

# NOTIFIED FATALITIES STATISTICAL REPORT

JULY 2008 TO DECEMBER 2008

**JUNE 2009**



**safe work australia**

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this document can only assist you in the most general way. This document does not replace any statutory requirements under any relevant State and Territory legislation. Safe Work Australia is not liable for any loss resulting from any action taken or reliance made by you on the information or material contained on this document. Before relying on the material, users should carefully make their own assessment as to its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, and should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

To the extent that the material on this document includes views or recommendations of third parties, such views or recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of Safe Work Australia or indicate its commitment to a particular course of action.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2009

ISBN 978-0-642-32857-1

This work is copyright. You may download, display, print and reproduce this material for your personal, non-commercial use or use within your organisation, provided that an appropriate acknowledgement is made (retaining this notice), and the material is not altered or subjected to derogatory treatment. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, all other rights are reserved. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>

## SUMMARY

This report provides an analysis of data on work-related deaths notified to OHS jurisdictions under their OHS legislation that occurred during the six month period 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008.

During this period:

- > There were 88 notified work-related fatalities — 73 workers and 15 bystanders (Table 1).
- > The majority of fatalities were male — 79 in total (including 8 bystanders). There were 6 female fatalities, 4 of whom were bystanders. The gender of 3 fatalities was unknown.
- > Workers aged 55 years and over accounted for one-fifth (20%) of worker fatalities for which the age of the deceased was known (Figure 1) — higher than the proportion of workers in this age group in the Australian workforce (15%)<sup>1</sup>.
- > Four industries accounted for over three-quarters (76%) of all notified work-related fatalities — 24% of fatalities occurred at an Agriculture, forestry and fishing workplace; 20% occurred at a workplace primarily engaged in Construction; 19% in Transport and storage; and 13% occurred in Manufacturing (Table 2).
- > The most common causes of work-related fatalities were *Vehicle accident* (28 fatalities — including 3 vehicle rollovers); *Being hit by moving objects* (17 fatalities); *Being hit by falling objects* (11 fatalities); *Drowning/immersion* (7 fatalities); and *Falls from a height* (6 fatalities) (Figure 2).
- > Of the 28 fatalities caused by *vehicle accidents*, 12 occurred on public roads and 16 occurred elsewhere, including 3 during air travel (Table 1). Since work-related road traffic fatalities and work-related aircraft crash fatalities are not notified to some OHS jurisdictions, the figures presented in this report are likely to under-report their occurrence.

<sup>1</sup> Calculated using ABS Labour Force data (6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 01. Labour force status by Social marital status, Age and Sex).

**Table 1 Notified fatalities by place of fatality, 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008, Australia**

Type of fatality	Worker	Bystander	Total
At worksite	51	9	60
Vehicle accident on a public road	8	4	12
Vehicle accident elsewhere <sup>(a)</sup>	14	2	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>88</b>

(a) Includes air crash fatalities and rollovers of mobile mechanical equipment such as tractors, forklifts and construction vehicles.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OHS legislation in each Australian state and territory requires work-related deaths to be notified to the state or territory OHS authority. Notifications cover workers (both employees and self-employed) who suffered a fatal injury at work and bystanders who suffered a fatal injury as a result of work activity. Fatalities that occurred while commuting to or from work, and those resulting from suicide or natural causes (i.e. stroke or heart attack) are not included in this report.

The compilation of notifications at the national level is complicated by differences across jurisdictions in the definition of a work-related death and the coverage of some incidents. In particular:

- > Several jurisdictions do not include work-related deaths caused by vehicle accidents on public roads in their notification systems. These fatalities are instead notified to and investigated by the police.
- > Aircraft crash fatalities are not notified to all OHS jurisdictions. These fatalities are instead notified to the relevant transport authority.

**Table 2 Number of notified fatalities by industry, 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008**

Industry	Industry of workplace <sup>(a)</sup>			Industry of employer <sup>(a) (b)</sup>
	Worker	Bystander	Total	Worker
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	21	0	21	22
Construction	16	2	18	17
Manufacturing	11	0	11	8
Transport & storage	11	6	17	9
Mining	5	0	5	5
Wholesale trade	3	0	3	3
Electricity, gas & water supply	2	0	2	1
Cultural & recreational services	1	2	3	0
Government administration & defence	1	0	1	1
Personal & other services	1	0	1	1
Property & business services	1	0	1	5
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	0	1	1	0
Finance & insurance	0	1	1	0
Retail trade	0	1	1	0
Education	0	0	0	0
Health & community services	0	0	0	0
Communication services	0	0	0	0
Private residence	0	0	0	na
Industry unknown	0	2	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>73</b>

