

Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2018



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Foreword

The aim of this report is to provide statistics about people who traumatically die each year from injuries that arose through work-related activity. This includes traumatic fatalities resulting from an injury sustained in the course of a work activity (worker fatalities) and as a result of someone else's work activity (bystander fatalities).

This report generally presents data from the latest five years (2014 to 2018). However, a series of electronic tables are also available on the Safe Work Australia website that provide the full time series (2003 to 2018) for key data variables.

Injury is defined as a condition coded to 'External causes of morbidity and mortality' and 'Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes' in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM).

The scope of this collection includes all persons:

- who were traumatically fatally injured, and
- whose injuries resulted from work activity or exposures, and
- whose injuries occurred in an incident that took place in Australian territories or territorial sea.

The report includes all persons who died:

- while working, including unpaid volunteers and family workers, persons undertaking work experience and defence force personnel killed within Australian territories or territorial sea or travelling for work (worker fatalities), or
- as a result of someone else's work activity (bystander fatalities).

The collection specifically excludes those who died:

- of iatrogenic injuries—those where the worker died due to medical intervention
- due to natural causes such as heart attacks and strokes, except where a work-related injury was the direct cause of the heart attack or stroke
- as a result of diseases, such as cancers, and
- by self-inflicted injuries (suicide).

Changes from previous publications may be evident due to the availability of additional information from finalised coroners' reports and additional workers' compensation claims. The data presented in this report is based on the information available about the fatalities as at August 2019 when the 2018 dataset was finalised. Fatalities that occurred while the worker was commuting to or from work (commuter fatalities) are not included in this collection.

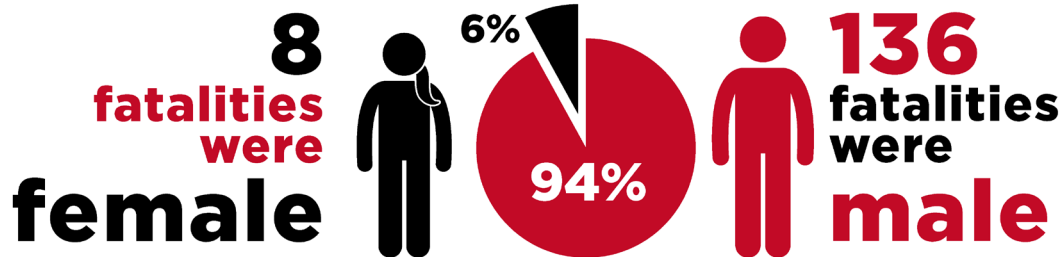
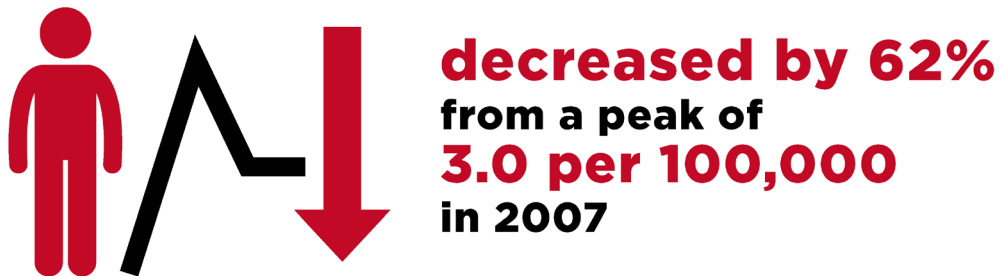
For explanatory notes on the data for this publication, refer to

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/explanatory-notes-traumatic-injury-fatalities-safe-work-australia>.

Worker Fatalities in 2018

Key findings

Worker fatalities in 2018



Industry fatalities in 2018

69% of fatalities were in three industries

38 

transport, postal
and warehousing

37 

agriculture, forestry
and fishing

24 

construction

Causes of worker fatalities in 2018



31%

(44 workers)
vehicle collision



17%

(24 workers)
hit by moving objects



13%

(18 workers)
falling from height



62%
were related to vehicles

Causes of bystander fatalities in 2018



77%

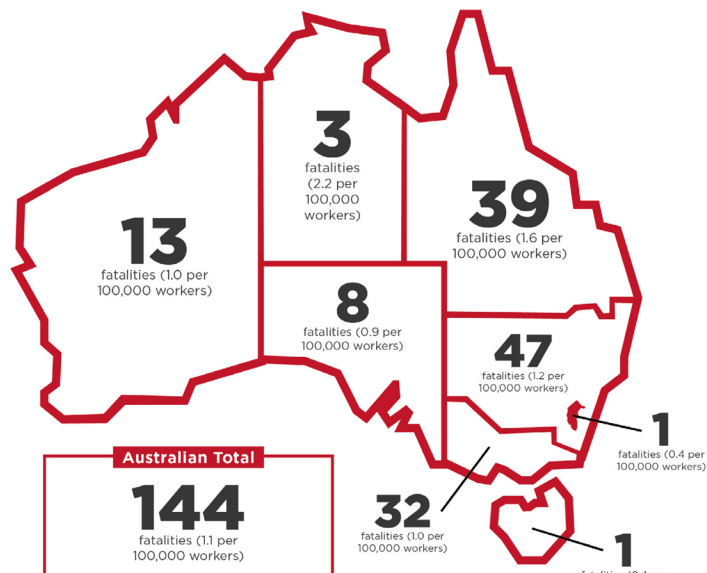
(48 bystanders)
of bystander fatalities were due to a vehicle collision



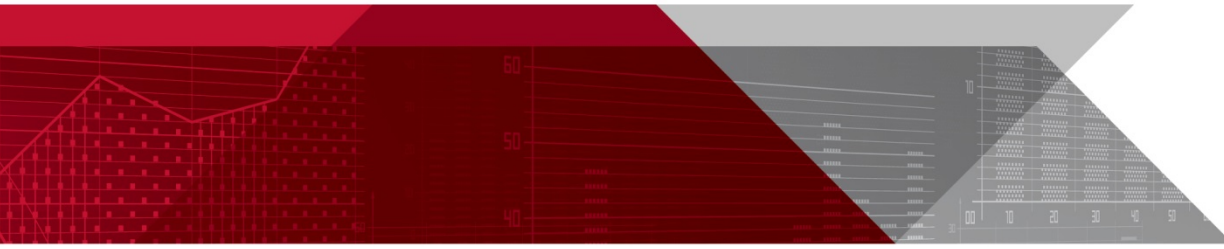
16%

(10 bystanders)
hit by moving objects

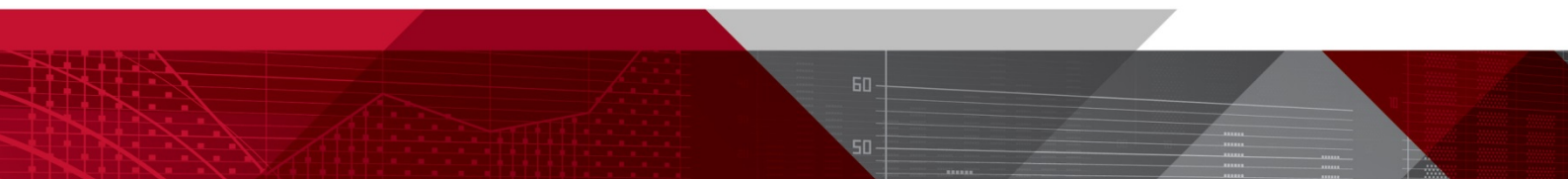
Location of worker fatalities in 2018*



* Fatalities are presented according to the state or territory where the fatality occurred, not the jurisdiction under which the fatality fell.



Section 1: Worker fatalities

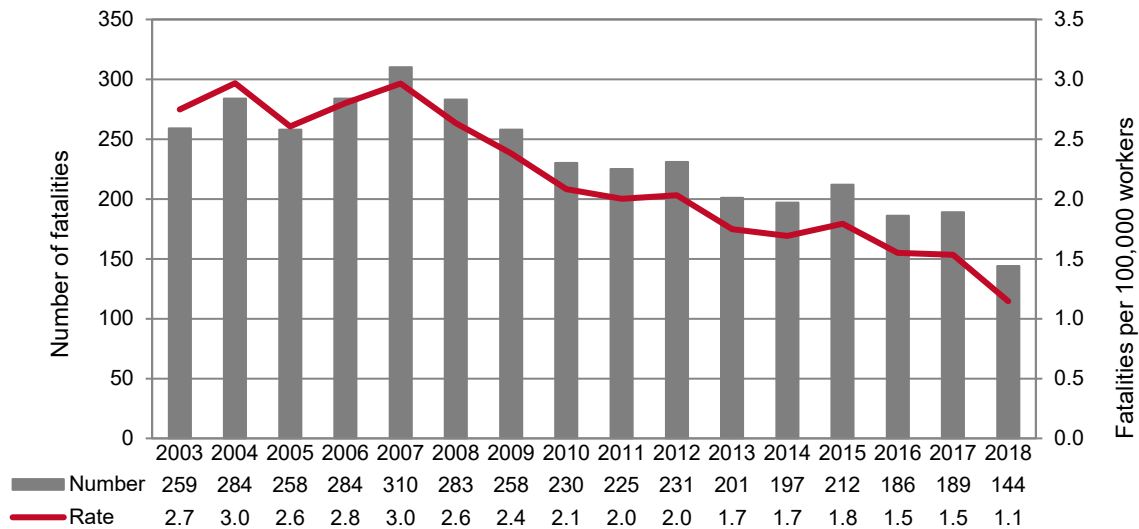


1.1. Fatalities and fatality rate

There were 144 worker fatalities in 2018 due to injuries sustained in the course of a work-related activity, which is the lowest recorded number since the series began in 2003. The highest number of work-related injury fatalities was recorded in 2007 when there were 310 deaths. Both the number of fatalities and the fatality rate have been trending downward since 2007 (Figure 1).

