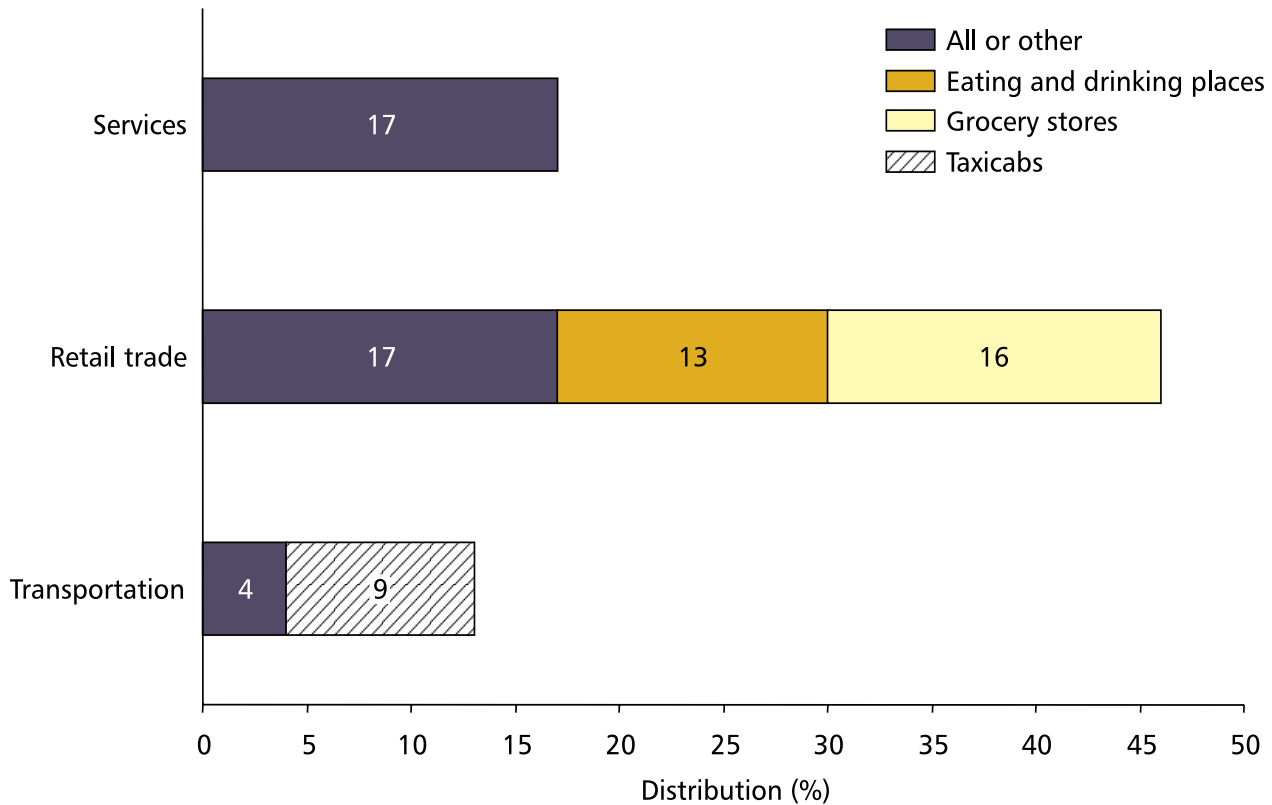


Figure 2-18. Distribution of homicides in high-risk industries, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

