

Occupational Fatalities in Kentucky

ANNUAL REPORT



2024

Kentucky Fatality Assessment
and Control Evaluation

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KENTUCKY FATALITY ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL EVALUATION

The Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (KY FACE) program is an occupational fatality surveillance program of the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC)*. The goal of KY FACE is to prevent fatal work injuries by studying the worker, work environment, energy exchange resulting in fatal injury, and the role of management, engineering, and behavioral changes in preventing future injuries. KY FACE investigators evaluate data from multiple sources, including 1) interviews with employers, coworkers, witnesses, and other investigators; 2) examinations of the work site and equipment; 3) Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports, police reports, and medical examiner reports; 4) employer safety procedures; and 5) information provided by the Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics. KY FACE does not seek to determine fault or place blame on companies or individual workers. Rather, findings are summarized in narrative reports that include recommendations for preventing similar events in the future.

KY FACE respectfully acknowledges the individuals who lost their lives to workplace injury in Kentucky and the pain and loss endured by their families and colleagues. It is hoped that surveillance of these tragic workplace incidents will help government, industry, workers, and communities target their injury prevention efforts and resources.

*Organizationally, KIPRC is part of the University of Kentucky and is a bona fide agent of the Kentucky Department for Public Health. This publication was supported by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as part of cooperative agreement 5 U60OH008483 totaling \$4,277,660 with 0% financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, NIOSH, CDC, HHS, or the U.S. government.

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Kentucky Public Health
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INTRODUCTION

In 2024, KY FACE recorded the deaths of 79 individuals due to work-related injuries that occurred in Kentucky. This number represents a rate of 3.98 fatalities per 100,000 workers employed in the civilian labor force in Kentucky in 2024.

2024 Trends in Fatal Occupational Injuries:

- The number of occupational fatalities in Kentucky in 2024 decreased from 100 occupational fatalities in 2023. The rate fell from 5 per 100,000 employed workers in 2023 to 3.98 employed workers in 2024.
- Motor vehicle crash was the leading cause of occupational fatalities, followed by falls and struck/by against.
- The natural resources and mining industry sector had the highest number of occupational fatalities, followed by the trade, transportation, and utilities industry sector and the construction industry sector.
- Fourteen percent of workplace deaths were among Hispanic workers, while Hispanic workers account for only 6% of the employed labor force in Kentucky. Forty-five percent of occupational fatalities among Hispanic workers were in the natural resources and mining industry sector in farming, logging, or landscaping occupations.
- Nineteen individuals aged 65 years and older were killed due to workplace injuries. Deaths from workplace injuries decreased among individuals aged 24 and younger, from 12 in 2023 to five in 2024.

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Charts displaying demographics of worker fatalities (pages 3-5)

Charts characterizing fatal occupational injuries (pages 6-10)

Summaries of the nine investigative reports KY FACE published (page 11)

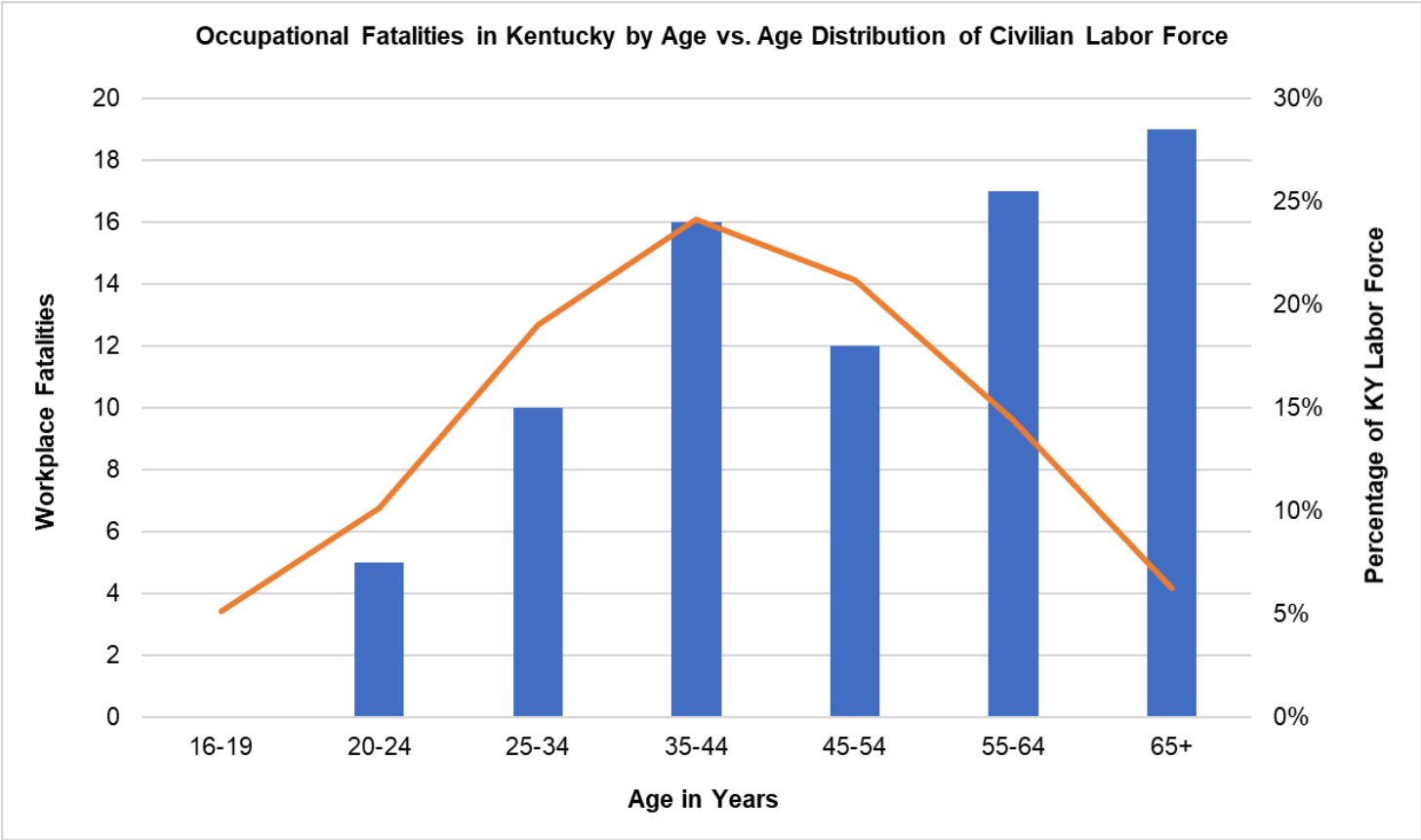
Summaries of hazard alerts and links to publications KY FACE published (page 12)

