

COMPENDIUM OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATISTICS AUSTRALIA 2004–05

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Australian Government

Australian Safety and Compensation Council

Part B

Compensated fatalities, 2004–05p

Preliminary data show that in 2004–05, there were 214 compensated work-related fatality claims. This is equivalent to an incidence rate of 2.5 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 2004–05 data are preliminary, they are known to understate the final number of accepted workers' compensation claims. A small proportion of claims lodged during 2004–05 would not have had their liability accepted in time to be reported here.

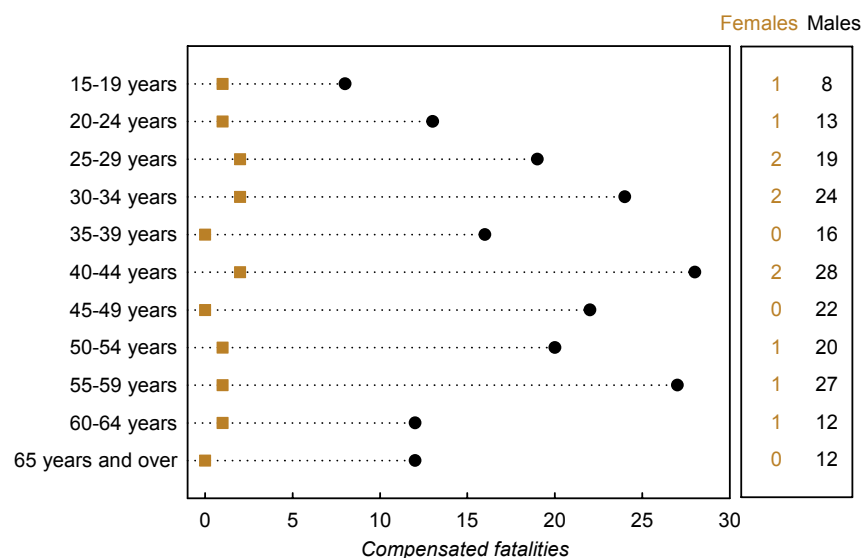
Compensated fatalities by gender

The preliminary data for 2004–05 show that work-related compensated fatalities mainly involved men. Of the 214 claims, 203 were male employees (95%) and 11 were female employees (5%). This is the lowest proportion of female fatalities in any year since the national database was established in 1996–97. Figure 8 shows that the number of compensated fatalities in each age group was similar 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 (41) occurred in the Transport and storage industry. This was followed by the Manufacturing industry (29 male fatalities), the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (28 male fatalities), and the Construction industry (25 male fatalities). The equal highest number of female compensated fatalities (2) occurred in the Retail trade industry and the Transport and storage industry.

Approximately three-quarters 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, 2004–05p



workers (70 male fatalities), Labourers and related workers (39 male fatalities) or Tradespersons and related workers (37 male fatalities). The equal highest number of female fatalities (3) occurred among Intermediate production and transport workers and Associate professionals.

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 and third most common nature of injury or disease for males was *Other and unspecified injuries*, accounting for 22 male fatalities and *Malignant neoplasm of pleura (mesothelioma)*, accounting for 16 fatalities. For females, 9 of the 11 fatalities were caused by *Multiple injuries*.

Compensated fatalities by industry

Table 5 shows that in 2004–05p, the highest number of compensated fatalities in any industry, 43, was recorded within the Transport and storage industry and accounted for 20% of all fatalities. The second highest number of fatalities, 30, was recorded within the Manufacturing industry, followed by the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (29 fatalities) and the Construction industry (25 fatalities).

However, when the number of fatalities is expressed as a rate per employee, the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest rate of 16 fatalities per 100 000 employees. This was followed by the Transport and storage industry with 11 fatalities per 100 000 employees. While the 5 fatalities recorded in the Mining industry was comparatively low, the industry recorded the third highest rate of 6 fatalities per 100 000 mining employees.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the fatalities that occurred in the Transport and storage industry were concentrated in the Road transport sub-division (31 of the 43 fatalities). The fatalities in the Manufacturing and Agriculture, forestry and fishing industries were spread over a number of sub-divisions.