Similarly, the fatality rate (the number of fatalities per 100,000 workers) was 1.1 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2018, down from 1.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2017. The fatality rate in 2018 is the lowest since the series began, and is almost a third of the rate recorded at the peak in 2007 when there were 3.0 fatalities per 100,000 workers.

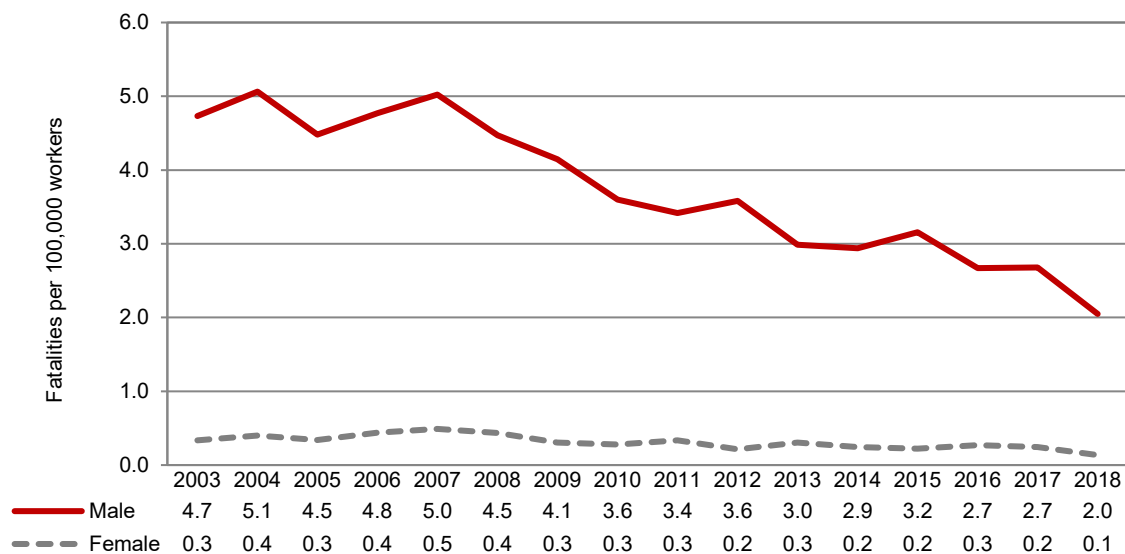
Figure 1: Worker fatalities: number of fatalities and fatality rate, 2003 to 2018



1.2. Gender¹

In 2018, 94 per cent (136 of the 144 fatalities) of workers killed were men. The fatality rate for male workers has been declining over the last 11 years, down from 5.0 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2007 to 2.0 in 2018 (Figure 2). Over the same period, the fatality rate for female workers has remained relatively constant at or around 0.3 fatalities per 100,000 workers, declining to 0.1 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2018.

Figure 2: Worker fatalities: fatality rate by gender, 2003 to 2018



¹ See Glossary for more detail on gender.

1.3. Age group

Workers aged 55 to 64 years had the highest number of fatalities in 2018, followed by workers aged 45 to 54 years (Table 1). The distribution of fatalities by age group has remained fairly steady over the past five years, however, the proportion of fatalities for young workers aged under 25 years, increased to 13 per cent in 2018, up from 8 per cent in 2017 (Figure 3).

The worker fatality rate has decreased for all age groups in 2018, except for young workers aged under 25 (Table 2). Young workers aged under 25 account for 15 per cent of the Australian workforce, and the proportion of fatalities involving young workers in 2018 was reflective of this. However, workers aged 65 and over only account for 4 per cent of the Australian workforce, yet represented 13 per cent of all worker fatalities in 2018. This is reflected in the higher fatality rate for older workers of 3.3 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2018.

Table 1: Worker fatalities: number by age group, 2014 to 2018

Age group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5 year total
Under 25	22	17	16	16	19	90
25–34	33	39	33	32	24	161
35–44	28	28	24	33	25	138
45–54	45	50	39	36	27	197
55–64	38	42	48	48	31	207
65 & over	31	36	26	24	18	135
Total	197	212	186	189	144	928

Figure 3: Worker fatalities: proportion by age group, 2014 to 2018

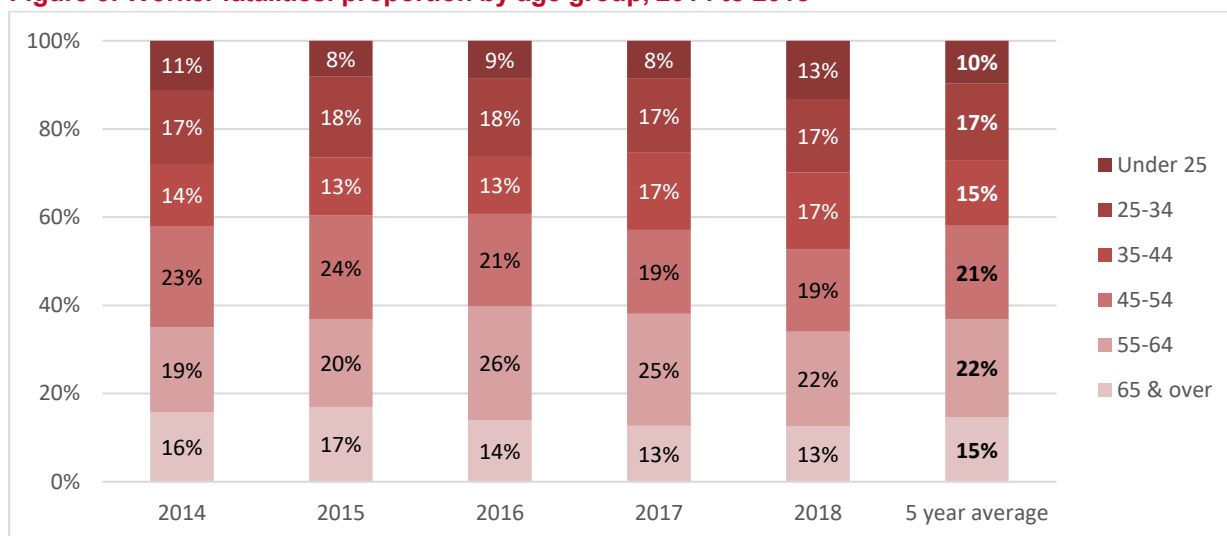


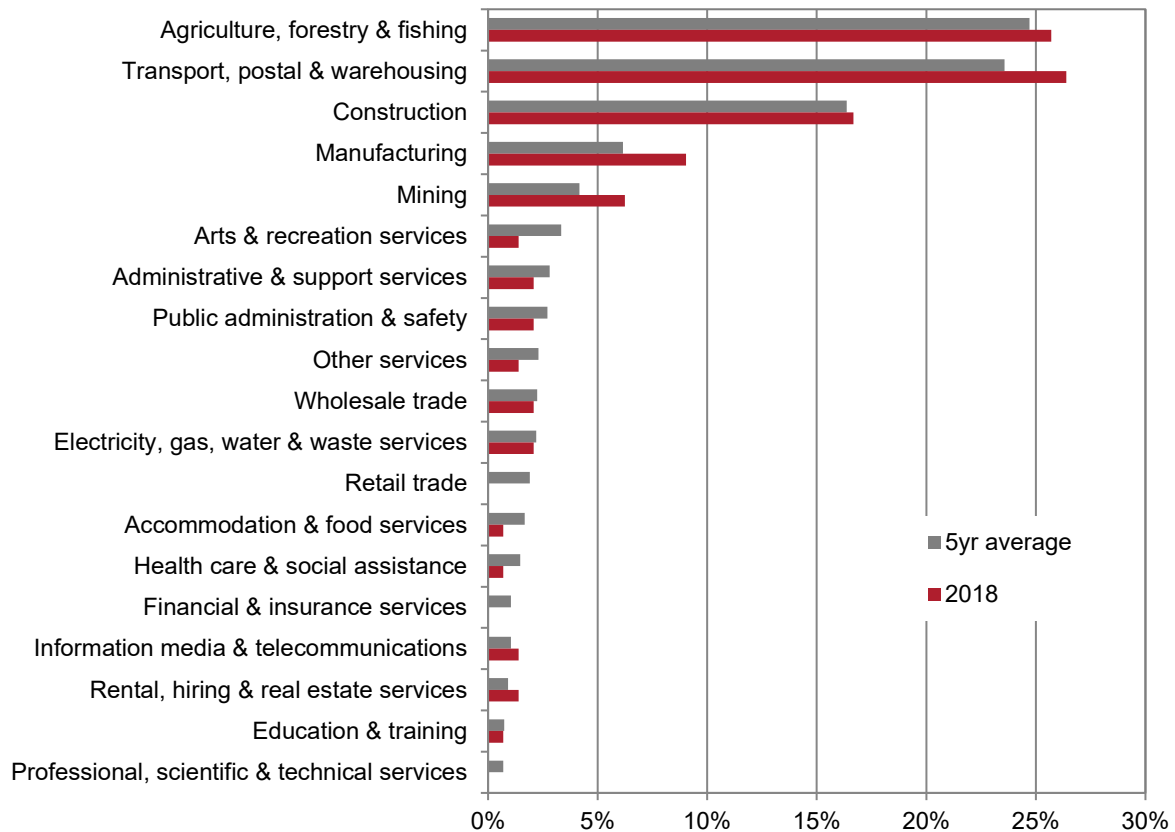
Table 2: Worker fatalities: fatality rates by age group, 2014 to 2018