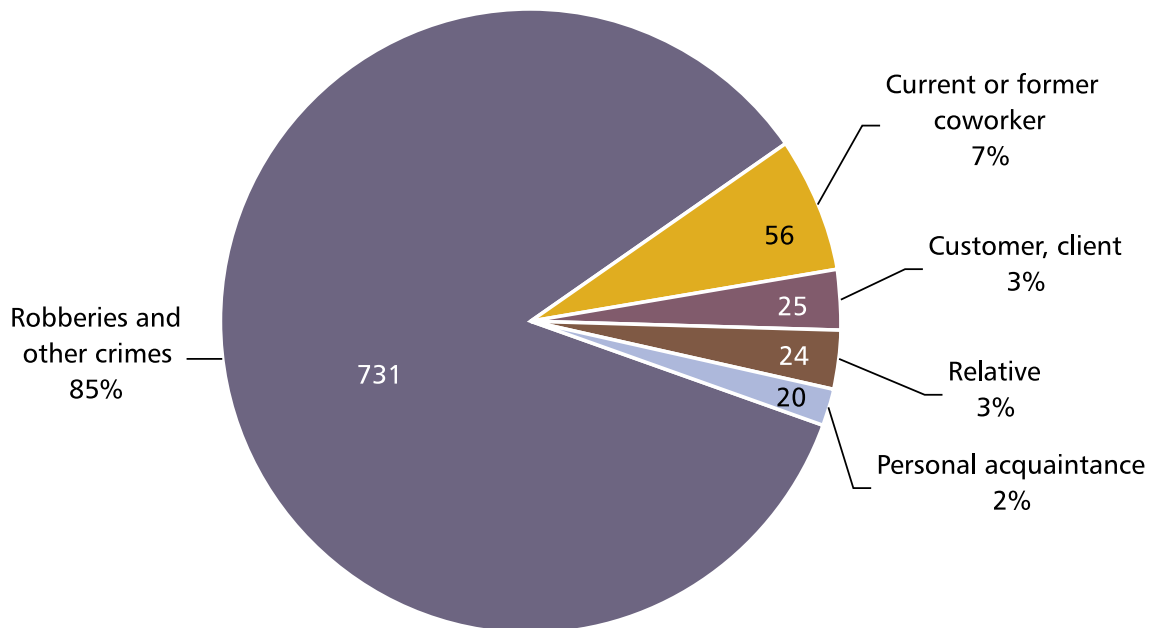


Figure 2-19. Number and distribution of work-related homicides, by circumstance or alleged perpetrator, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

Fatal Falls

Falls were the fifth leading type of fatal occupational event in 1997, accounting for more than 700 deaths, or 12% of all fatal occupational injuries (Figure 1–9). Fatalities from falls recorded in the CFOI increased by more than 19% from 1992 to 1997. Falls to a lower level, including falls from roofs, were the major contributors (Figure 2–20). Approximately half of the falls occurred in the construction industry (Figures 2–21 and 2–22).