KY FACE online resources and a link to provide feedback (page 13)



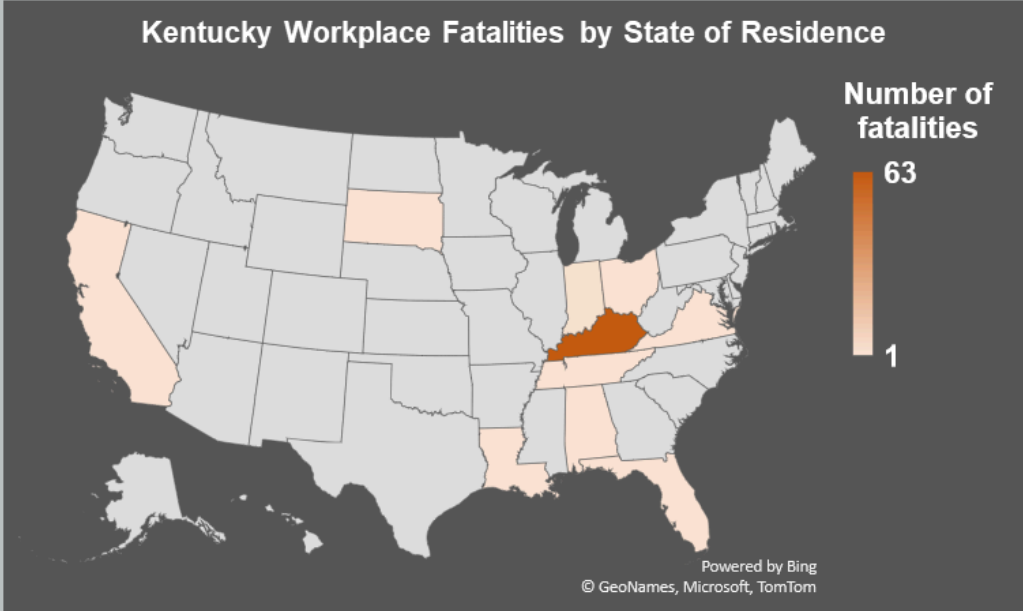
CHARTS

Demographics of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2024

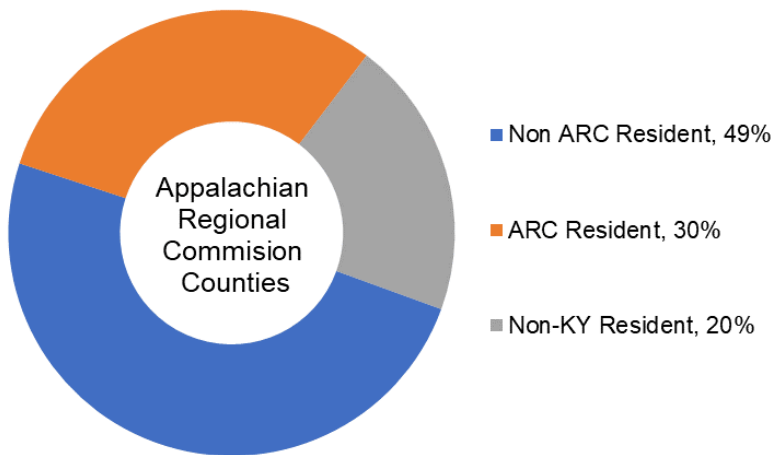


The bars above reflect fatal occupational injuries by age; the line reflects age distribution of the Kentucky employed labor force.

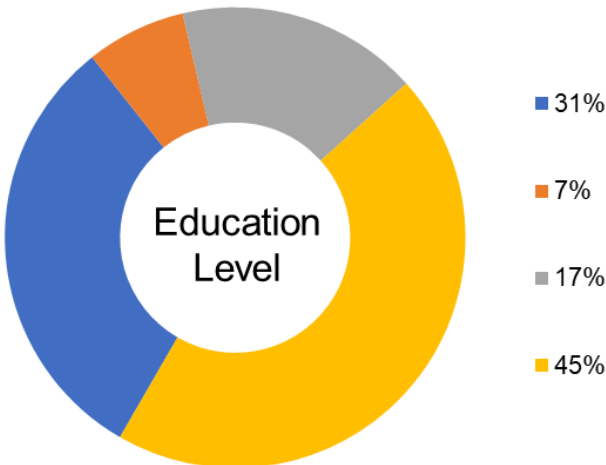
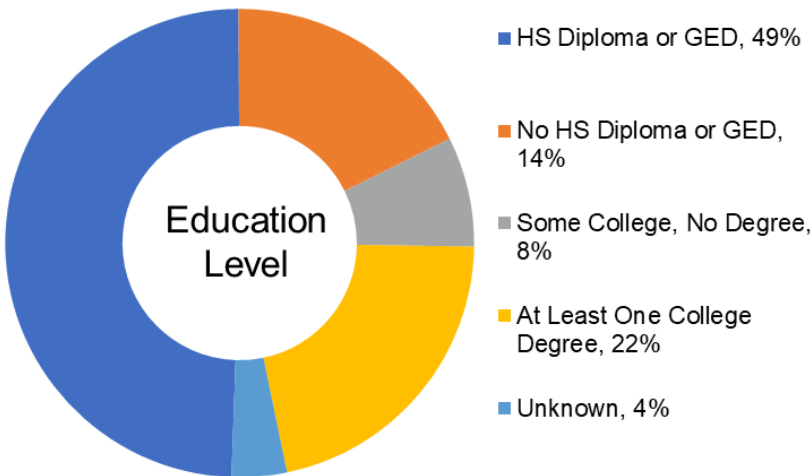
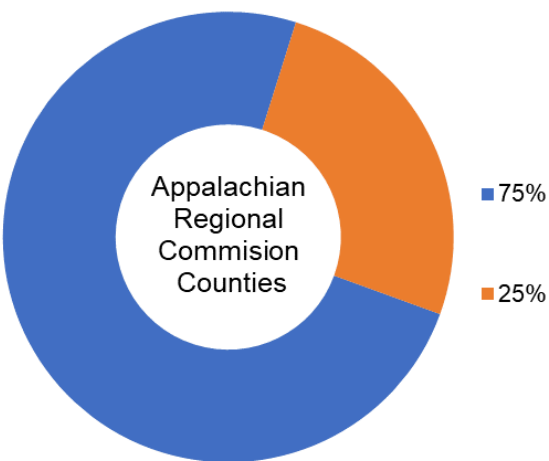
- While working in Kentucky in 2024, 79 residents of the following states died due to an occupational injury: Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Alabama, Florida, Ohio, California, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Virginia.
- Twenty percent of workplace fatalities that occurred in Kentucky were non-Kentucky residents. Two fatalities were non-United States residents.
- Thirty-one percent of deaths that occurred among non-Kentucky residents were due to motor vehicle crashes, compared to 18% in 2023.



Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2024
(79 total)



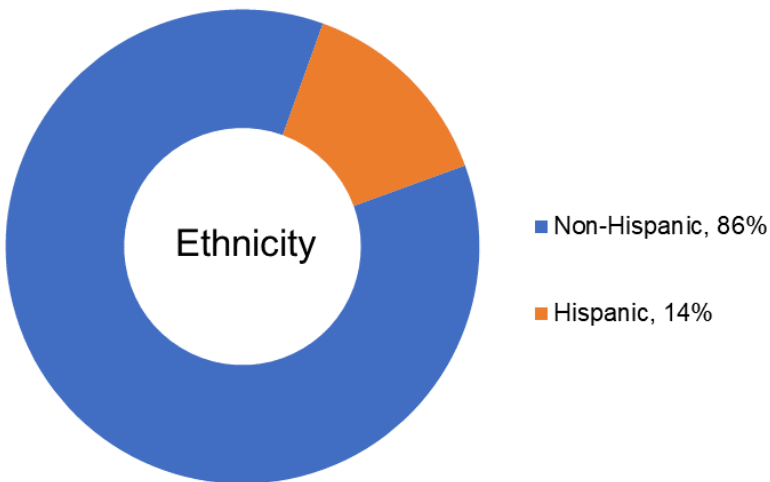
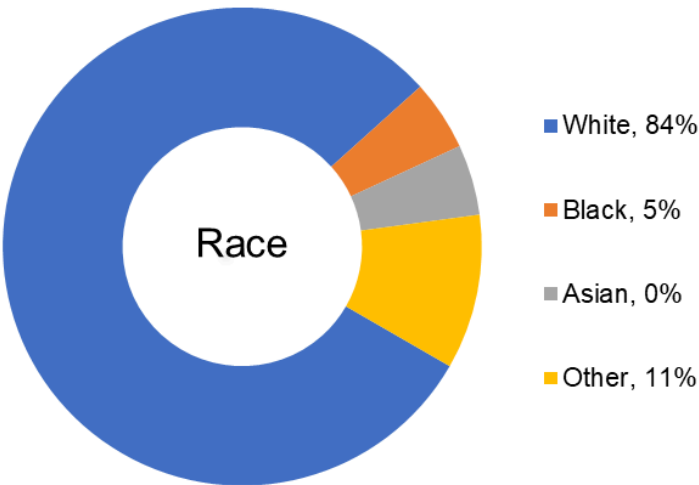
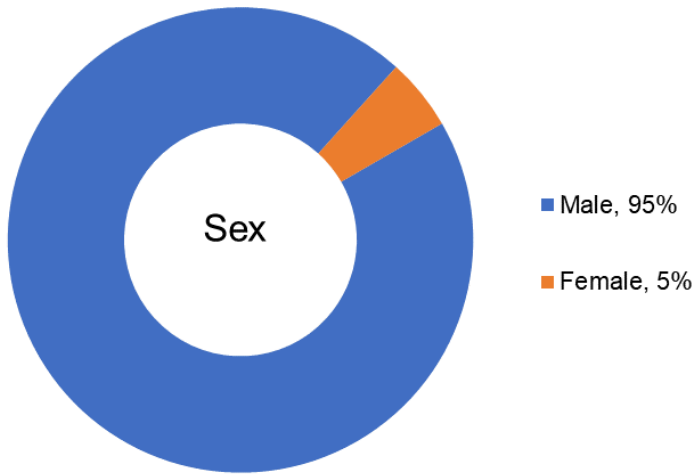
Employed Labor Force in Kentucky, 2024



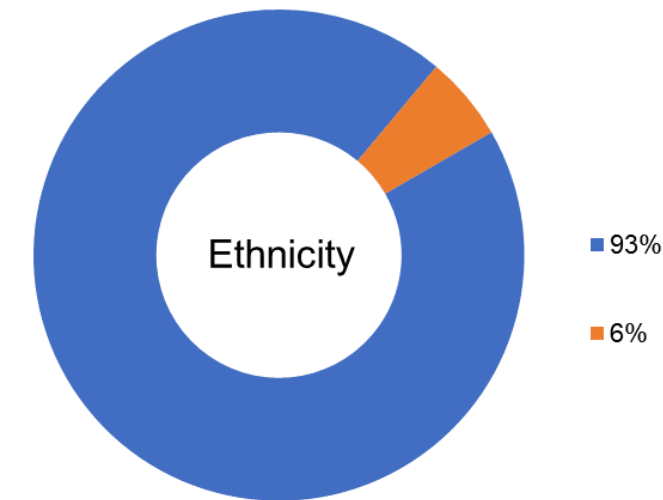
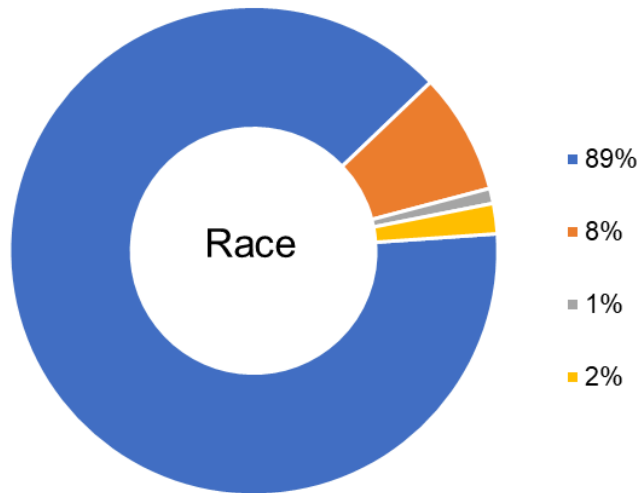
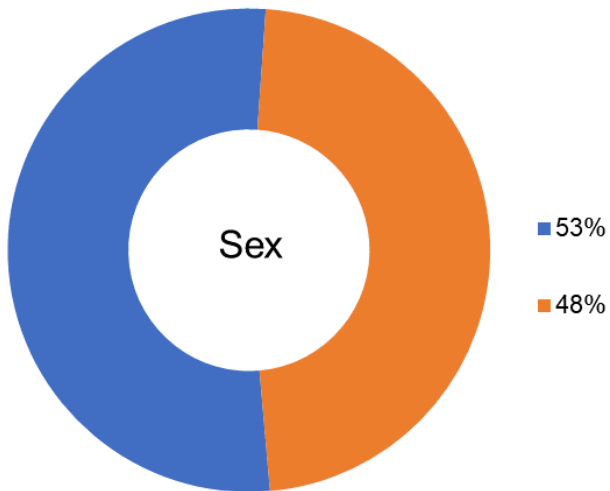
The **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** defines Appalachia as a 205,000-square-mile region encompassing **423 counties** across 13 states. Kentucky has 54 Appalachian counties.