Age group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5 year average
Under 25	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
25–34	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.1
35–44	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.1
45–54	1.8	2.0	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.6
55–64	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.6	1.7	2.4
65 & over	7.3	8.3	5.7	4.9	3.3	5.9
Total	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.5

1.4. Industry

In 2018, the vast majority (69 per cent) of fatalities occurred in three industries (Figure 4). Transport, postal and warehousing (38 fatalities) accounted for more than a quarter of fatalities in 2018 (26 per cent), followed closely by Agriculture, forestry and fishing (37 fatalities, 26 per cent) and Construction (24 fatalities, 17 per cent).

Figure 4: Worker fatalities: proportion by industry of employer, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018)



Fatality rates, expressed as the number of fatalities per 100,000 workers, are best used when comparing data across industries. In 2018, the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest fatality rate with 11.2 fatalities per 100,000 workers, around 10 times the all industries average of 1.1 (Figure 5). The Transport, postal and warehousing industry recorded the second highest fatality rate in 2018 with 5.9 fatalities per 100,000 workers, followed by the Mining industry (3.7 fatalities per 100,000 workers).

It should be noted, however, that fatality rates are sensitive to the number of workers employed in each industry. Industries which employ the fewest workers (such as the Electricity, gas, water and waste services industry) may show volatility even when small variations in the number of fatalities are recorded. Therefore, the actual number of fatalities should also be considered when interpreting the fatality rates for smaller industries (see Table 3 for numbers and fatality rates for all industries).

When considering numbers and rates of fatalities, one should also consider the five year average as figures can fluctuate each year.

Figure 5: Worker fatalities: fatality rates by industry of employer, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018)

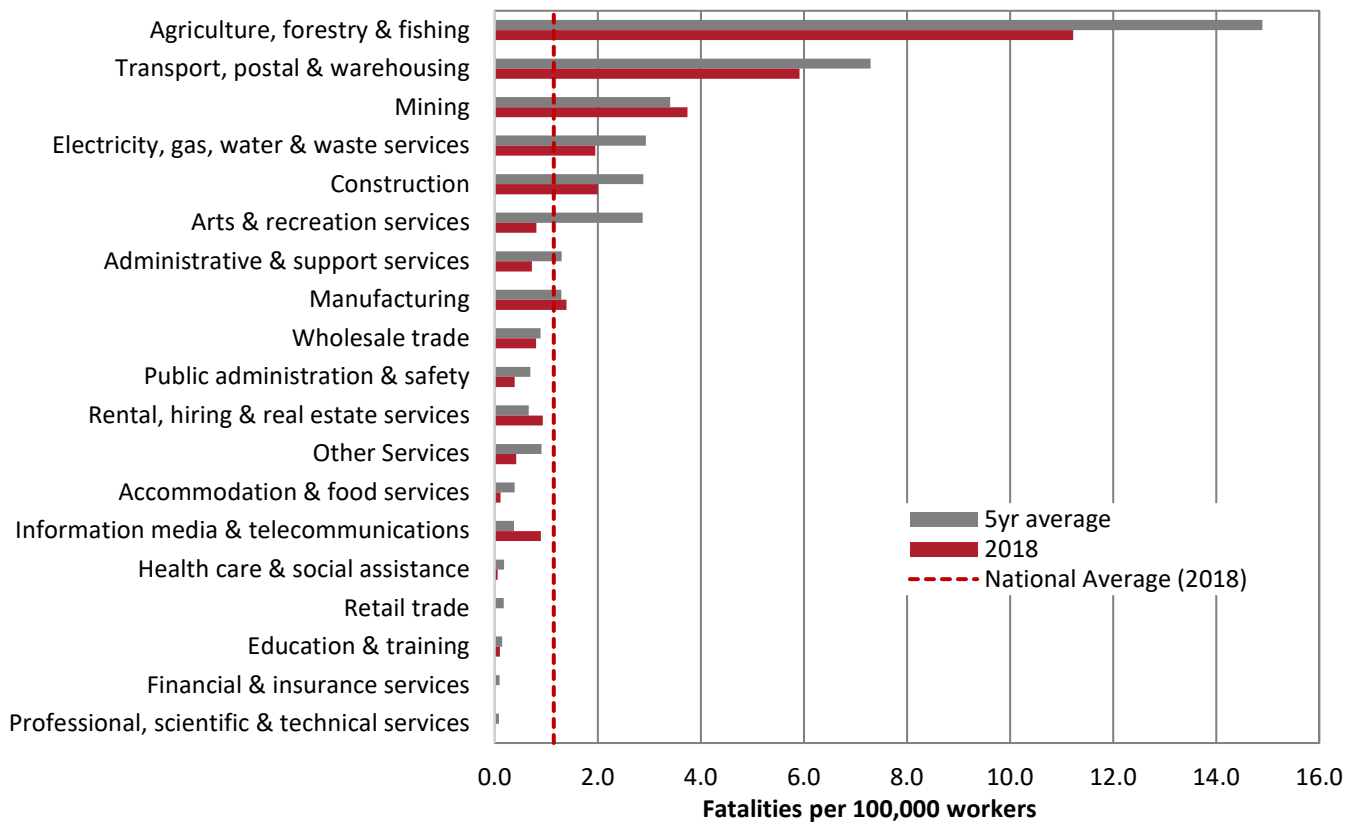


Table 3: Worker fatalities: number of fatalities and fatality rates by industry of employer, 2017, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018) (sorted by five year average fatality rate)

Industry of employer	Number of fatalities			Fatality rates		
	2017	2018	5yr average	2017	2018	5yr average
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	53	37	47	16.8	11.2	14.9
Transport, postal & warehousing	52	38	45	8.3	5.9	7.3
Mining	3	9	8	1.4	3.7	3.4
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	2	3	4	1.5	2.0	2.9
Construction	30	24	31	2.7	2.0	2.9
Arts & recreation services	8	2	6	3.5	0.8	2.9
Administrative & support services	2	3	5	0.5	0.7	1.3
Manufacturing	6	13	12	0.7	1.4	1.3
Other Services	3	2	4	0.6	0.4	0.9
Wholesale trade	6	3	3	1.6	0.8	0.9
Rental, hiring & real estate services	2	2	1	1	0.9	0.7
Public administration & safety	5	3	5	0.6	0.4	0.7
Accommodation & food services	5	1	3	0.6	0.1	0.4
Information media & telecommunications	0	2	1	0	0.9	0.4
Health care & social assistance	4	1	3	0.2	0.1	0.2
Retail trade	4	0	2	0.3	0	0.2
Education & training	1	1	1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial & insurance services	2	0	0	0.5	0	0.1
Professional, scientific & technical services	1	0	1	0.1	0	0.1
Total	189	144	186	1.5	1.1	1.5

1.5. Priority industries

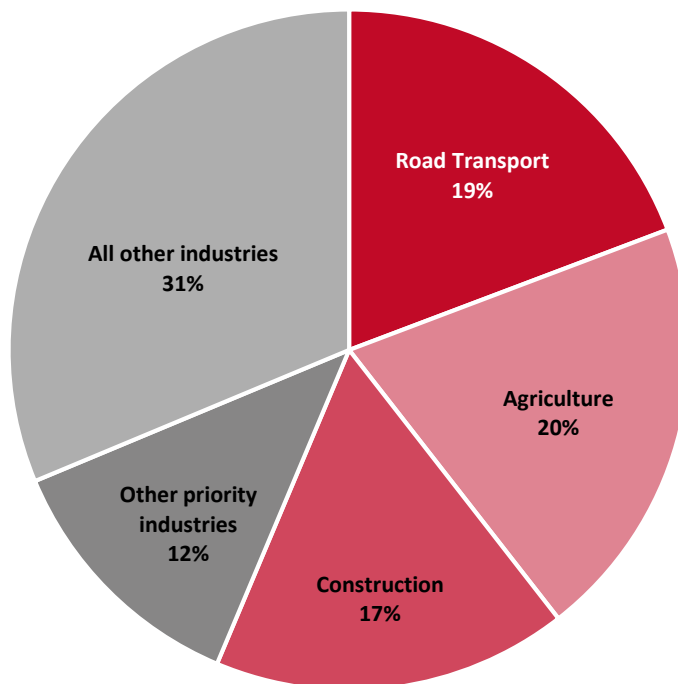
The *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022* (Australian Strategy) provides a framework to drive improvements in work health and safety (WHS) in Australia. It promotes a collaborative approach between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, industry and unions and other organisations to achieve the vision of healthy, safe and productive working lives. The Australian Strategy identifies national priority industries and conditions to help direct prevention activities to where they are needed the most.