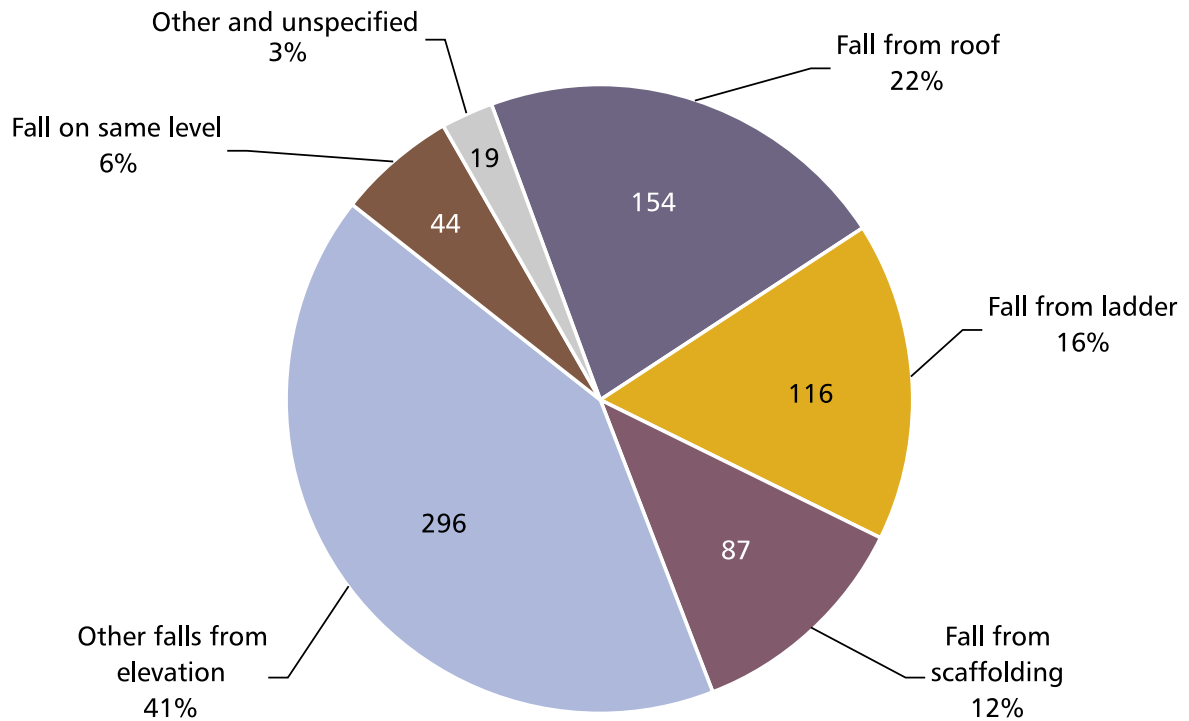


Figure 2–20. Number and distribution of fatal occupational falls by type of fall, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

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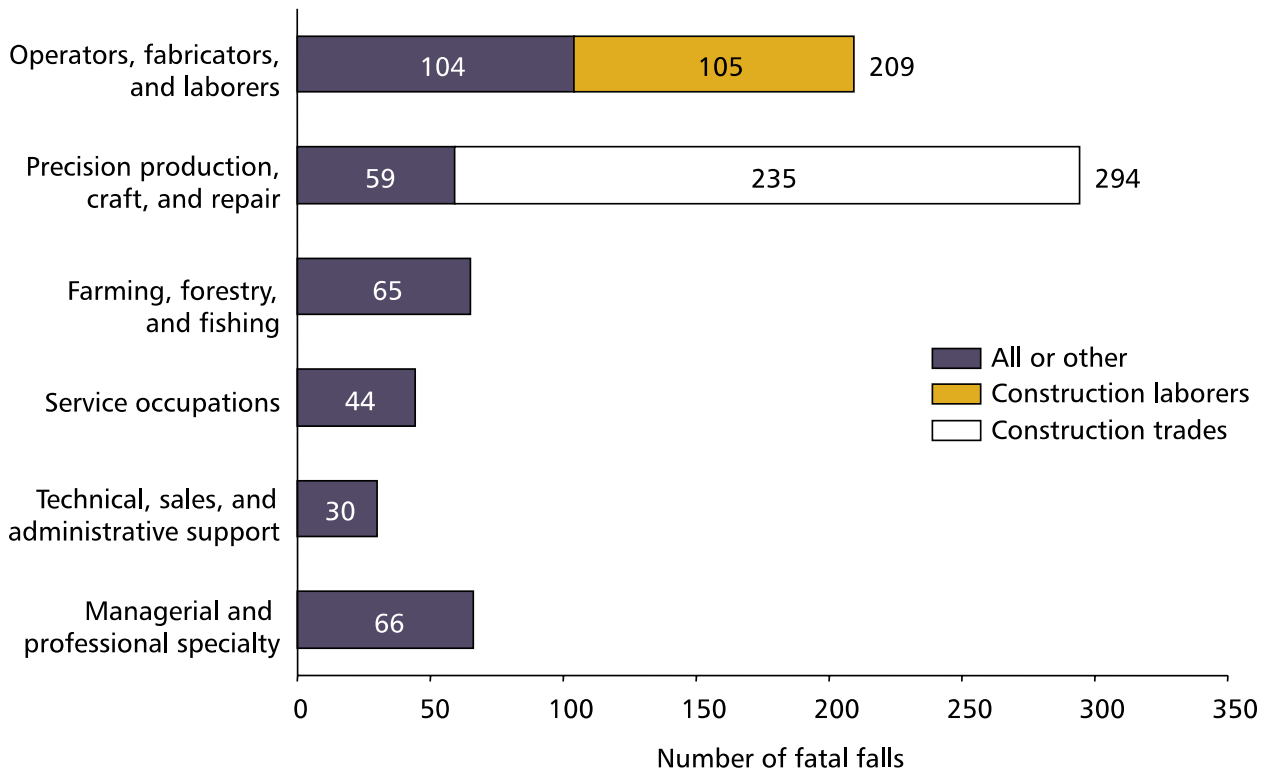


Figure 2–21. Number of fatal occupational falls by occupational group, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

