

COMPENDIUM OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATISTICS AUSTRALIA 2005–06

June 2008



Australian Government

Australian Safety and Compensation Council

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Part B

Compensated fatalities, 2005–06p

Preliminary data show that in 2005–06, 231 claims involving the death of an employee were accepted for compensation: workers' compensation schemes do not generally cover self-employed workers. This is equivalent to an incidence rate of 2.6 compensated fatalities per 100 000 Australian employees. The compensated fatality claims discussed in this section are limited to those that occurred in the workplace; fatalities related to journeys to or from work are not included in this analysis.

Because the 2005–06 data are preliminary, they are known to understate the final number of accepted workers' compensation claims. A small proportion of claims lodged during 2005–06 would not have had their liability accepted in time to be reported here.

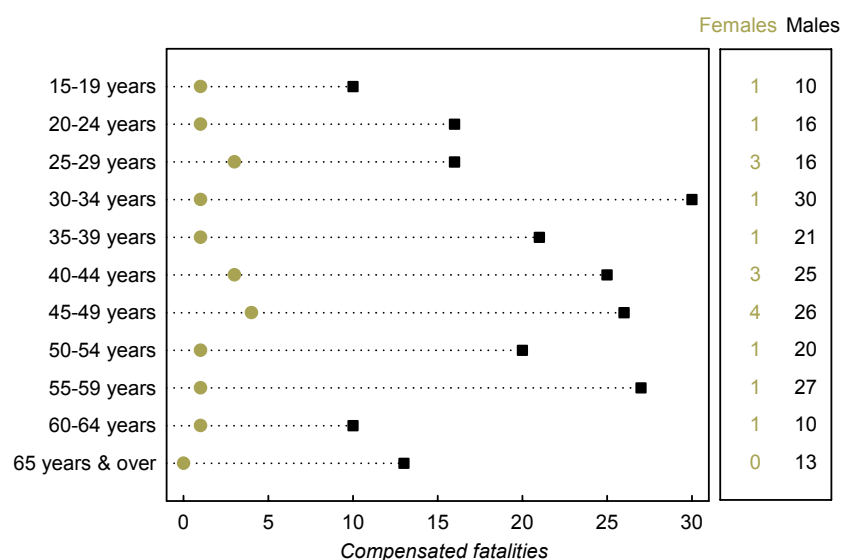
Compensated fatalities by age and gender

The preliminary data for 2005–06 show that work-related compensated fatalities mainly involved men. Of the 231 fatalities, 214 were male employees (93%) and 17 were female employees (7%). Figure 8 shows that the number of compensated fatalities were concentrated across the middle age groups, with fewer fatalities occurring in the youngest and oldest age groups: in part, due to the smaller number of employees in these age groups.

The highest number of compensated male fatalities (40) occurred in the Transport and storage industry. This was followed by the Construction industry (33 male fatalities); the Manufacturing industry (28 male fatalities); and the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (22 male fatalities). The highest number of female compensated fatalities (6) occurred in the Property and business services industry. The second highest, with 4 female fatalities, was the Health and community services industry.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the males who sustained a fatal work-related injury or disease were employed as either Intermediate production and transport

Figure 8 Compensated fatalities: number by age and gender, 2005–06p



workers (67 male fatalities); Labourers and related workers (44 male fatalities); or Tradespersons and related workers (44 male fatalities). The equal highest number of female fatalities (3) occurred among Professionals; Associate professionals; Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers; and Elementary clerical, sales and service workers.

The most common nature of injury or disease recorded for males, accounting for 81 fatalities, was *Multiple injuries*. This category is used when no principal injury could be identified as the cause of death. The second most common nature of injury or disease for males was *Diseases of the circulatory system*, accounting for 20 male fatalities. For females, 3 of the 13 fatalities were caused by *Multiple injuries*.