Table 5 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by industry, 2004–05p

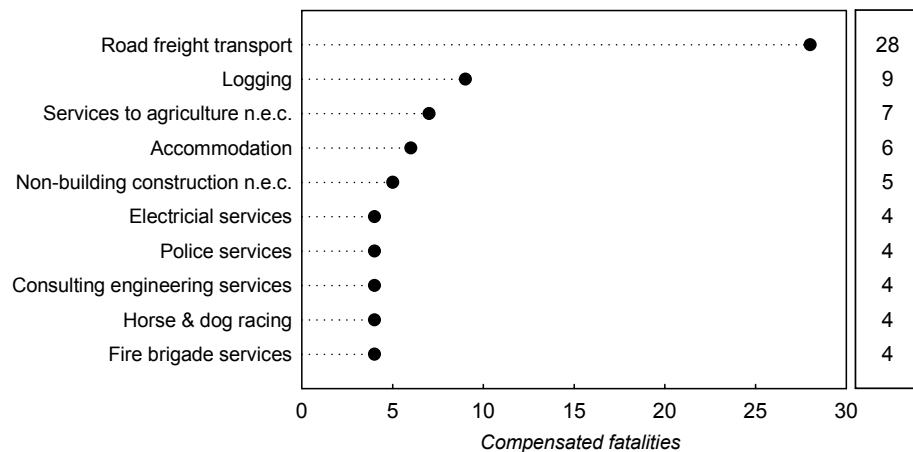
Industry	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
Agriculture, forestry, & fishing	29	15.7	8.5
Transport & storage	43	11.4	5.9
Mining	5	5.7	2.5
Construction	25	4.7	2.4
Cultural & recreational services	7	2.9	2.2
Personal & other services	10	3.1	1.9
Manufacturing	30	3.3	1.7
Electricity, gas & water supply	2	2.7	1.4
Wholesale trade	9	2.6	1.3
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	8	1.6	1.2
Government administration & defence	7	1.5	0.9
Property & business services	14	1.3	0.8
Retail trade	9	0.7	0.5
Communication services	1	0.7	0.4
Health & community services	4	0.4	0.3
Education	2	0.3	0.2
Finance & insurance	0	0.0	0.0
Industry not stated	9		
Total compensated fatalities	214	2.5	1.5

(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

Figure 9 provides details of the industry sub-categories where the highest numbers of compensated fatalities were recorded in 2004–05p. The ten industry sub-categories shown together accounted for 35% of all fatalities in 2004–05p and indicate that fatalities occurred across a broad range of industries. At this level of detail, the highest number of fatalities (28 fatalities — 13% of all compensated fatalities) was recorded in the Road freight transport sub-category. The second highest number (9 fatalities — 4% of all fatalities) was recorded by employees in the Logging sub-category.

Figure 9 Compensated fatalities: ten highest industry sub-categories, 2004–05p



Compensated fatalities by occupation

Table 6 shows the number of compensated fatality claims recorded in each major occupation group. Intermediate production and transport workers accounted for just over one-third (34%) of compensated fatalities in 2004–05p (73 fatalities). This group also recorded the highest incidence and frequency rates: both about four times the respective rate for all claims. Within the Intermediate production and transport workers group, just over three-quarters (77%) of the fatalities were recorded in the sub-category Road and rail transport drivers.

The second highest number of fatalities, 40, was recorded for Labourers and related workers: representing 19% of all compensated fatalities. This group includes factory, mining, construction and agricultural labourers (9 were identified as farm-hands): 17 of the 40 fatalities were not coded to a detailed occupation group.