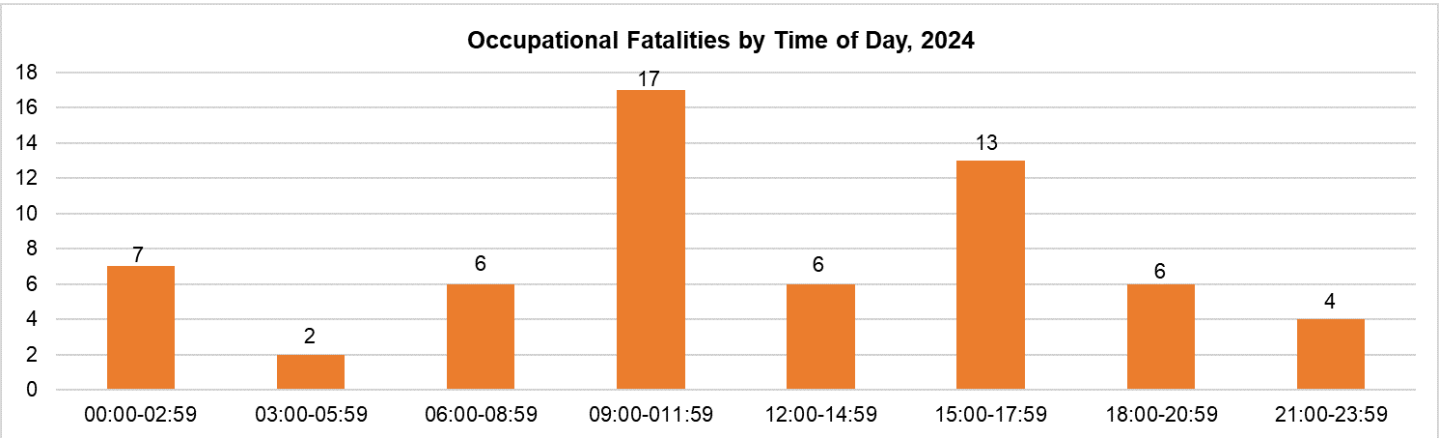
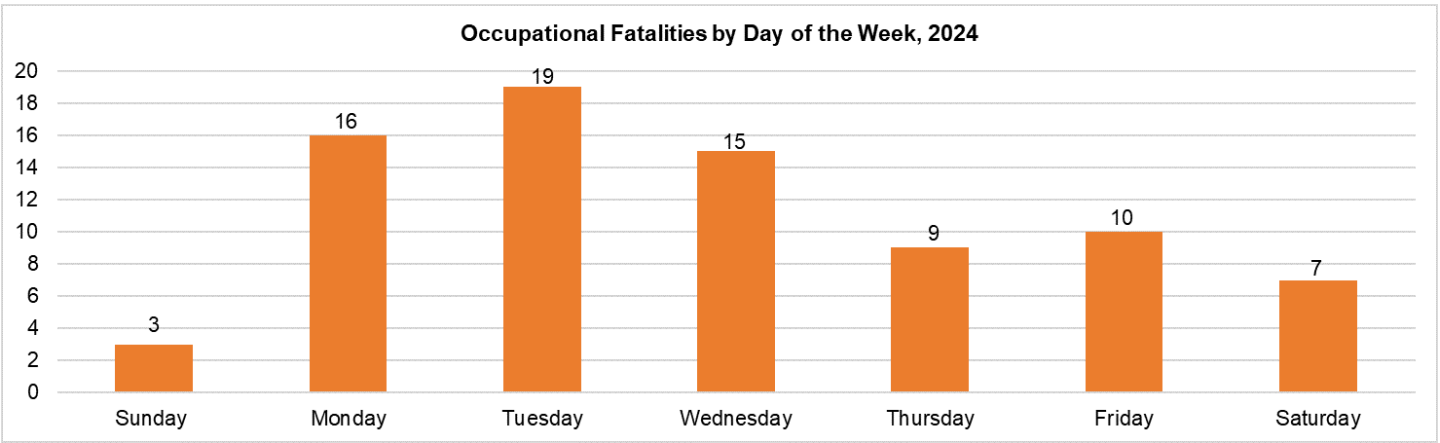
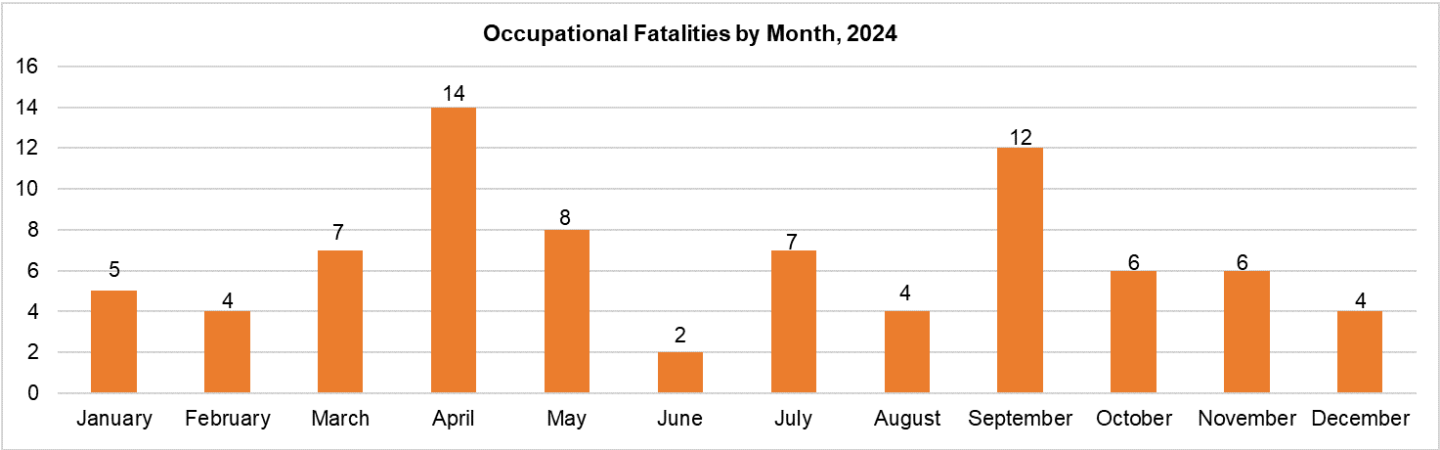
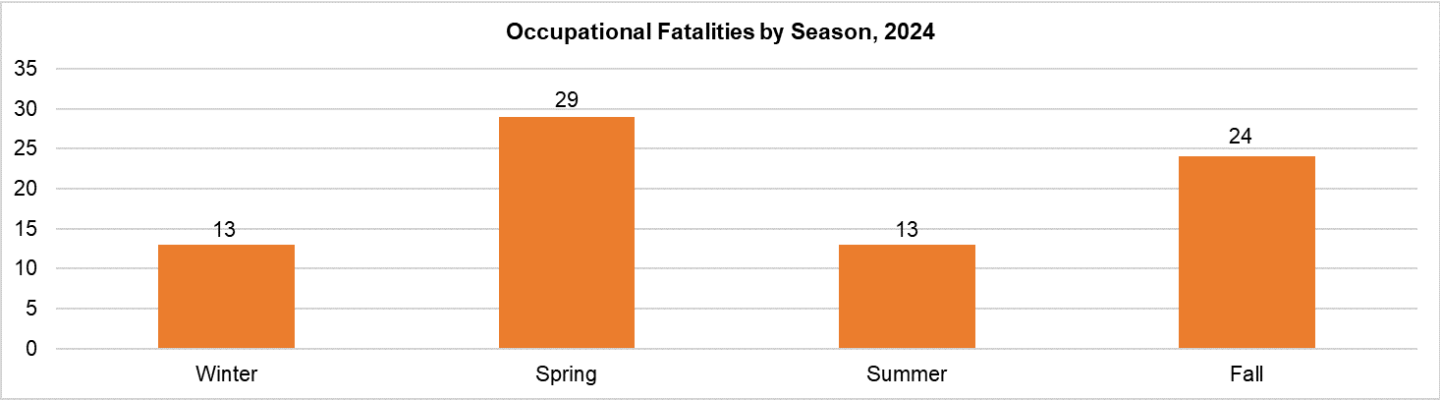