Table 5 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by age, 2005–06p

Age group	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
15-19 years	11	1.5	1.6
20-24 years	17	1.6	1.0
25-29 years	19	1.9	1.1
30-34 years	31	3.0	1.7
35-39 years	22	2.2	1.3
40-44 years	28	2.6	1.5
45-49 years	30	2.9	1.6
50-54 years	21	2.4	1.4
55-59 years	28	4.2	2.5
60-64 years	11	3.5	2.2
65 years & over	13	10.3	7.4
Total compensated fatalities	231	2.6	1.6

(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

Table 5 shows how the number, incidence and frequency rates vary by age for the 231 compensated fatalities recorded in 2005–06p. The most common age recorded for deceased employees was 30–34 years: accounting for 31 fatalities. However, the incidence and frequency rates for this age group were not notably high because of the relatively large number of employees in this age group. There were 13 fatalities recorded where the employee was aged 65 years and over. However, because relatively few employees continue working beyond 65 years of age, this age group recorded the highest incidence and frequency rates (10 fatalities per 100 000 employees and 7 fatalities per 100 million hours worked respectively). Table 7 shows that fatality incidence and frequency rates generally increased with age.

While fatalities from disease accounted for 47 (20%) of the 231 compensated fatalities in 2005–06p, nearly half (21 fatalities) of these disease-related fatalities involved employees aged 55 years and over. Of the fatalities that involved employees aged 55 years and over, 40% were disease-related compared with 11% among fatalities involving employees aged less than 30 years. A greater proportion of disease-related fatalities are expected in the older age groups compared with the younger age groups because of older employees' greater length of exposure to work-related conditions and the long latency period of some work-related diseases.

Compensated fatalities by industry

Table 6 shows that in 2005–06p, the highest number of compensated fatalities in any industry, 41, was recorded within the Transport and storage industry and accounted for 18% of all compensated fatalities. The second highest number of

Table 6 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by industry (ranked on incidence rate), 2005–06p

Industry	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	23	12.7	7.0
Transport & storage	41	10.0	5.2
Mining	12	9.8	4.4
Electricity, gas & water supply	8	9.4	5.2
Construction	33	5.8	3.0
Manufacturing	28	2.9	1.5
Property & business services	27	2.4	1.4
Personal & other services	7	2.2	1.4
Communication services	3	1.9	1.0
Government administration & defence	7	1.5	0.9
Wholesale trade	5	1.3	0.7
Retail trade	13	1.0	0.7
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	4	0.8	0.6
Cultural & recreational services	2	0.8	0.6
Finance & insurance	2	0.6	0.3
Education	4	0.6	0.3
Health & community services	4	0.4	0.3
Industry not stated	8		
Total compensated fatalities	231	2.6	1.6

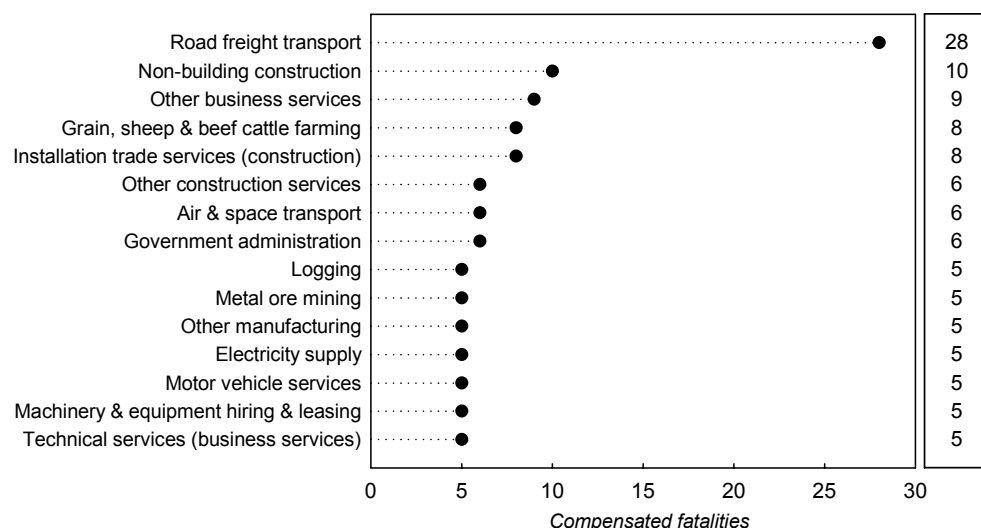
(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

fatalities, 33, were employees in the Construction industry, followed by the Manufacturing industry (28 fatalities) and the Property and business services industry (27 fatalities).