The following priority industries have high numbers and rates of fatalities and/or injuries, or are by their nature hazardous:

- 1 Agriculture
- 2 Road transport
- 3 Manufacturing
- 4 Construction
- 5 Accommodation and food services
- 6 Public administration and safety, and
- 7 Health care and social assistance.

Figure 6 shows that three priority industries—Agriculture, Road transport and Construction — accounted for 56 per cent of worker fatalities between 2014 and 2018.

Figure 6: Worker fatalities: proportion of fatalities by priority industry of employer, 2014–2018 (combined)

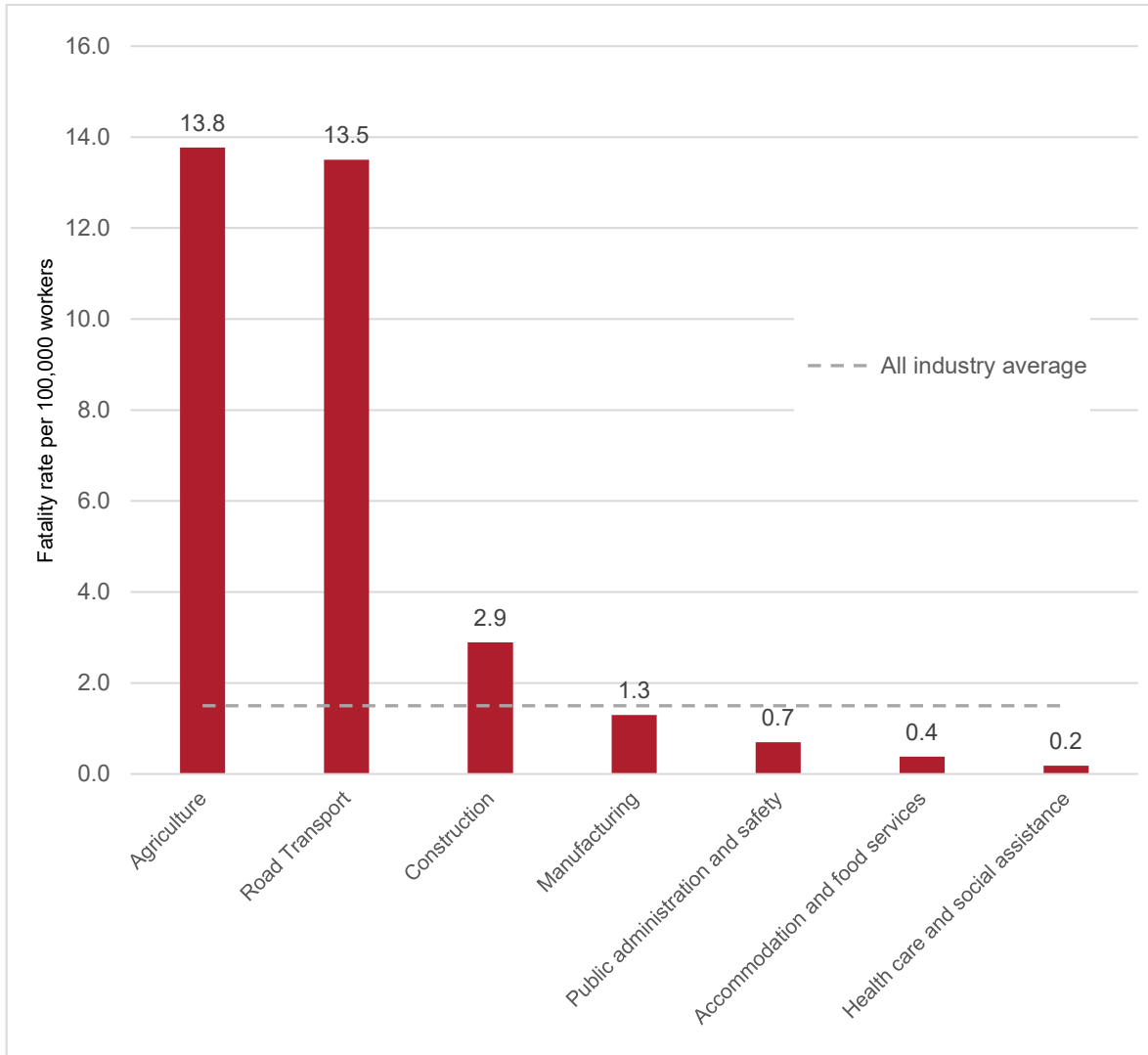


Note: 'Other priority industries' include Manufacturing, Accommodation and food services, Public administration and safety, and Health care and social assistance

The large share of fatalities in the Agriculture, Road transport and Construction industries is not due to industry size, but due to disproportionately high fatality rates for these industries. As Figure 7 shows, the five year average fatality rates for Agriculture (13.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers), Road Transport (13.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers) and Construction (2.9 fatalities per 100,000 workers) sit well above the rates for the remaining priority industries, as well as the fatality rate across all industries (1.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers). Given these significantly higher rates, this report examines these three priority industries in further detail.

Industries such as Manufacturing, Accommodation and food services, Health care and social assistance and Public administration and safety have low fatality rates but are included as priority industries due to high non-fatal injury rates. For information on non-fatal injuries in these industries, refer to the latest [Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics](#) report.

Figure 7: Worker fatalities: fatality rates by priority industry of employer, 2014–2018 (combined)



1.5.1. Priority industry: Agriculture

Over the last five years (2014-2018), there were 188 worker fatalities in the Agriculture industry, which is 20 per cent of all worker fatalities over the period.

Within the Agriculture industry subdivision, the Sheep, beef cattle and grain farming industry group accounted for 57 per cent of fatalities over the five years (Table 4). Workers aged 65 and over accounted for almost a third (31 per cent) of fatalities in the Agriculture industry. This is double the proportion of fatalities across all industries (15 per cent) over the same period and age group.

Table 4: Worker fatalities: Agriculture industry groups by age group, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Agriculture industry group	Under 25	25–44	45–64	65 & over	5 year total
Sheep, beef cattle & grain farming	11	18	46	33	108
Other crop growing	3	5	4	6	18
Other livestock farming	1	2	9	6	18
Fruit & tree nut growing	1	3	8	5	17
Dairy cattle farming	2	1	5	3	11
Mushroom & vegetable growing	2	2	2	2	8
Other agriculture subdivision	1	1	2	4	8
5 year total	21	32	76	59	188

The most common mechanism of incident² causing worker fatalities in the Agriculture industry over the five years was vehicle collisions³, which caused 28 per cent of fatalities (Table 5). This was followed by Being hit by moving objects (16 per cent) and Falls from a height (10 per cent).

Table 5: Worker fatalities: Agriculture by mechanism of incident, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Mechanism of incident	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Vehicle collision*	52	28%
Being hit by moving objects	30	16%
Falls from a height	18	10%
Being trapped by moving machinery	16	9%
Rollover of non-road vehicle	13	7%
Being hit by falling objects	11	6%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	9	5%
Contact with hot objects	9	5%
Contact with electricity	7	4%
Explosion	6	3%
Other mechanisms	17	9%
5 year total	188	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

² See Glossary for explanation of 'mechanism of incident'

³ See Glossary for explanation of 'vehicle collision'

Over the five years to 2018, the majority of fatalities (69 per cent, 129 fatalities) in the Agriculture industry involved a vehicle⁴ (Table 6). The most common vehicles involved were tractors (23 per cent, 44 fatalities) and quad bikes (15 per cent, 29 fatalities).

Table 6: Worker fatalities: Agriculture by vehicle involvement and type of vehicle, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Vehicle involvement and type of vehicle	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Vehicle involved	129	69%
Tractor	44	23%
Quad bike	29	15%
Ute or car	14	7%
Aircraft	9	5%
Truck	7	4%
Forklift	6	3%
Motorbike	5	3%
Other vehicles	15	8%
No vehicle involved	59	31%
5 year total	188	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

⁴ See Glossary for explanation of 'vehicle involvement'

1.5.2. Priority industry: Road transport

Over the period from 2014 to 2018, there were 179 worker fatalities in the Road transport industry, which accounts for 19 per cent of all worker fatalities over the period. The vast majority (169 fatalities; 94 per cent) occurred in the Road freight transport sub-division, with 10 fatalities in the Road passenger transport industry.

The majority of fatalities in the Road transport industry over the five years to 2018 were due to vehicle collisions⁵ —130 in the Road freight transport industry and seven in the Road passenger transport industry (Table 7). Being hit by moving objects caused a further 14 fatalities in the Road freight transport industry.