Demographics of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 2024
(79 total)



Employed Labor Force in Kentucky, 2024

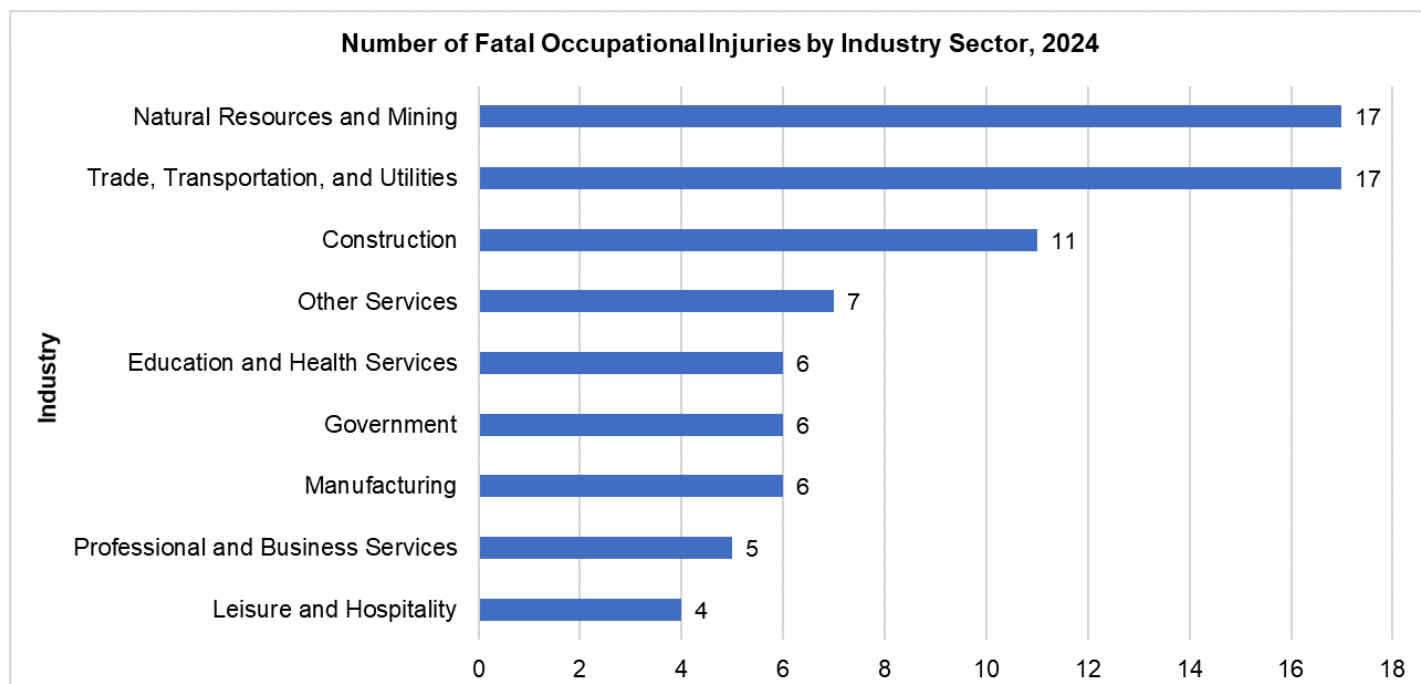