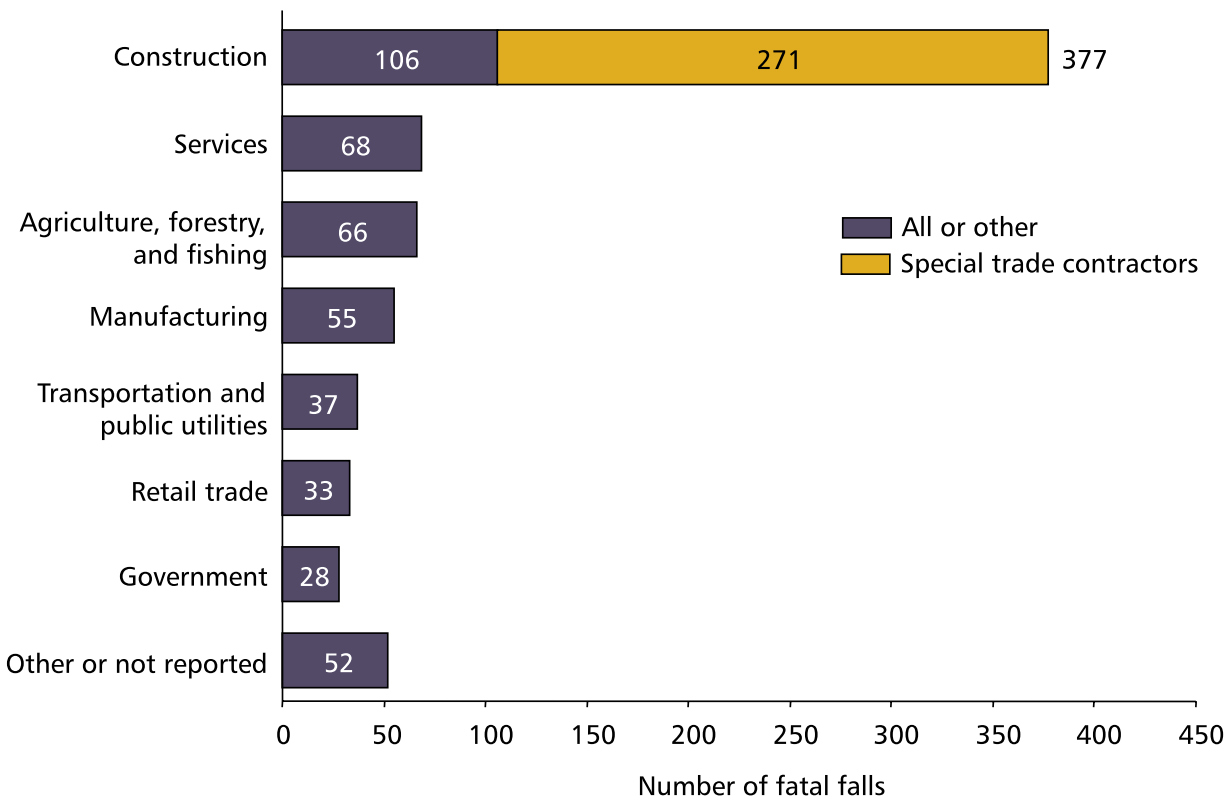


Figure 2–22. Number of fatal occupational falls by industry division, 1997. (Source: CFOI [1999].)

Fire Fighter Fatalities

NIOSH began investigating all fire fighter fatalities in October 1998. The goal of this initiative is to examine the magnitude and characteristics of occupational deaths and severe injuries among fire fighters and to develop recommendations for injury prevention. The investigations are being conducted through the fatality assessment and control evaluation (FACE) model developed by NIOSH. For each case investigated, information is collected on factors associated with the fire fighter who died, the physical agents contributing to the death, and the environment. These factors are identified during three phases: pre-event, event, and post-event. The contributing factors are investigated in detail for each incident and are summarized in the investigation report along with recommendations for preventing future incidents. Additional information about the NIOSH fire fighter program and individual investigation case reports are available on the NIOSH Web site at www.cdc.gov/niosh/firehome.html.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration estimate that an average of 112 fire fighters died on the job each year between 1979 and 1998 (Figure 2–23). In 1998, 44% of the fire fighter deaths occurred at the fireground. Another 35% occurred while responding to or returning from alarms or performing other nonfire emergency duties (Figure 2–24). Heart attacks (43%), internal trauma (23%), and asphyxiation (10%) were the most frequent causes of death in 1998 (Figure 2–25).