Table 7: Worker fatalities in Road transport industry groups by mechanism of incident, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Industry group and mechanism of incident	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Road freight transport	169	94%
Vehicle collision*	130	73%
Being hit by moving objects	14	8%
Being hit by falling objects	7	4%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	7	4%
Falls from a height	3	2%
Other mechanisms	8	4%
Road passenger transport	10	6%
Vehicle collision*	7	4%
Other mechanisms	3	2%
5 year total	179	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

Table 8 shows that 164 worker fatalities (92 per cent) in the Road transport industry involved a vehicle, with the majority (140 fatalities) occurring while driving the vehicle. A further nine fatalities occurred while the worker was loading or unloading a vehicle, and four occurred while the worker was conducting repairs or maintenance on a vehicle. Fifteen fatalities occurred in the Road transport industry which did not directly involve a vehicle.

Table 8: Worker fatalities: Road transport by vehicle involvement and activity of the deceased, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Vehicle involvement/Deceased activity	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Vehicle involved	164	92%
Driving/moving freight/people	140	78%
Loading/unloading	9	5%
Repair/maintenance	4	2%
Other	11	6%
No vehicle involved	15	8%
5 year total	179	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

⁵ See Glossary for explanation of 'vehicle collision'

1.5.3. Priority industry: Construction

Over the five year period from 2014 to 2018, there were 156 worker fatalities in the Construction industry in Australia. The majority of these (92 fatalities or 59 per cent) occurred in the Construction services industry sub-division (Table 9). Younger workers aged under 25 accounted for 15 per cent of fatalities in the Construction industry, compared with only 10 per cent of fatalities across all industries (Table 10).

With regard to occupations within the Construction industry, Labourers (both Construction & mining and Miscellaneous) accounted for 35 per cent of fatalities from 2014 to 2018 (Table 11). Electricians (13 fatalities) and Bricklayers, carpenters and joiners (12 fatalities) each accounted for a further 8 per cent of Construction industry fatalities.

In terms of mechanism of the fatalities, between 2014 and 2018, Falls from a height were the main cause of fatalities in both the Construction services and Building construction industry sub-divisions, resulting in 51 deaths across the Construction industry (Tables 12 and 13). Over a third (35 per cent) of these involved falls from a building or other type of structure, and 18 per cent involved a fall from a ladder (Table 13). Fatalities arising from Being hit by falling objects (22 fatalities) and Vehicle collisions (20 fatalities) were also common mechanisms of worker fatalities across the Construction industry (Table 12).

Table 9: Worker fatalities: Construction industry sub-divisions and groups, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Industry sub-divisions and groups	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Construction services	92	59%
Building structure services	23	15%
Other construction services	20	13%
Land development & site preparation services	18	12%
Building installation services	17	11%
Building completion services	14	9%
Building construction	42	27%
Residential building construction	23	15%
Non-residential building construction	19	12%
Heavy & civil engineering construction	22	14%
Construction 5 year total	156	100%

Table 10: Worker fatalities: Construction industry and all industries by age group, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Age group	Construction industry - No. of fatalities	Construction industry – % of fatalities	All industries – % of fatalities
Under 25	23	15%	10%
25–34	33	21%	17%
35–44	15	10%	15%
45–54	32	21%	21%
55–64	36	23%	22%
65 & over	17	11%	15%
5 year total	156	100%	100%

Table 11: Worker fatalities: Construction industry occupations, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Occupation minor groups	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Construction and mining labourers	37	24%
Miscellaneous labourers	17	11%
Electricians	13	8%
Bricklayers, carpenters and joiners	12	8%
Glaziers, plasterers and tilers	10	6%
Mobile plant operators	10	6%
Floor finishers and painting trades workers	9	6%
Plumbers	8	5%
Construction, distribution and production managers	6	4%
Electronics and telecommunications trades workers	6	4%
Truck drivers	6	4%
Stationary plant operators	5	3%
Other occupations	17	11%
Construction 5 year total	156	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

Table 12: Worker fatalities: Construction industry sub-divisions by mechanism of incident, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Construction sub-division and mechanism	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Construction services	92	59%
Falls from a height	31	20%
Vehicle collision*	15	10%
Being hit by falling objects	11	7%
Contact with electricity	10	6%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	7	4%
Being hit by moving objects	6	4%
Being trapped by moving machinery	4	3%
Slide or cave-in	3	2%
Rollover of non-road vehicle	2	1%
Other mechanisms	3	2%
Building construction	42	27%
Falls from a height	18	12%
Being hit by falling objects	9	6%
Being hit by moving objects	5	3%
Contact with electricity	3	2%
Vehicle collision*	2	1%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	2	1%
Other mechanisms	3	2%
Heavy & civil engineering construction	22	14%
Being hit by moving objects	9	6%
Vehicle collision*	3	2%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	2	1%
Falls from a height	2	1%
Being hit by falling objects	2	1%
Other mechanisms	4	3%
Construction 5 year total	156	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

Table 13: Worker fatalities: Construction industry, falls from a height fatalities by breakdown agency, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Falls from a height: Breakdown agency	No. of fatalities	% of fatalities
Buildings and other structures	18	35%
Ladders	9	18%
Openings in floors, walls or ceilings	4	8%
Scaffolding	3	6%
Doors and windows	3	6%
Other agencies	14	27%
Construction 5 year total - falls from a height	51	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

1.6. Occupation

In 2018, 51 Machinery operators and drivers were killed, accounting for the largest proportion (35 per cent) of all worker fatalities. Table 14 below shows Labourers accounted for a further 25 per cent (36 fatalities) of fatalities, 36 per cent of which were Farm, forestry and garden workers. Technicians and trades workers accounted for a further 19 per cent (27 fatalities) and Managers 11 per cent (16 fatalities).

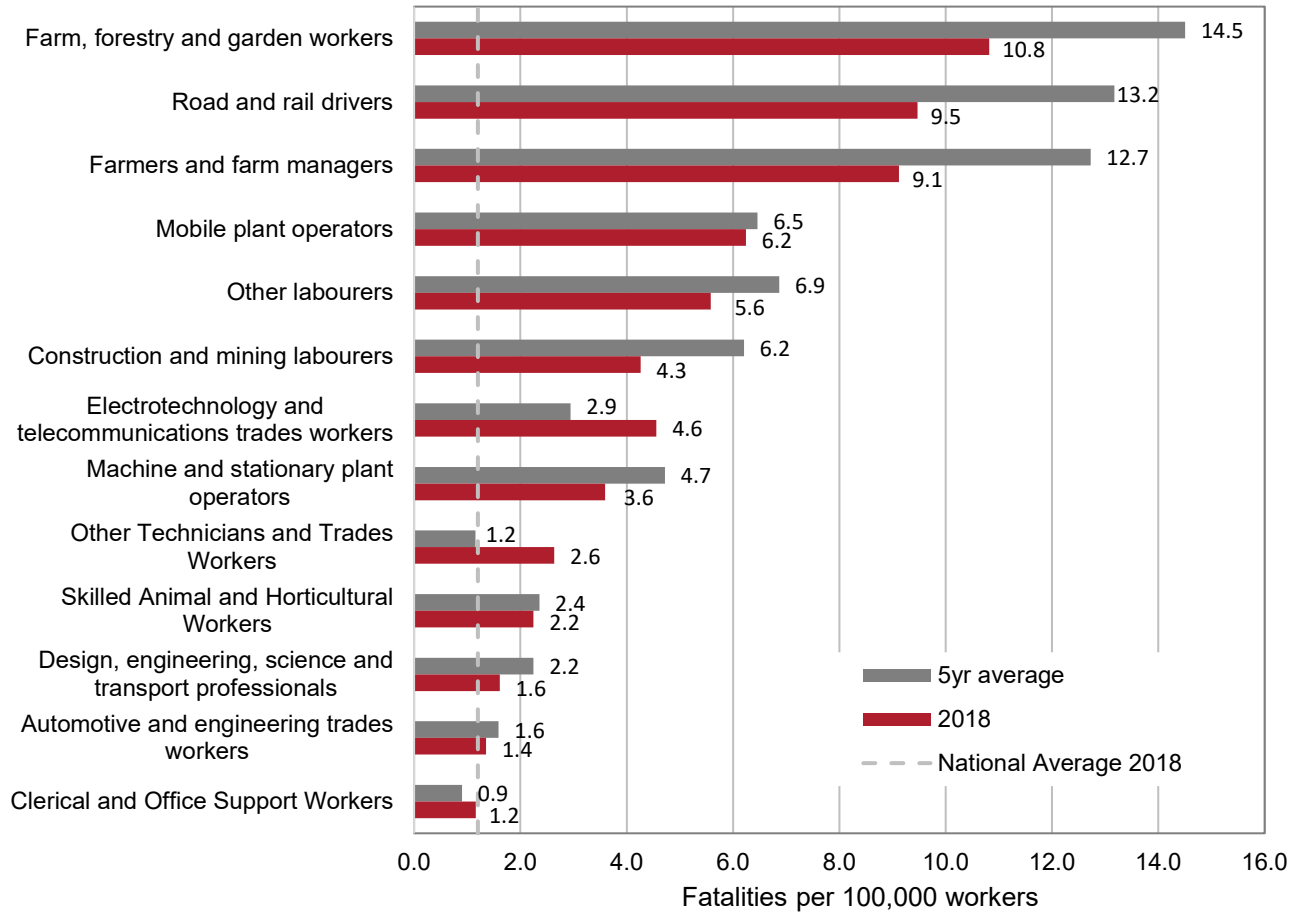
Table 14: Worker fatalities: number of fatalities by major and select sub-major occupation groups, 2017, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018)

Occupation	Number of fatalities		
	2017	2018	5yr average
Machinery operators and drivers	54	51	62
Road and rail drivers	43	36	45
Mobile plant operators	3	9	9
Machine and stationary plant operators	7	6	8
Labourers	56	36	46
Farm, forestry and garden workers	18	13	17
Other labourers	19	13	15
Construction and mining labourers	13	8	11
Technicians and trades workers	17	27	27
Construction trades workers	7	3	9
Electrotechnology and telecommunications trades workers	2	11	7
Automotive and engineering trades workers	3	5	6
Managers	27	16	26
Farmers and farm managers	22	15	21
Professionals	18	8	13
Design, engineering, science and transport professionals	14	7	9
Community and personal service workers	14	4	9
Sports and personal service workers	7	2	4
Protective service workers	4	..	2
Clerical & administrative workers	2	1	2
Sales workers	1	1	2
Total	189	144	186

Note: Not all sub-groups have been included for each sub-major occupation group.