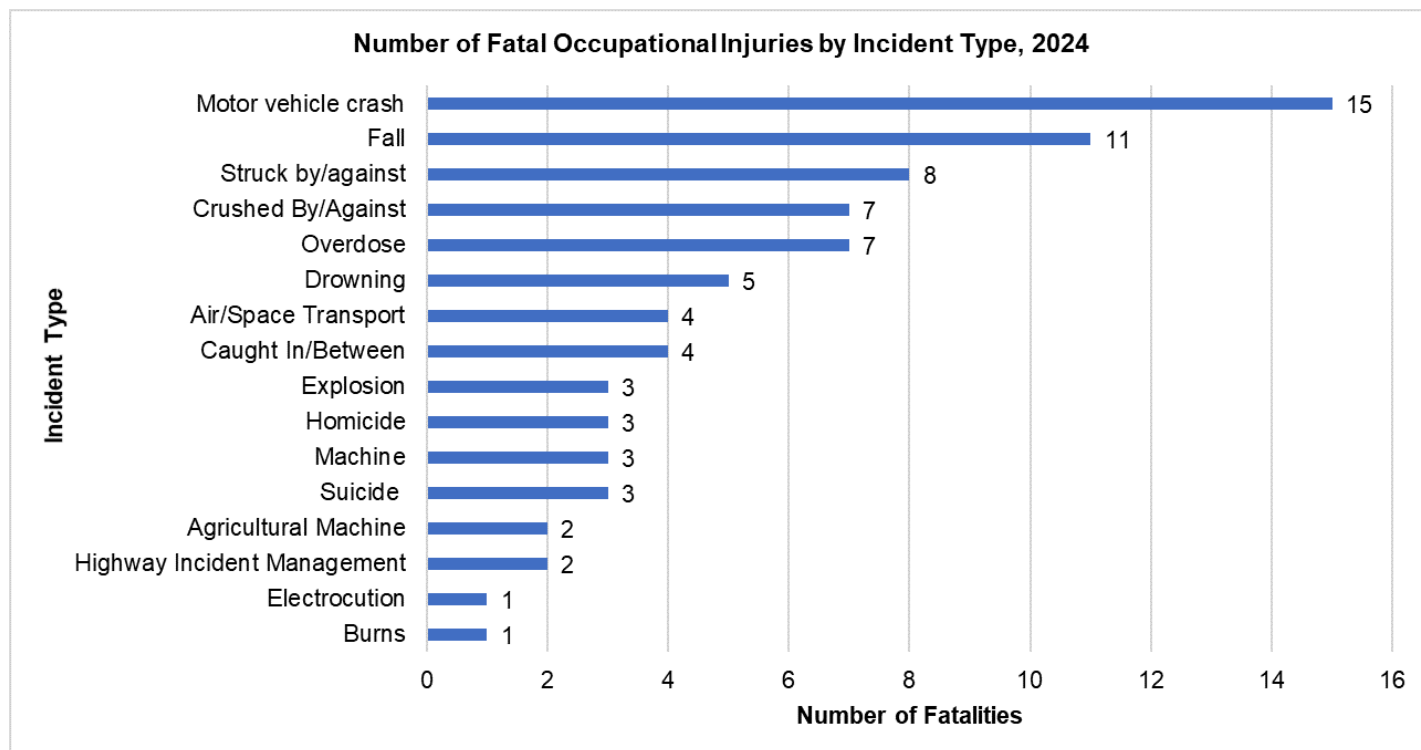




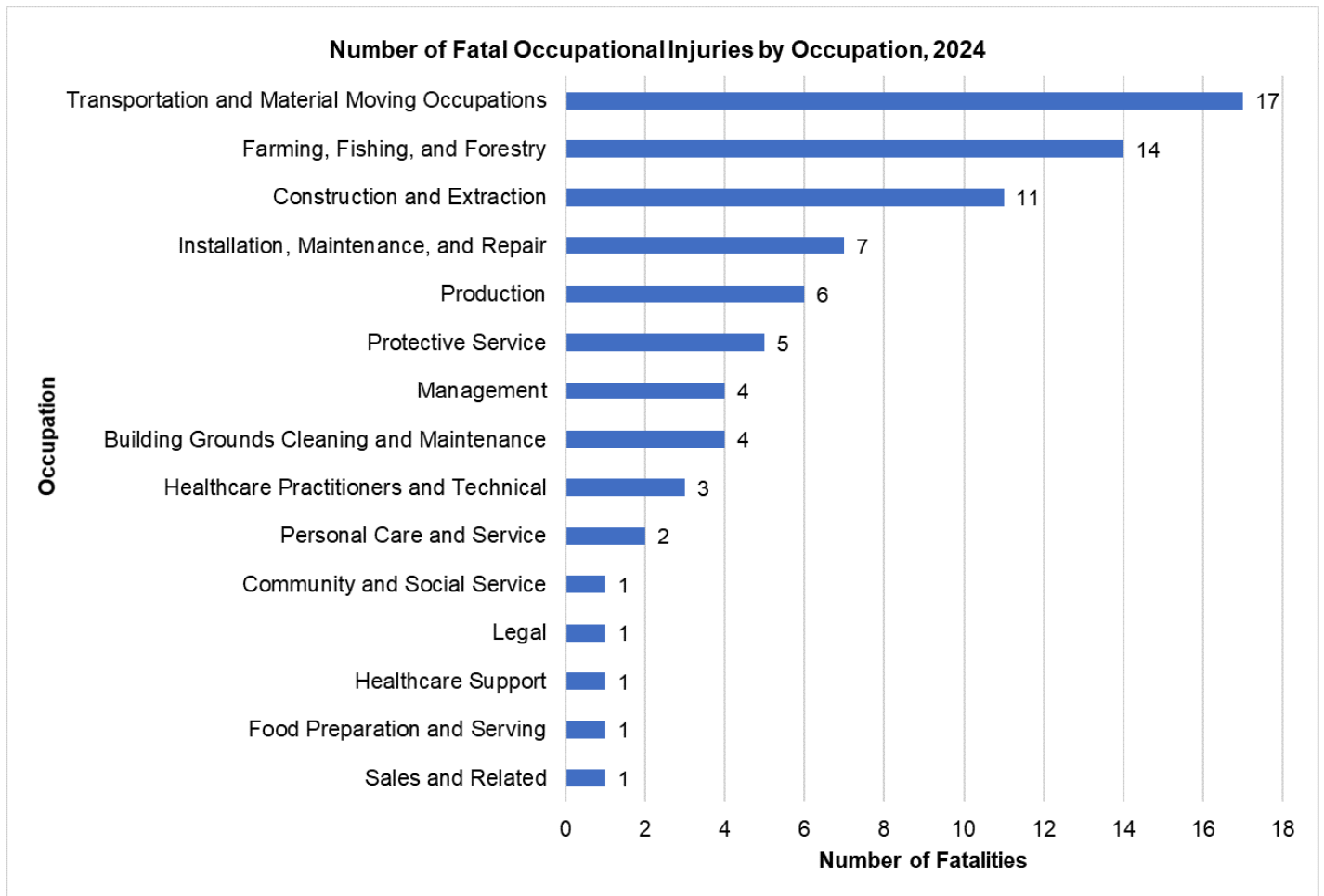
Note: Fatalities without a known time of incident are not included in the above chart.