However, when the number of fatalities is expressed as a rate, the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest rate of 13 fatalities per 100 000 employees. This was followed by the Transport and storage industry and the Mining industry: both with a rate of 10 fatalities per 100 000 employees.

Figure 9 shows the industry sub-categories in which the highest numbers of compensated fatalities occurred in 2005–06p. Together, the fifteen industry sub-categories shown accounted for half of all fatalities in 2005–06p. At this level of detail the highest number of fatalities (28 fatalities — 12% of all compensated fatalities) was recorded in the Road freight transport sub-category. The second highest number (10 fatalities — 4% of all fatalities) was recorded by employees in the Non-building construction sub-category (which includes the construction of roads, bridges, railways, dams, and pipelines).

Figure 9 Compensated fatalities: fifteen highest industry sub-categories, 2005–06p

Compensated fatalities by occupation

Table 7 shows the number of compensated fatality claims recorded in each major occupation group. Intermediate production and transport workers accounted for 29% of compensated fatalities in 2005–06p (68 fatalities). This group also recorded the highest incidence and frequency rates: both about three times the respective rate for all compensated fatalities. Within the Intermediate production and transport workers group, two-thirds of the fatalities (45) were of Road and rail transport drivers.

The second highest number of fatalities, 45, was recorded by Labourers and related workers: representing 19% of all compensated fatalities. This group includes factory, mining, construction and agricultural labourers (7 fatalities were identified as Farm-hands and 5 as Factory labourers).

Of the 44 fatalities involving employees who worked as Tradespersons and related workers, 15 were Electrical and electronics tradespersons and 9 were Mechanical and fabrication engineering tradespersons.

Table 7 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by occupation (ranked on incidence rate), 2005–06p

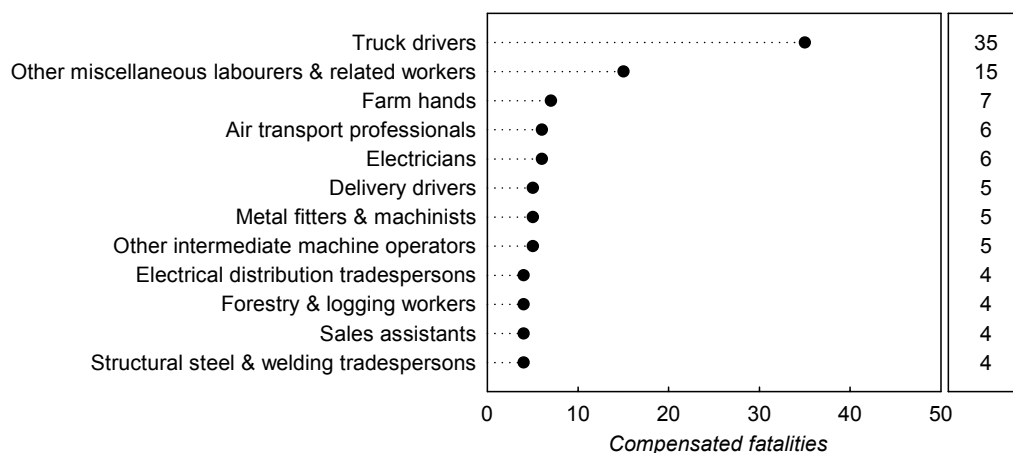
Occupation	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
Intermediate production & transport workers	68	9.2	5.0
Labourers & related workers	45	5.9	4.1
Tradespersons & related workers	44	4.7	2.5
Managers & administrators	14	2.2	1.0
Associate professionals	18	1.7	0.9
Professionals	25	1.4	0.8
Advanced clerical & service workers	3	0.9	0.6
Elementary clerical, sales & service workers	6	0.6	0.5
Intermediate clerical, sales & service workers	8	0.5	0.3
Total compensated fatalities	231	2.6	1.6

(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

Figure 10 shows the detailed occupation groups which recorded the highest number of fatalities in 2005–06p. These twelve groups together accounted for 43% of all compensated fatalities: with Truck drivers accounting for 15% (35 fatalities) of all compensated fatalities. There were also 5 fatalities recorded among Delivery drivers.