Table 6 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by occupation, 2004–05p

Occupation	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
Intermediate production & transport workers	73	10.1	5.5
Labourers & related workers	40	5.2	3.6
Tradespersons & related workers	37	4.1	2.1
Managers & administrators	10	1.9	0.8
Professionals	21	1.3	0.7
Associate professionals	13	1.3	0.7
Elementary clerical, sales & service workers	6	0.6	0.5
Advanced clerical & service workers	1	0.3	0.2
Intermediate clerical, sales & service workers	4	0.2	0.2
Occupation not stated	9		
Total compensated fatalities	214	2.5	1.5

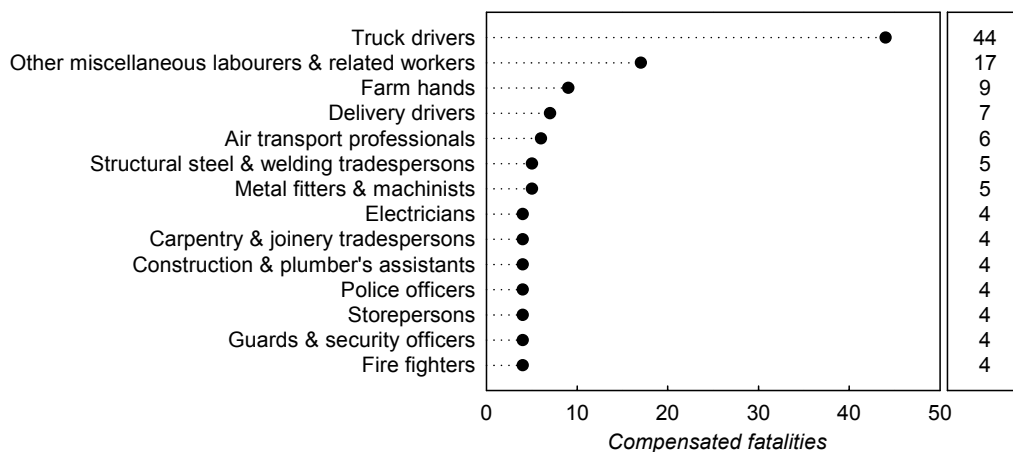
(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

Of the 37 fatalities recorded in the Tradespersons and related workers group, 10 fatalities each were recorded in the Mechanical and fabrication engineering tradespersons and Construction tradespersons detailed occupation groups.

Figure 10 shows the detailed occupation groups which recorded the highest number of fatalities in 2004–05p. These fourteen groups together accounted for 57% of all fatalities, with Truck drivers alone accounting for one-fifth (21% — 44 fatalities) of all compensated fatalities. In addition, there were also 7 fatalities recorded among Delivery drivers, indicating that driving a vehicle was a significant factor in work-related fatalities.

Figure 10 Compensated fatalities: fourteen highest detailed occupation groups, 2004–05p



Compensated fatalities by age

Table 7 shows how the number, incidence and frequency rates vary by age for the 214 compensated fatalities recorded in 2004–05p. The most common age recorded for deceased employees was 40–44 years: accounting for 30 fatalities. However, the incidence and frequency rates for this age group were not notably high because of the relatively large number of employees of this age. There were 12 fatalities recorded where the employee was aged 65 years and over, making it the second smallest age group. However, because relatively few employees continue working beyond 65 years of age, this age group recorded the highest incidence and frequency rates (9 fatalities per 100 000 employees and 6 fatalities per 100 million hours worked respectively). Table 7 shows that fatality incidence and frequency rates generally increased with age.

Table 7 Compensated fatalities: number, incidence rate and frequency rate by age, 2004–05p

Age group	Number	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
15-19 years	9	1.3	1.3
20-24 years	14	1.4	0.9
25-29 years	21	2.2	1.2
30-34 years	26	2.6	1.5
35-39 years	16	1.7	1.0
40-44 years	30	2.9	1.7
45-49 years	22	2.2	1.3
50-54 years	21	2.5	1.4
55-59 years	28	4.9	2.9
60-64 years	13	4.8	3.0
65 years and over	12	9.2	6.0
Total compensated fatalities	214	2.5	1.5

(a) Fatalities per 100 000 employees.