Fatal Occupational Injuries by Incident Type & Industry Sector

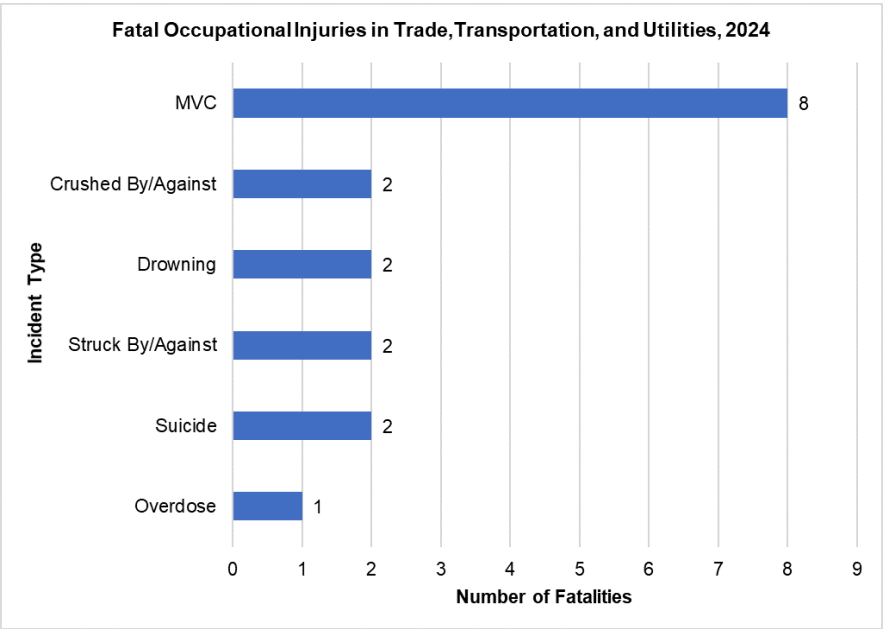
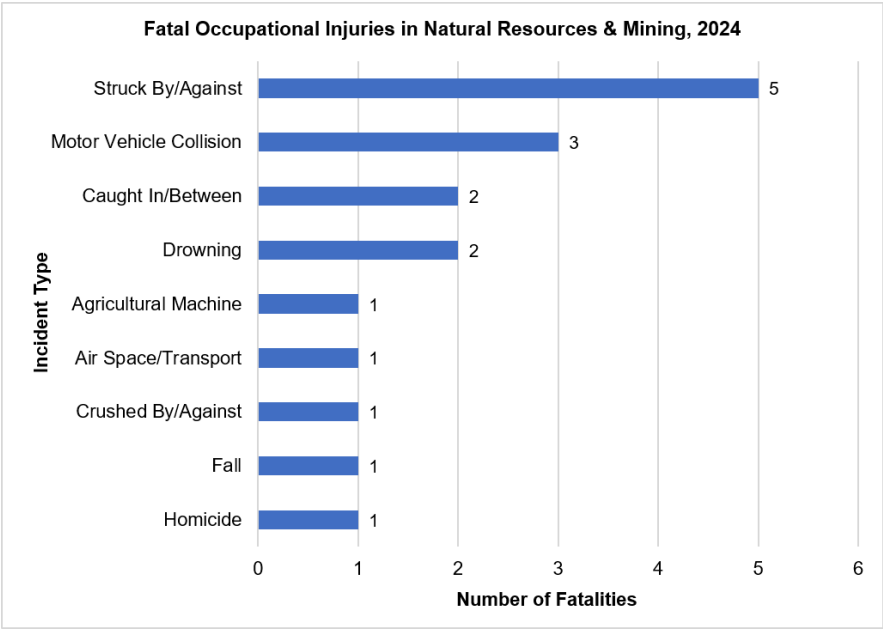
- Of the 79 occupational fatalities in Kentucky in 2024, 19% (n=15) were caused by motor vehicle crashes. Motor vehicle crash fatalities accounted for a lower percentage of overall occupational fatalities in 2024 than in 2023, (24%), 2022 (28%), 2021 (29%), 2020 (33%), 2019 (38%), and 2018 (37%).
- Falls were the second leading cause of occupational fatalities in Kentucky in 2024. Sixty-four percent (n=7) of fall fatalities were in the construction industry sector.
- Seventy-five percent (n=6) of occupational struck-by fatalities were logging or tree service-related fatalities.
- There were five occupational drowning fatalities, the highest number recorded in a single year since the beginning of KY FACE program in 1994.