Figure 10 Compensated fatalities: twelve highest detailed occupation groups, 2005–06p

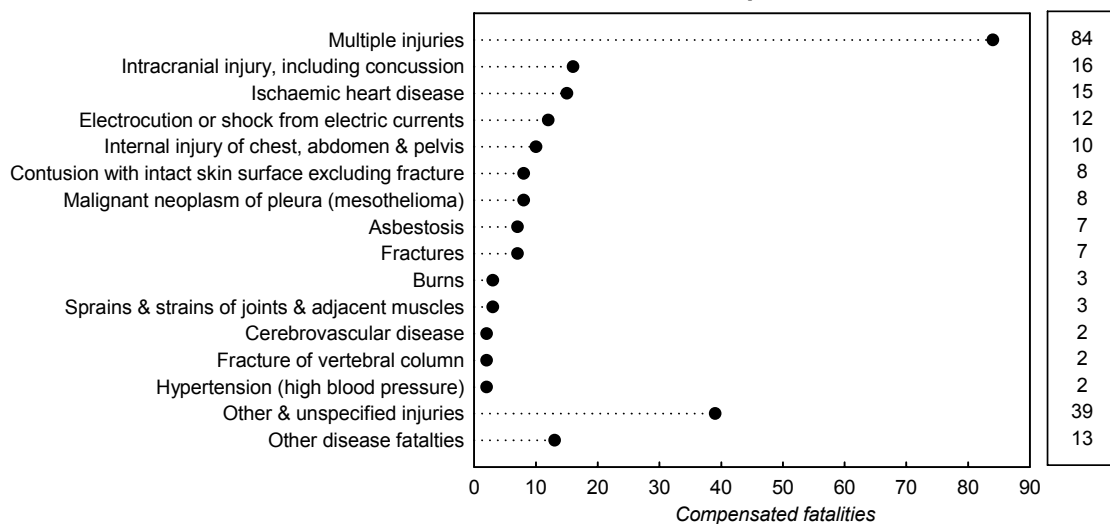


Compensated fatalities by nature of injury or disease

Figure 11 shows the number of compensated fatalities by the Nature of the injury or disease sustained by the deceased employee. Overall, of the 231 compensated fatalities in 2005–06p, 184 (80%) were caused by injury and 47 (20%) were caused by disease. *Multiple injuries*, with 84 fatalities, was the most common category, accounting for 36% of all compensated fatality claims. The second most common category, with 16 fatalities, was *Intracranial injury, including concussion*.

There were 8 compensated fatalities in 2005–06p caused by *Mesothelioma (malignant neoplasm of the pleura)* and 7 fatalities caused by the related *Asbestosis*. These workers' compensation figures are not a full measure of the incidence of these diseases in the community. For more information see the report *Mesothelioma in Australia, March 2008*, available from the ASCC website.

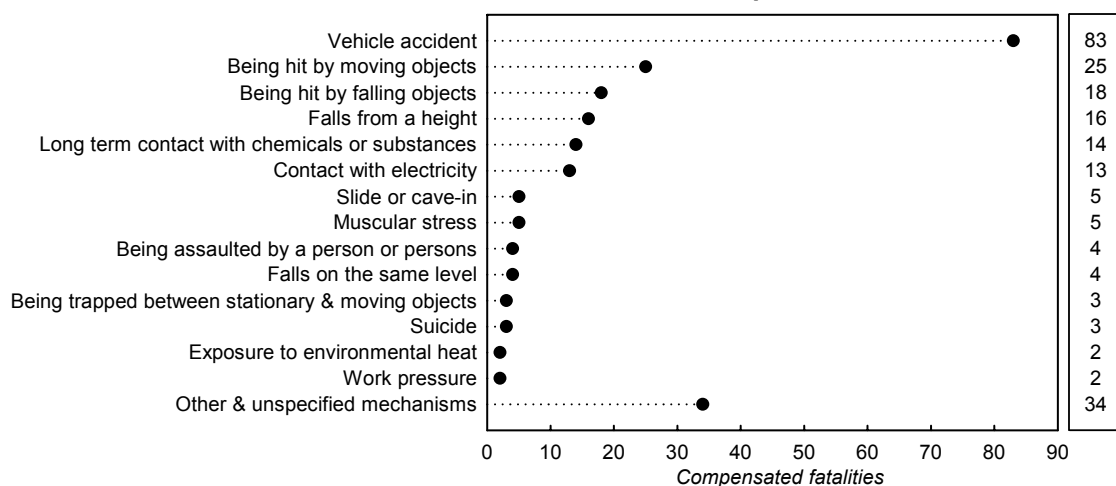
Figure 11 Compensated fatalities: number by nature of injury or disease, 2005–06p