Figure 8 below presents 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018) fatality rates for the ‘sub-major’ classification tier of occupations. Only sub-major occupations with a 2018 fatality rate over the national 2018 average fatality rate of 1.1 fatalities per 100,000 workers are shown. Farm, forestry and garden workers had the highest 2018 rate of 10.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers, followed by Road and rail drivers (9.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers) and Farmers and farm managers (9.1 fatalities per 100,000 workers).

Figure 8: Worker fatalities: selected occupations, 2018 and 5 year average (2014 to 2018) rates



1.7. Mechanism of incident

The mechanism of incident⁶ refers to the overall action, exposure or event that describes the circumstances that resulted in a worker fatality. Four mechanisms accounted for 71 per cent of worker fatalities in 2018; Vehicle collisions⁷, Being hit by moving objects, Falls from a height and Being hit by falling objects (Table 15).

In 2018, 31 per cent of worker fatalities were due to a Vehicle collision, which is slightly below the five year average of 35 per cent. Vehicle collisions includes incidents where an occupant of a vehicle is killed following a collision with another vehicle or a stationary object. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Being hit by moving objects⁸ accounted for the next highest proportion of worker fatalities in 2018 – 17 per cent, down slightly from 18 per cent in 2017. Falls from a height accounted for the third highest proportion in 2018 (13 per cent), followed by Being hit by falling objects (10 per cent).

Table 15: Worker fatalities: number and proportion by mechanism of incident, 2017, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018) (sorted by five year average)

Mechanism of incident	Number of fatalities			% of fatalities		
	2017	2018	5 yr average	2017	2018	5 yr average
Vehicle collision*	65	44	65	34%	31%	35%
Being hit by moving objects	34	24	27	18%	17%	15%
Falls from a height	28	18	25	15%	13%	13%
Being hit by falling objects	15	15	17	8%	10%	9%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	10	7	9	5%	5%	5%
Being trapped by moving machinery	3	7	8	2%	5%	4%
Contact with electricity	4	4	6	2%	3%	3%
Drowning	8	..	4	4%	..	2%
Rollover of non-road vehicle	5	5	4	3%	3%	2%
Contact with hot objects	3	2	4	2%	1%	2%
Being assaulted by a person or persons	2	..	3	1%	..	2%
Explosion	..	4	3	..	3%	2%
Slide or cave-in	2	3	2	1%	2%	1%
Being hit by an animal	3	1	2	2%	1%	1%
Other mechanisms	7	10	7	4%	7%	4%
Total	189	144	186	100%	100%	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

⁶ See Glossary for explanation of 'mechanism of incident'

⁷ See Glossary for explanation of 'vehicle collision'

⁸ See Glossary for explanation of 'being hit by moving objects'

1.8. Breakdown agency

The breakdown agency identifies the object, substance or circumstance principally involved at the point at which things started to go wrong and ultimately led to a worker fatality.

The breakdown agency category of Mobile plant and transport, which includes objects such as cars, tractors and excavators, accounted for over half (55 per cent) of fatalities over the last five years (Table 16). Environmental agencies, which includes objects such as buildings and vegetation, was the second most common breakdown agency, accounting for 15 per cent of worker fatalities over the last five years.

Table 16: Worker fatalities: number and proportion by breakdown agency, 2017, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018) (sorted by five year average)

Breakdown agency of incident	Number of fatalities			% of fatalities		
	2017	2018	5 yr average	2017	2018	5 yr average
Mobile plant & transport	106	77	102	56%	53%	55%
Environmental agencies	24	17	27	13%	12%	15%
Machinery & (mainly) fixed plant	13	17	17	7%	12%	9%
Non-powered handtools, appliances & equipment	17	11	14	9%	8%	8%
Animal, human & biological agencies	13	4	10	7%	3%	5%
Materials & substances	12	5	8	6%	3%	4%
Powered equipment, tools & appliances	4	4	4	2%	3%	2%
Chemicals & chemical products	..	7	2	0%	5%	1%
Other & unspecified agencies	..	2	1	0%	1%	1%
Total	189	144	186	100%	100%	100%

The following sections analyse selected mechanisms of incidents in conjunction with breakdown agencies, providing an overview of types of high-risk work that can result in worker fatalities. For a comprehensive overview of breakdown agency coding, see the [Type of Occurrence Classification System \(TOOCS\), 3rd Edition](#).

1.9. Being hit by moving objects

In 2018, 24 workers were killed as a result of Being hit by moving objects, a decrease of 29 per cent from 34 workers in 2017 (Table 17). These fatalities involve workers who were not occupants in a vehicle – vehicle occupant fatalities are analysed further in Section 1.11.

The majority of these fatalities were caused by Mobile plant and transport (71 per cent). Within the Mobile plant and transport category, being hit by tractors and agricultural vehicles accounted for the highest proportion of worker fatalities in 2018 (21 per cent), followed by trucks, semi-trailers and lorries (17 per cent).

The second highest breakdown agency was Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant, which involves plant such as cranes and forklifts, accounting for 8 per cent of fatalities in 2018; slightly below the average of 9 per cent over the past five years.

Table 17: Worker fatalities due to being hit by moving objects: number by breakdown agency, 2014 to 2018 (sorted by five year average)

Breakdown agency	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% of 2018	% of 5 yr average
Mobile plant & transport	19	19	13	18	17	71%	65%
Trucks, semi-trailers, lorries	5	3	2	7	4	17%	16%
Tractors, agricultural or otherwise	5	3	3	4	5	21%	15%
Self-propelled plant	2	6	5	1	3	13%	13%
Cars, station wagons, vans, utilities	4	4	2	4	2	8%	12%
Other mobile plant & transport	3	3	1	2	3	13%	9%
Machinery & (mainly) fixed plant	1	3	2	4	2	8%	9%
Powered equipment, tools & appliances	..	3	2	3	1	4%	7%
Non-powered handtools, appliances & equipment	2	3	..	3	1	4%	7%
Materials & substances	..	..	1	3	2	8%	5%
Animal, human & biological agencies	1	1	1	2	..	..	4%
Environmental agencies	1	2	..	1	..	..	3%
Chemicals & chemical products	..	..	..	..	1	4%	1%
Other & unspecified agencies	..	..	1	..	..	..	1%
Total – Being hit by moving objects	24	31	20	34	24	100%	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

1.10. Falls from a height

In 2018, 18 workers died as a result of a Fall from a height; a decrease from 15 per cent of all worker fatalities in 2017 to 12 per cent in 2018. Over the last five years, Falls from a height most commonly involved falls from a roof (18 per cent), ladder (13 per cent), horses, donkeys and mules (9 per cent) and trucks, semi-trailers and lorries (7 per cent) (Table 18).

Table 18: Worker fatalities due to falls from a height: number by breakdown agency and selected sub-groups, 2014 to 2018 (sorted by five year average)

Breakdown agency	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% of 2018	% of 5yr average
Environmental agencies	10	12	10	11	7	39%	41%
Roof	5	6	4	3	4	22%	18%
Openings in floors, walls or ceilings	1	1	2	3	..	..	6%
Non-powered handtools, appliances & equipment	4	7	10	6	4	22%	25%
Ladders	2	3	6	4	1	6%	13%
Scaffolding	..	2	2	..	..	..	3%
Mobile plant & transport	2	5	3	6	2	11%	15%
Trucks, semi-trailers, lorries	..	3	1	2	2	11%	7%
Tractors, agricultural or otherwise	..	..	..	3	..	..	2%
Animal, human & biological agencies	3	3	1	3	1	6%	9%
Horses, donkeys, mules	3	3	1	3	1	6%	9%
Machinery & (mainly) fixed plant	3	2	1	1	2	11%	7%
Elevating work platforms	..	2	..	..	1	6%	2%
Materials & substances	..	..	..	1	..	..	1%
Other & unspecified agencies	..	..	1	..	2	11%	2%
Total - Falls from a height	22	29	26	28	18	100%	100%

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total. Not all sub-groups have been included for each breakdown agency.

