



[2008 Workplace Injuries, Illnesses and Deaths](#)

by ***John Demas*** on 03/23/10 at 11:54 am Posted in: ***[Workplace Injuries](#)***

Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

A [New York Times](#) article states that more government workers report on-the-job injuries than their counterparts in the private sector. This statement is based on a new [Department of Labor report](#) indicating that during 2008, for every 10,000 employees working full-time: (1) private sector workers reported 113 nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses; (2) state employees filed 170 similar reports; and (3) local government employees reported 195 labor injuries and illnesses.

However, this does not mean that government workers are necessarily filing more questionable injury reports since the government sector hires far more police and correctional officers (whose physical safety is often regularly threatened) than private employers. What does appear true is that private sector employees are more likely than their government counterparts to report injuries and illnesses attributed to on-the-job overexertion or harmful contact with job-related equipment or objects.

This same labor report indicates that men are more likely to report job injuries than women – regardless of whether or not they're holding down private sector, local or state government jobs. It's possible that this is because men are still handling a higher percentage of jobs requiring heavy lifting and physical labor than women.

Workplace Deaths and Suicides

One promising bit of statistical information is that workplace deaths actually declined by 10 percent in 2008 when compared to the previous year. The total of 5,071 workplace deaths reported in 2008 was the lowest one reported since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking that information back in 1992.

Unlike previous years, 2008 was apparently far less plagued by deaths caused by falls and homicides. Unfortunately, that same year marked [a 28% increase](#) in workplace suicides, reaching a total of 251 (that's higher than any previously recorded year). Oddly enough, given cultural stereotypes, more women than men died as a result of job-related homicides and highway accidents in 2008.

Other Interesting Facts About Worker Injuries and Deaths in 2008

- Aircraft pilots, flight engineers, logging workers and fishers were among those mostly likely to experience work-related injuries and deaths;
- Of all the foreign-born workers who died in America in 2008, 42 % of them came from Mexico;
- About two-fifths of all work-related deaths in 2008 were transportation-related;
- Older workers were much more likely to die on the job in 2008 than younger workers;

There are various theories as to why the overall number of injuries and deaths dropped in 2008. Perhaps one of the strongest arguments is that the more dangerous industries like construction hired fewer workers in 2008 due to the country's economic downturn. Furthermore, the government itself may have been understaffed in 2008, causing these preliminary statistics to appear much lower than they will be once the current, higher number of government employees can fully update them.

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