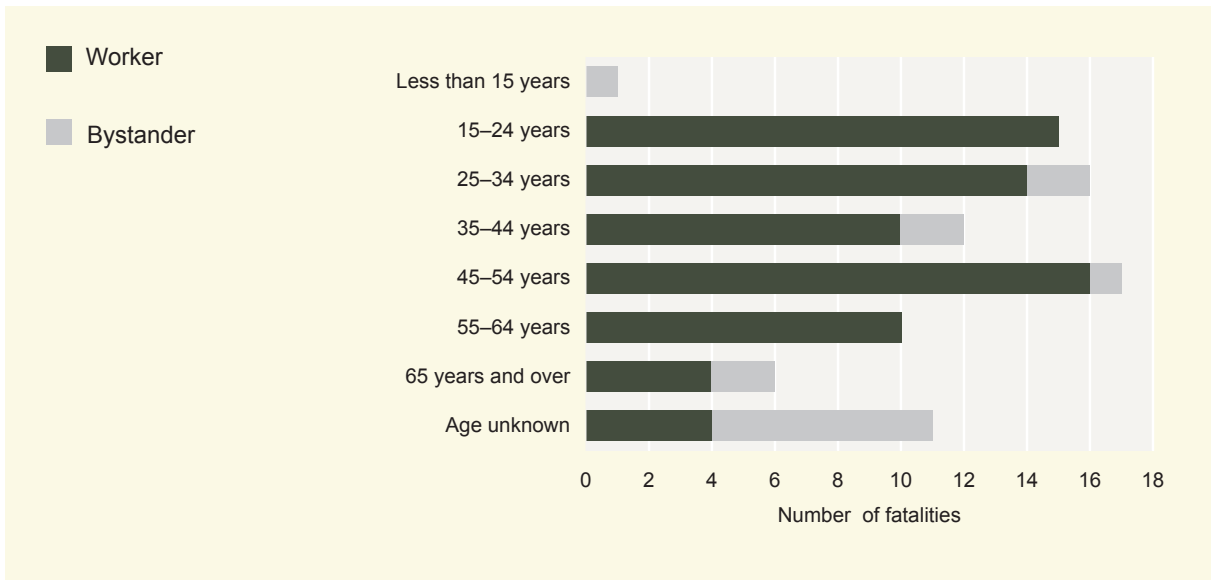
(a) Industry of workplace identifies the main industry conducted at the workplace where the fatal incident occurred. Industry of employer identifies the main industry conducted by the employer of the fatally-injured worker, which will sometimes differ from the Industry of workplace — for example, where a worker is employed under a labour hire arrangement to provide services at a workplace. Industry of workplace would therefore more accurately reflect the actual work tasks and circumstances associated with a fatal workplace incident.

(b) Industry of employer is not applicable for bystanders.

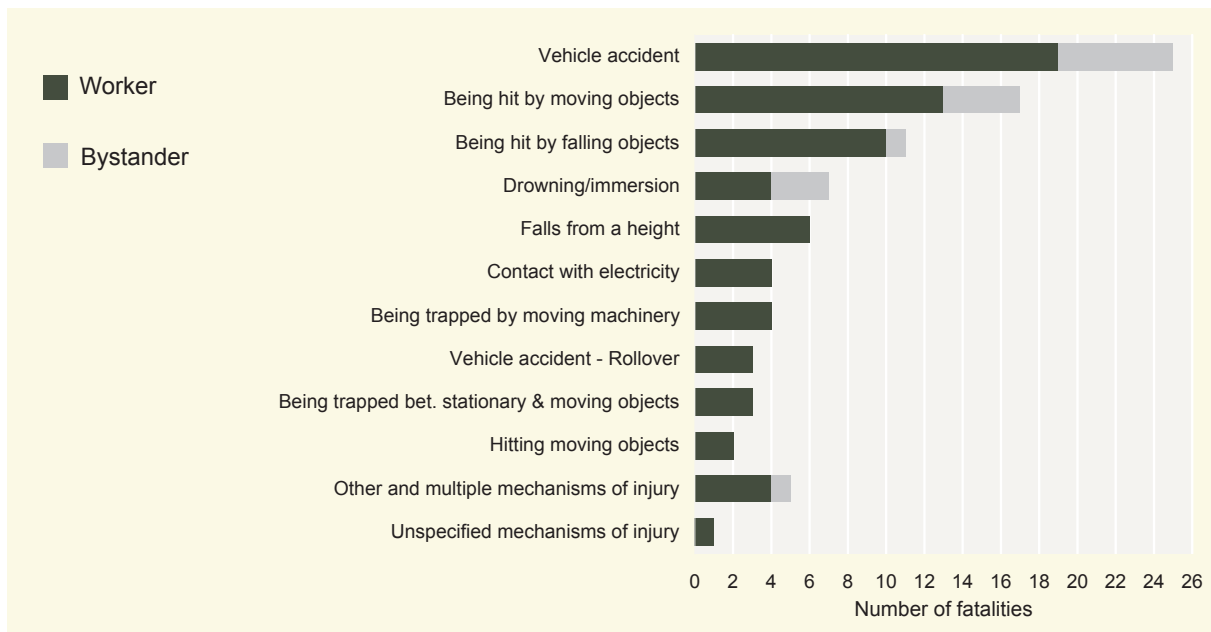
na denotes 'not applicable'.



**Figure 1 Number of notified fatalities by age group, 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008**



**Figure 2 Number of notified fatalities by mechanism, 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008**



## INQUIRES

For further information regarding the contents of this publication contact:

Safe Work Australia

[www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

(02) 6121 9152