1.11. Vehicle involvement and collisions

Safe Work Australia's work-related fatalities database collects two sources of information relating to vehicles:

- Whether a vehicle was principally involved in the incident leading to a worker fatality, referred to as 'vehicle involvement'
- 'Vehicle collisions', where a vehicle crash occurred and an occupant of the vehicle was killed⁹

Over the five year period from 2014 to 2018, 60 per cent of worker fatalities (555 fatalities) involved vehicles. Of these, just under half (271 fatalities) occurred on a public road¹⁰ (Table 19). The vast majority (86 per cent) of worker fatalities involving vehicles on public roads were the result of a vehicle collision (233 fatalities). By contrast, vehicle collisions not on a public road only accounted for 32 per cent of worker fatalities involving a vehicle (92 fatalities).

Table 19: Worker fatalities: number of fatalities with vehicle involvement by public road status, and proportion of fatalities involving a vehicle of all fatalities, by mechanism of incident, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Mechanism of incident	On a public road	Not on a public road	Total fatalities involving a vehicle	% of all fatalities
Vehicle collision*	233	92	325	35%
Being hit by moving objects	25	64	89	10%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	3	26	29	3%
Rollover of non-road vehicle	..	22	22	2%
Being hit by falling objects	..	22	22	2%
Other mechanisms	10	58	68	7%
5 year total	271	284	555	60%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

⁹ See Glossary for more detail on Vehicle collisions

¹⁰ See Glossary for a definition of public road

Worker fatalities in 2018 resulting from a vehicle collision were aligned with the five year average figures (Table 20). In 2018, of the 44 workers who died in a vehicle collision, just under two thirds (64 per cent) involved single vehicle collisions, with just over a half of these (15 fatalities) involving a heavy vehicle. There were 16 worker fatalities in 2018 due to a multi-vehicle collision, with the majority (63 per cent) involving two heavy vehicles.

Table 20: Worker fatalities due to vehicle collision*: number by type of collision and breakdown agency, 2014 to 2018 (sorted by five year average)

Type of collision	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% of 2018	% of 5yr average
Single vehicle collision*	50	42	45	45	28	64%	65%
Heavy vehicle	24	20	21	20	15	34%	31%
Aircraft	9	5	7	13	5	11%	12%
Light vehicle	7	8	12	3	3	7%	10%
Quad bike	6	9	3	5	2	5%	8%
Motorbike	3	..	..	3	1	2%	2%
Agriculture vehicle	..	..	2	..	..	..	1%
Other single vehicle	1	..	..	1	2	5%	1%
Multi vehicle collision*	23	25	31	20	16	36%	35%
Two heavy vehicles	8	6	10	6	10	22%	12%
Two light vehicles	4	7	9	4	..	..	7%
Occupant in a light vehicle killed in collision with a heavy vehicle	5	6	5	5	1	2%	7%
Occupant in a heavy vehicle killed in collision with a light vehicle	3	2	4	1	4	9%	4%
Other multi-vehicle collision	3	4	3	4	1	2%	5%
Total – vehicle collision	73	67	76	65	44	100%	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

1.12. Location

Both the number and rate of fatalities decreased in 2018 for all states and territories (based on the location where the fatality occurred), except for the Australian Capital Territory which remained steady at 1 fatality and a rate of 0.4 fatalities per 100,000 workers (Table 21). Worker fatalities which occurred in a state or territory may not fall within the jurisdictional responsibility of that state or territory (see Table 23 for a breakdown by jurisdiction).

Table 21: Worker fatalities: number by location of death, 2017, 2018 and five year average (2014 to 2018)

State/Territory	Number of fatalities			Fatality rates		
	2017	2018	5yr average	2017	2018	5yr average
New South Wales	61	47	56	1.6	1.2	1.5
Queensland	44	39	46	1.8	1.6	1.9
Victoria	36	32	37	1.1	1.0	1.2
Western Australia	21	13	24	1.6	1.0	1.8
South Australia	14	8	13	1.7	0.9	1.5
Northern Territory	7	3	4	5.1	2.2	3.0
Tasmania	5	1	5	2.0	0.4	2.2
Australian Capital Territory	1	1	1	0.4	0.4	0.3
Total	189	144	186	1.5	1.1	1.5

Based on the location of where the fatality occurred, over the five years to 2018, the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry accounted for the highest number of worker fatalities in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. The Transport, postal and warehousing industry accounted for the highest number of worker fatalities in the other states and territories (Table 22).

Table 22: Worker fatalities: number by location of death and industries with the highest number of fatalities, 2014 to 2018 (combined)

Industry	New South Wales	Queensland	Victoria	Western Australia	South Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory	National total
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	61	61	63	23	16	8	5	237
Transport, postal & warehousing	67	57	38	30	20	6	8	226
Construction	58	36	33	18	9	1	..	156
Manufacturing	24	14	6	11	1	3	..	59
Mining	7	10	2	16	2	1	2	40
Arts & recreation services	7	12	5	4	2	..	1	32
Administrative & support services	4	10	6	4	2	1	..	27
Public administration & safety	9	4	4	4	3	1	1	26
Other services	4	5	3	5	3	1	..	22
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	4	4	7	4	2	..	..	21
Other industries	37	16	17	2	3	4	3	82
5 year total	282	229	184	121	63	26	20	928

Note: The Australian Capital Territory was not included separately due to the low number of fatalities, however, the total includes the Australian Capital Territory.

As noted above, worker fatalities which occurred in a state or territory may not fall within the jurisdictional responsibility of that state or territory. The jurisdiction with the highest number of number of worker fatalities in 2018 was New South Wales, with 46 worker fatalities, of which 37 did not occur on a public road. This was followed by Queensland (38 fatalities of which 27 did not occur on a public road) and Victoria (29 fatalities of which 23 did not occur on a public road) (Table 23). Aircraft incidents resulted in five worker fatalities in 2018.

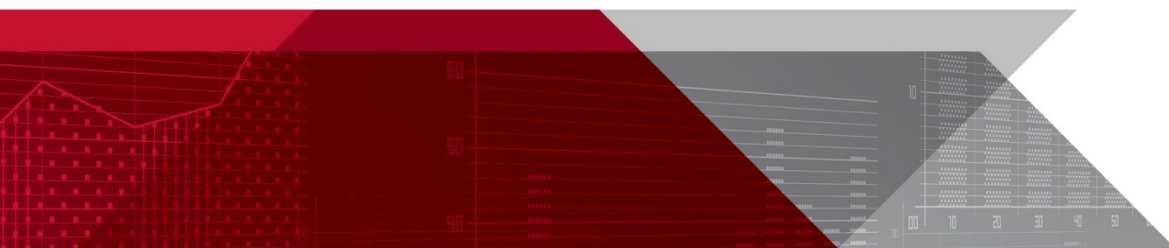
Table 23: Worker fatalities: number by jurisdiction and public road status, 2018

Jurisdiction*	Not on a public road	On a public road	Total
New South Wales	37	9	46
Queensland	27	11	38
Victoria	23	6	29
Western Australia	11	1	12
South Australia	6	1	7
The Commonwealth**	..	4	4
Northern Territory	2	..	2
Australian Capital Territory	1	..	1
Tasmania	..	..	..
Aircraft incidents***	5	..	5
2018 total	112	32	144

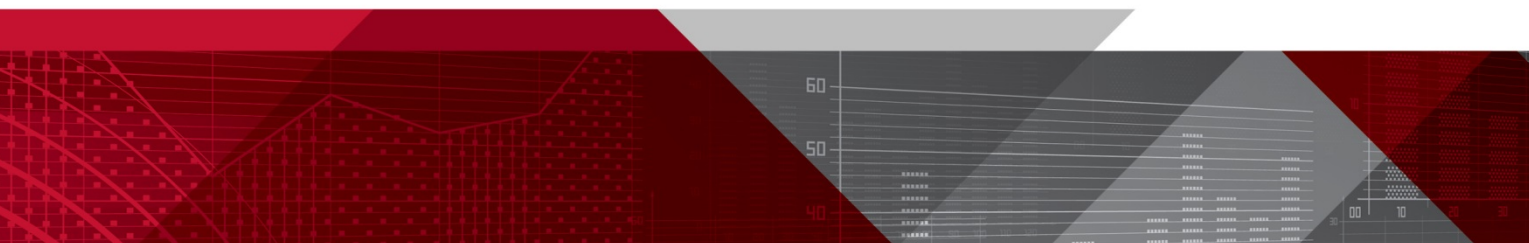
* Jurisdictions may include a number of different regulatory authorities.

** The Commonwealth jurisdiction refers to that which falls within the Commonwealth *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* administered by Comcare. Commonwealth jurisdiction fatalities have been reported in previous reports by location of death only.

*** Worker fatalities involving aircraft incidents are not tabulated against jurisdictions.



Section 2: Bystander Fatalities



2.1 Bystander fatalities by mechanism of incident

The actions of a worker or a fault in a workplace resulted in the deaths of 62 members of the public (referred to as bystanders) in 2018. The majority of these, 77 per cent, were due to a vehicle collision¹¹, which is higher than the five year average of 61 per cent (Table 24). Being hit by moving objects accounted for a further 16 per cent of bystander fatalities in 2018.