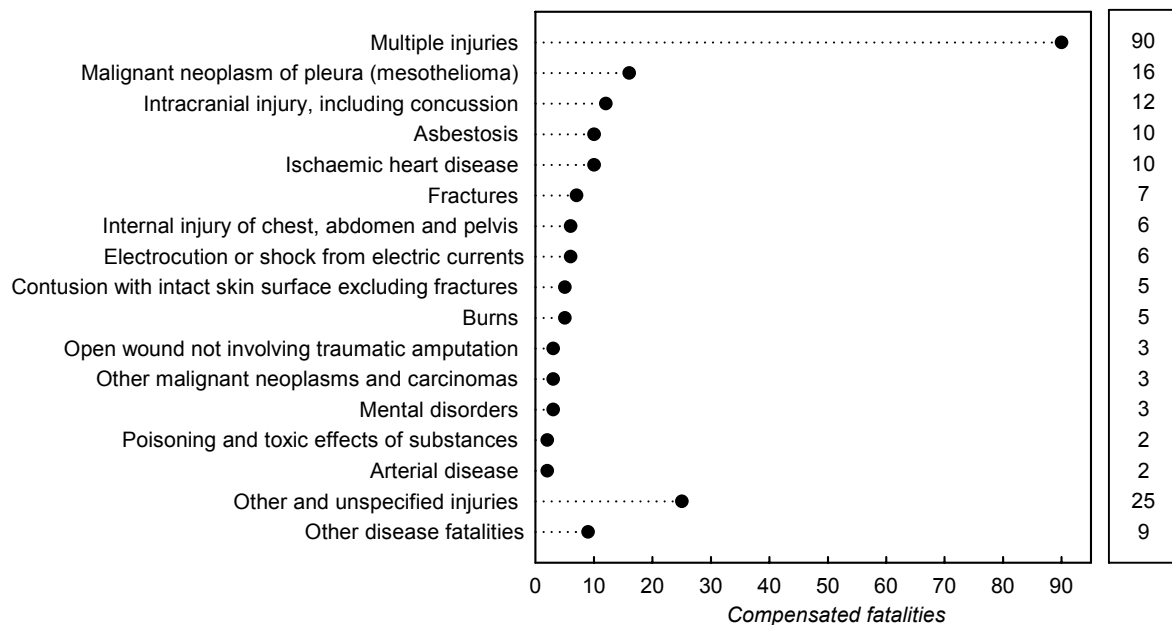
(b) Fatalities per 100 million hours worked.

While fatalities from disease accounted for 53 (25%) of the 214 compensated fatalities in 2004–05p, nearly half (24 fatalities) of these disease-related fatalities involved employees aged 55 years and over. Of the fatalities that involved employees aged 55 years and over, 45% were disease-related compared with 18% 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 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 214 compensated fatalities in 2004–05p, 161 (75%) were caused by injury and 53 (25%) were caused by disease. *Multiple injuries*, with 90 fatalities, was the most common category, accounting for 42% of all compensated fatality claims. The second most common category, with 16 fatalities, was *Malignant neoplasm of pleura (Mesothelioma)*: related to this category were a further 10 fatalities from *Asbestosis*. There were a large number of claims with insufficient information to classify the nature of injury or disease.

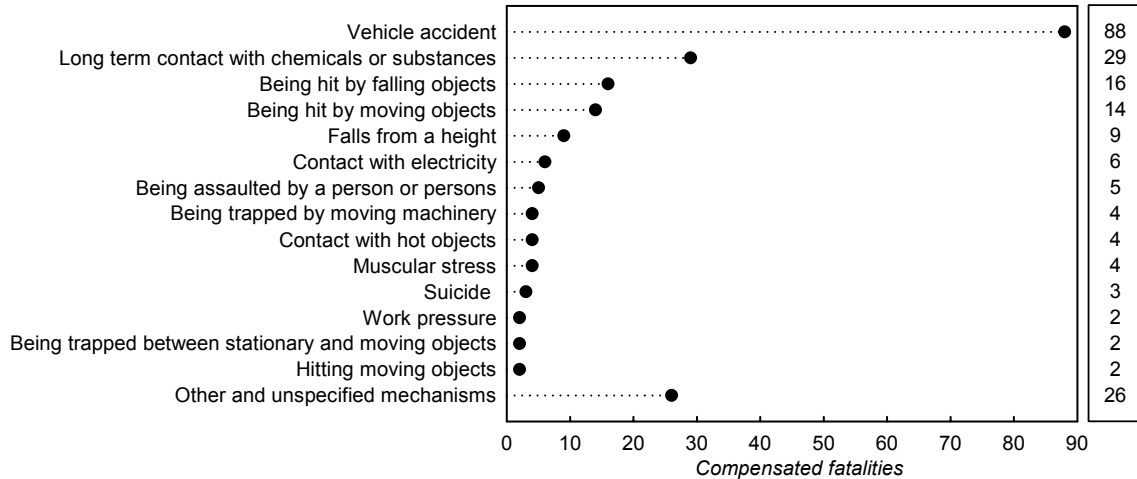
Figure 11 Compensated fatalities: number by nature of injury or disease, 2004–05p