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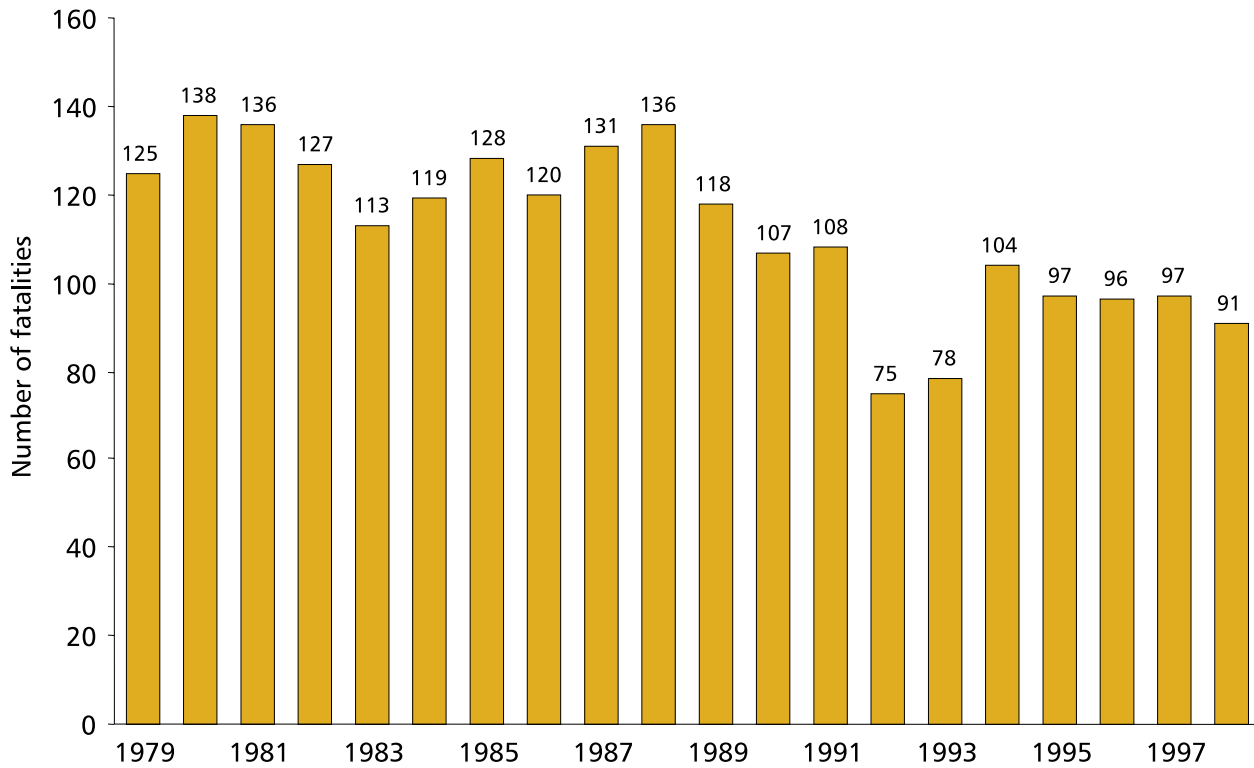


Figure 2–23. Number of fire fighter deaths, 1979–1998. Total number of deaths was 2,244. (Source: NFPA [Washburn et al. 1999].)