Table 24: Bystander fatalities: number by mechanism of incident, 2014 to 2018 (sorted by five year average)

Mechanism of fatality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% of 2018	% of 5yr average
Vehicle collision*	39	27	25	45	48	77%	61%
Being hit by moving objects	11	12	13	13	10	16%	20%
Drowning	4	5	6	..	1	2%	5%
Falls from a height	6	3	1	4	..	..	5%
Being hit by falling objects	3	2	3	..	..	..	3%
Other mechanisms	6	2	5	5	3	5%	7%
Total	69	51	53	67	62	100%	100%

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

Note: The percentages shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore the sum of percentage figures for each column may not equal the total.

2.2 Bystander fatalities by age group

Over the last five years, there have been 40 work-related bystander fatalities involving children under 14 years of age (13 per cent of bystander fatalities) and 65 fatalities involving people aged 65 years or older (22 per cent of bystander fatalities).

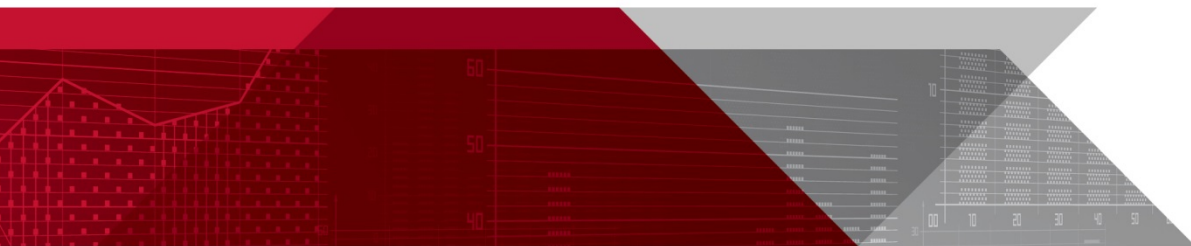
Vehicle collisions¹¹ accounted for the highest number of work-related bystander fatalities across all age groups (Table 25). This was followed by Being hit by moving objects, where children aged 14 and under accounted for 19 per cent (11 fatalities) and bystanders aged 65 and over accounted for 32 per cent (19 fatalities). Bystanders aged 65 and over accounted for 36 per cent of bystander fatalities due to Falls from a height.

Table 25: Bystander fatalities: number by age group, 2014 to 2018

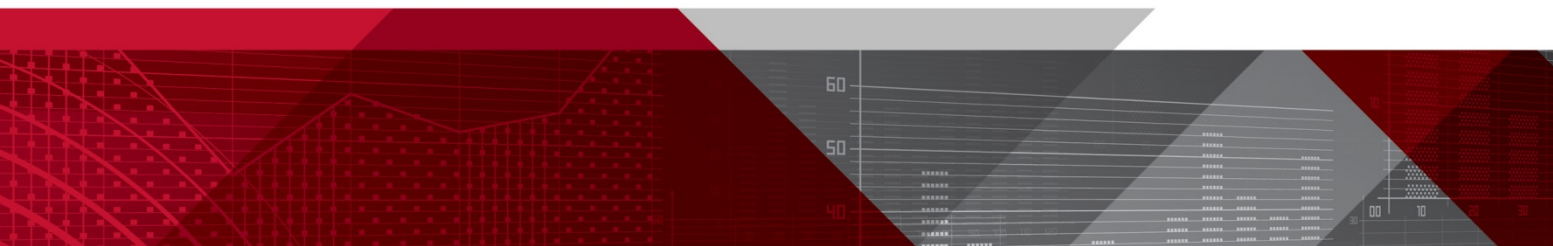
Mechanism of fatality	14 & under	15–24	25–44	45–64	65 & over
Vehicle collision*	17	23	55	62	27
Being hit by moving objects	11	3	9	17	19
Drowning	1	4	3	3	5
Falls from a height	4	2	2	1	5
Being hit by falling objects	4	..	1	2	1
Other mechanisms	3	2	5	3	8
5 year total	40	34	75	88	65

* Vehicle collisions include fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle crash. Vehicles include not only road vehicles such as cars and trucks, but also machines such as aircraft, boats, loaders, tractors and quad bikes.

¹¹ See Glossary for explanation of 'vehicle collision'



Section 3: Data sources & Glossary



3.1 Data sources

The Traumatic Injury Fatalities database uses information from three datasets:

- National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS), constructed using accepted workers' compensation claims
- Notifiable Fatalities Collection (NFC), constructed using work-related fatalities that are notified to Australian work health and safety authorities
- National Coronial Information System (NCIS), constructed using deaths reported to Australian coroners

These datasets are also supplemented by monitoring of work-related fatalities in Australian media by Safe Work Australia. Labour Force Survey data, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS category number 6202.0), is used to calculate fatality rates. For more information on Safe Work Australia datasets, refer to <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/explanatory-notes-traumatic-injury-fatalities-safe-work-australia>.

3.2 Glossary

Being hit by moving objects

Part of the TOOCS Mechanism classification used to describe the action of an object hitting a person. This includes pedestrians hit by vehicles as well as being hit by other moving equipment or objects.

Breakdown agency

A part of the TOOCS classification which identified the object, substance or circumstance principally involved at the point at which things started to go wrong and ultimately led to a worker fatality.

Bystander fatality

The death of a person who dies from injuries sustained as a result of another person's work activity and who was not engaged in a work activity of their own at the time of the injury. A traffic incident death is only classified as a bystander fatality when attributable to someone else's work activity. Typically, this means the driver of a work vehicle is at fault. Cases where fault could not be determined with sufficient confidence are excluded.

Employed person

The denominators used in calculating fatality rates in this report are based on ABS estimates of Employed persons, as defined in Labour force, Australia (ABS cat no 6202.0). This population includes employees (who work for an employer); self-employed persons (regardless of whether they employ others or not); and those who work without pay for a family business or farm. It excludes persons whose only work is voluntary.

Employee

A person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, a retainer fee from their employer while working on a commission basis, tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind; or a person who operates his or her own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees.

Fatality rate

The number killed as a result of work-related injury expressed as a per-capita rate against the population at risk of work-related injury. In this report the rate is expressed as the number of fatalities per 100,000 Employed persons: for brevity this is usually expressed as 'fatalities per 100,000 workers'. Labour Force Survey data, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS category number 6202.0) to provide the number of workers to calculate fatality rates. See the [Explanatory notes](#) for further details.

Gender vs sex

Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, while gender refers to the social identification of sex. Safe Work Australia's fatality data is based on multiple data sources, some of which is reported by gender and some which is reported by sex. Further, while the majority of the population identifies both their sex and gender as either male or female, a small proportion of the population identify their sex and/or gender as other than male or female; however there are no work-related fatalities in the Traumatic Injury Fatalities dataset which have been identified as belonging to this third category.

Industry

A grouping of businesses that carry out similar economic activities. Fatalities data in this publication have been coded to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (ABS cat. no. 1292.0). ANZSIC utilises four levels of industry classification—division, subdivision, group and class—and unless specified in this report, industries are presented at the division level.

Injury

A condition coded to 'External causes of morbidity and mortality' and 'Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes' in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM).

Job

A set of tasks designed to be performed by one person for an employer (including self-employment) in return for payment or profit.

Mechanism of incident

The action, exposure or event that best describes the circumstances that resulted in the most serious injury, coded to the TOOCS classification.

Non-public road incident

An incident involving a vehicle that occurred at a worksite, on a private road or a public area that is not a public road. These incidents include plane crashes and incidents involving watercraft as well as vehicle crashes on farming properties.

Occupation

A set of jobs with similar sets of tasks. Fatalities data in this publication have been coded to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) (ABS cat. no. 1220.0) First edition. ANZSCO utilises four levels of occupational classification—major, sub-major, minor and unit groups—and unless specified in this report, occupations are presented at the major group level.

Public road incident

A collision on a public road between any vehicle or self-propelled plant and anything else including a pedestrian. Incidents involving vehicles at worksites or on private roads are excluded. Public road incidents can be due to a vehicle collision or being hit by a vehicle (which is included in the Mechanism of Being hit by moving objects).

Rollover of non-road vehicle

Part of the Mechanism classification used to identify when a vehicle that is not normally a road vehicle overturns. This includes tractors and quad bikes being used on farm properties.

Type of occurrence classification system (TOOCS)

A suite of four classifications to code the way an injury occurred, comprising the Nature of injury/disease classification, the Bodily location of injury/disease classification, Mechanism of incident classification, and the Agency of injury/disease classification. Version 3.1 is used for coding the data presented in this report. Fatalities are only coded by Mechanism and Agency.

Vehicle collision

Part of the TOOCS Mechanism of incident classification that identifies fatalities that occurred as a direct result of a vehicle collision. In the TOOCS classification, this category is called Vehicle Incident but has been renamed in this report to vehicle collision to assist with reader understanding. Vehicle collisions include all fatalities involving a moving vehicle (rail, road, water, or air) crashing, colliding, or running out of control; with the exception of people who are struck by (or struck against) a vehicle when not travelling in one, which are included as 'Being hit by moving objects'. Vehicle collisions that occur on public roads are further classified as a public road incidents.

Volunteer

Persons who undertake voluntary work through or for an organisation or group are included in the worker counts where that organisation or group is a business enterprise. It does not include sporting organisations or caring activities.

Worker fatality

The death of a person who dies from injuries sustained while at work, including those workers whose injury was caused by another's work activity. Workers include employees, self-employed persons, volunteers and contributing family workers.