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, accounting for 88 fatalities (41% of all compensated fatalities), was *Vehicle accidents*. The next most common mechanism, the cause of 29 fatalities (14%), was *Long term contact with chemicals or substances*. This was followed by *Being hit by falling objects* which accounted for 16 fatalities (7%).

Figure 12 Compensated fatalities: number by mechanism of injury or disease, 2004–05p

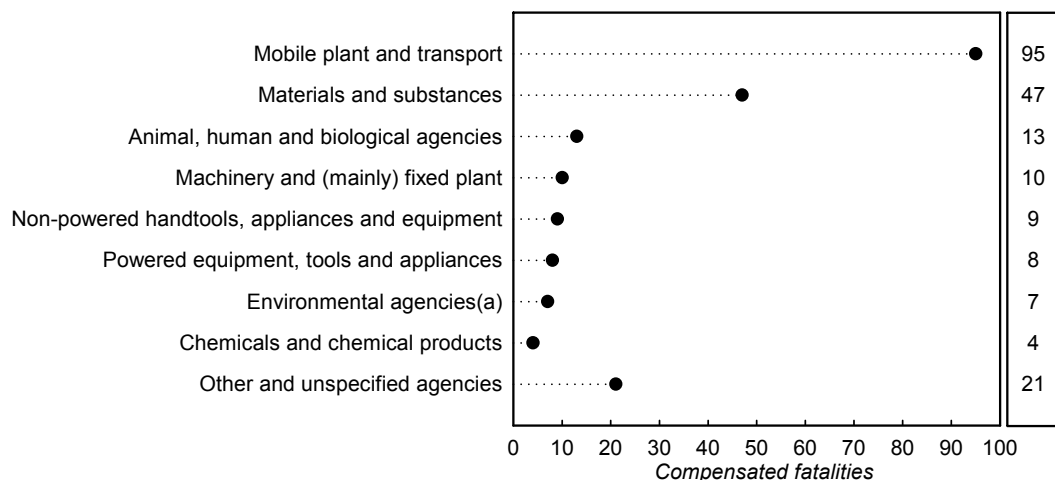


Compensated fatalities by breakdown agency

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 number of compensated fatalities by the breakdown agency of the most serious injury or disease.

The most common breakdown agency for compensated fatality claims in 2004–05p was *Mobile plant and transport*. The 95 fatalities attributed to this agency accounted for nearly half (44%) of all compensated fatality claims. Of these 95 fatalities, 78 involved *Road transport*: mostly comprising *Trucks, semi-trailers, lorries* (47 fatalities) and *Cars, station wagons, vans, utilities* (29 fatalities). A further 47 fatalities (22% of all compensated fatalities) involved *Materials and substances*, of which 28 fatalities involved *Asbestos* (including 16 claims for *Mesothelioma* and 8 for *Asbestosis*). The 21 fatalities (10% of all fatalities) involving *Other and unspecified agencies* demonstrate that the breakdown agency involved in the fatality cannot always be identified, especially for diseases that take a long time to develop. More than one-half (13) of the 21 fatalities involving *Other and unspecified agencies* were disease-related.

Figure 13 Compensated fatalities: number by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2004–05p



(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.