Compensated fatalities by mechanism of injury or disease

The Mechanism classification is used to identify the action, exposure or event that caused the injury or disease. The number of fatalities by the mechanism of the most serious injury or disease is shown in Figure 12. The most common mechanism for compensated fatalities, responsible for 83 fatalities (36% of all compensated fatalities), was *Vehicle accidents*. The next most common mechanism, the cause of 25 fatalities (11%), was *Being hit by moving objects*. *Being hit by falling objects* accounted for 18 fatalities (8%) while 16 fatalities (7%) were caused by *Falls from a height*.

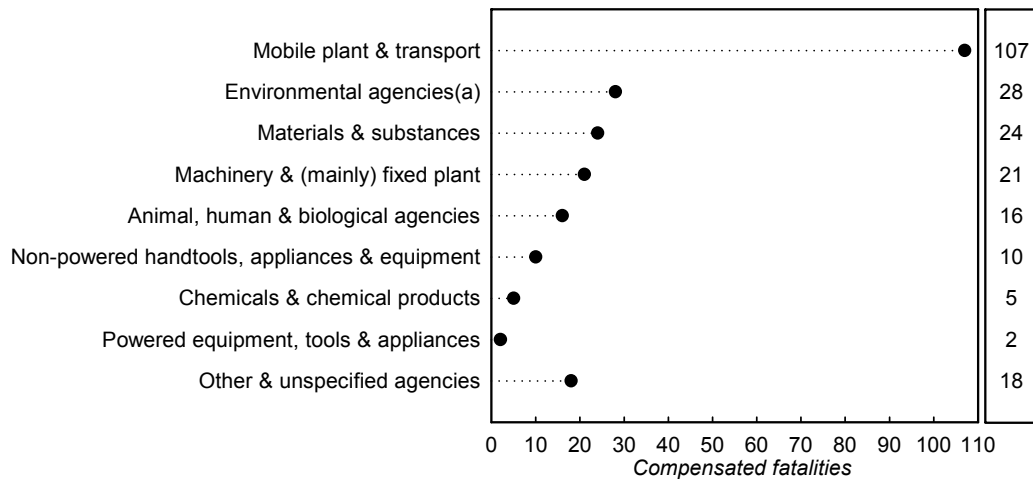
Figure 12 Compensated fatalities: number by mechanism of injury or disease, 2005–06p



Compensated fatalities by breakdown agency

The Breakdown agency refers to the object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in, or most closely associated with, the point at which things started to go wrong, and which ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease. Figure 13 shows the most common breakdown agency for compensated fatality claims in 2005–06p was *Mobile plant and transport*. The 107 fatalities attributed to this agency accounted for nearly half (46%) of all compensated fatality claims. Of these 107 fatalities, 84 involved *Road transport*: mostly comprising *Cars, station wagons, vans, utilities* (42 fatalities) and *Trucks, semi-trailers, lorries* (39 fatalities). A further 28 fatalities (12% of all compensated fatalities) involved *Environmental agencies* (which includes factors such as steps and stairways, floor conditions, weather, sun, and ground conditions). Of the 24 fatalities involving *Materials and substances*, 13 involved *Asbestos* (7 due to *Mesothelioma* and 6 to *Asbestosis*). Of the 18 fatalities involving *Other and unspecified agencies*, 16 had no identified breakdown agency, and of these, 10 involved diseases.

Figure 13 Compensated fatalities: number by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2005–06p



(a) Environmental agencies include both indoor and outdoor environments. These agencies include such factors as steps and stairways, floor conditions, weather, sun, and ground conditions.