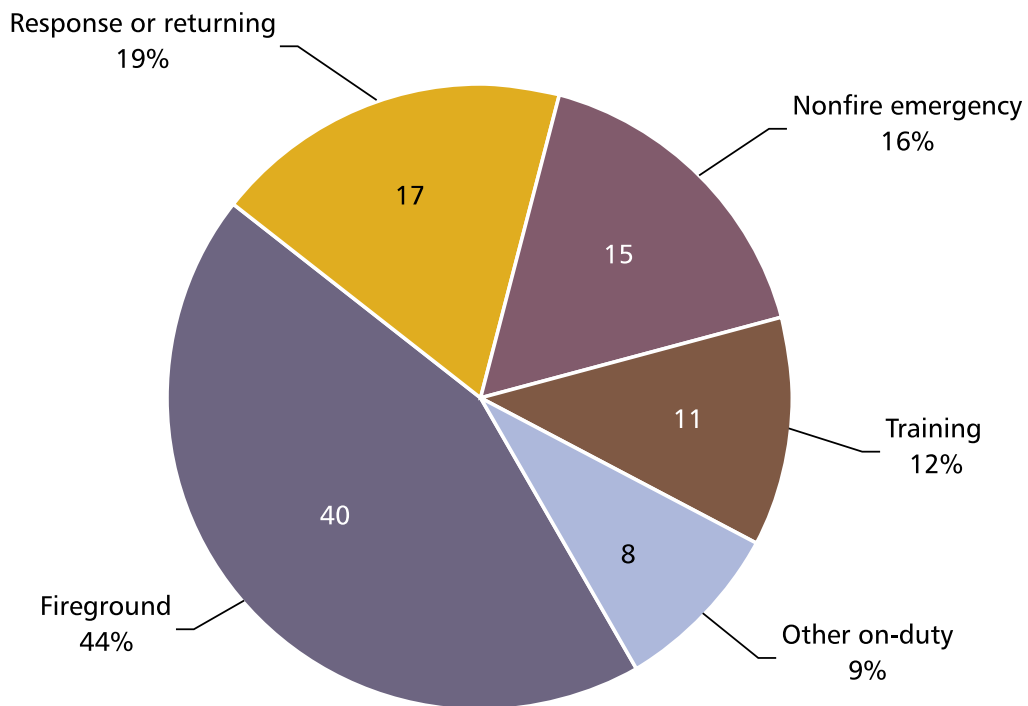


Figure 2–24. Number and distribution of fire fighter deaths by type of duty, 1998. Total number of deaths was 91. (Source: NFPA [Washburn et al. 1999].)

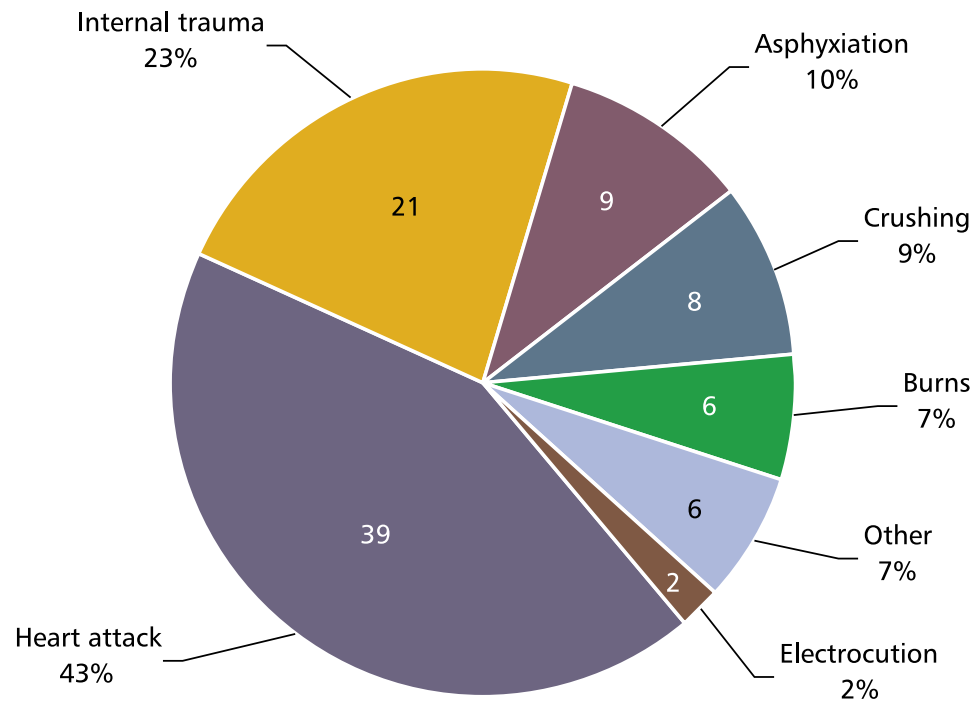


Figure 2-25. Number and distribution of fire fighter deaths by nature of injury, 1998. Total number of deaths was 91. (Source: NFPA [Washburn et al. 1999].)