Fatal Occupational Injuries by Occupation



Fatalities by Selected Industry Sectors



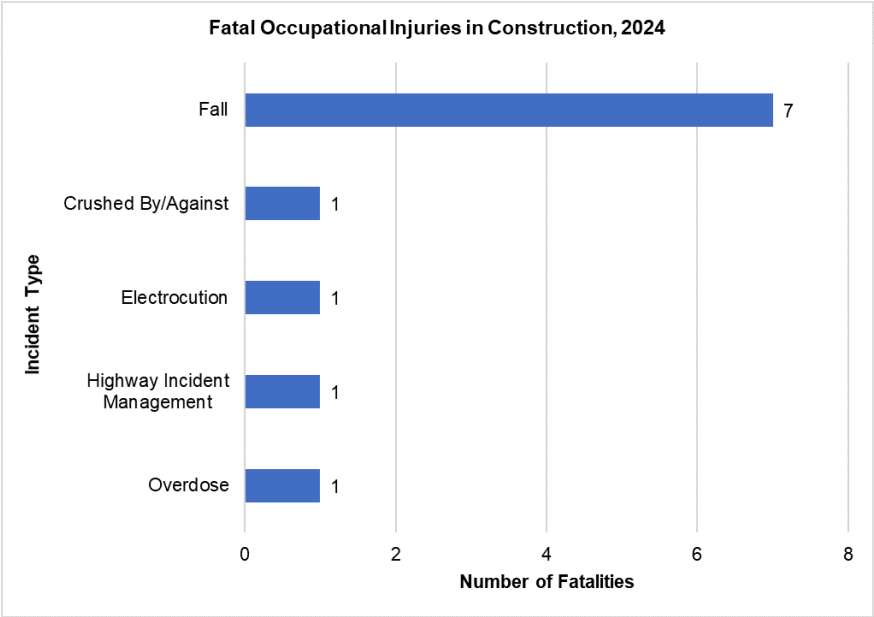
Natural Resources & Mining

- Twenty-two percent (n=17) of occupational fatalities in 2024 occurred in the natural resources & mining industry sector. This increased from 12% in 2023.
- Forty-seven percent of deaths in this industry sector were among individuals who worked in logging and forestry operations, and 35% were farmers.

Trade, Transportation, & Utilities

- The trade, transportation, and utilities industry sector accounted for 22% of workplace fatalities in 2024, up from 18% (n=18) in 2023.
- Sixty-five percent of cases in this industry sector involved truck drivers, up from 56% in 2023.
- Combined suicide and overdose accounted for 18% (n=3) of fatal injuries in this industry sector in 2024.

Fatalities by Selected Industries (continued)



Construction

- Fourteen percent of workplace fatalities occurred in the construction industry sector in 2024, compared to 22% (n=22) in 2023.
- In 2024, falls were overwhelmingly the leading cause of fatal injuries in the construction industry sector. Fall-related fatalities in the construction industry sector increased by 75% in 2024 compared to 2023 (n=4).



On-site investigations of selected cases are conducted by a KY FACE investigator. Investigative reports are reviewed by professional safety experts and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health prior to publication. Investigative reports seek to identify root causes of fatal workplace incidents and provide targeted recommendations for workplace injury prevention.

Complete investigative reports can be viewed at <https://kiprc.uky.edu/programs/fatality-assessment-and-control-evaluation-face>

FACE Investigation Summaries

Case ID: 24KY037 **Industry:** General Freight Trucking

Truck Driver Killed After Semi-Trailer Wheel and Tire Cross Median, Strike Windshield: A 55-year-old commercial truck driver was traveling on a Kentucky interstate when a semi-trailer wheel and tire crossed the median and struck the vehicle he was operating.

Case ID: 24KY020 **Industry:** Wire Product Manufacturing [Versión en español](#)

Machine Operator Pulled into Machine: A 33-year-old machine operator was pulled into the wire weaving machine she was operating, by her hair, while she was attempting to clean excess fluid off the wire weaving machine.

Case ID Number: 23KY063 **Industry:** Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction

General Laborer Killed on Kentucky Interstate in Multi-Vehicle Collision: A 46-year-old general laborer was operating a commercial vehicle on a Kentucky interstate en route to a highway construction project. While en route, the driver was involved in a multi-vehicle collision.

Case ID Number: 23KY115 **Industry:** Hotels and Motels

Hotel Employee Drowns in Swimming Pool: A 23-year-old hotel worker was killed when he drowned cleaning out the hotel pool. He attempted to dive down to retrieve trash but then could not remain afloat or reach the side of the pool.

Case ID Number: 24KY001 **Industry:** Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools [Versión en español](#)

Employee Dies by Suicide: A 66-year-old locksmith jumped from the roof of a 12-story building and succumbed to his injuries.

Case ID Number: 24KY022 **Industry:** Concrete Additive Manufacturer

Manufacturing Laborer Falls from Elevated Pallet, Succumbs to Injuries: A 62-year-old male manufacturing laborer was mixing concrete additive solution when he fell from a pallet elevated on a forklift.

Case ID Number: 24KY058 **Industry:** Tobacco Farming [Versión en español](#)

Farming Laborer Struck by Backing Truck, Succumbs to Injuries: A 40-year-old farm laborer was struck by a backing pickup truck as it was attempting to connect with a trailer. The victim was crushed between the backing truck and the trailer.

Case ID Number: 23KY003 **Industry:** Motor Vehicle Brake System Manufacturing

Press Operator Killed by Ejected Fragment: A 52-year-old press operator was setting up a hydraulic fineblanking press for production use. When the press was operated, a metal balance pin fractured from the pressure and a fragment was ejected from the press and struck the the press operator in the neck.

Case ID Number: 24KY072 **Industry:** General Freight Trucking

Wash Bay Attendant Engulfed by Fire Dies from Injuries: A 20-year-old wash bay attendant attempted to perform maintenance on a compressed liquid petroleum gas tank trailer when the tool he was using ignited residual gas escaping from the trailer.

Hazard Alerts

The Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance (KOSHS) program produces Hazard Alerts based on trends observed in FACE data and investigations.

Complete versions of Hazard Alerts can be found at:

<https://kiprc.uky.edu/programs/fatality-assessment-and-control-evaluation-face/hazard-alerts>.

Working in Extreme Heat and Humidity

Heat is the leading cause of death among all weather-related phenomena in the United States. From 1992 to 2022 in the United States, 986 workers across all industries died from exposure to heat. Thirty-four percent of those fatalities were in the construction industry. Nearly 3 out of 4 heat-related deaths occur during a worker’s first week on the job. From 2018 to 2022, 616 Kentucky workers visited the emergency department due to heat-related illnesses.

Versión en español:
[Trabajo en condiciones extremas de calor y humedad](#)



HAZARD ALERT

Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance-August 2024



WORKING IN EXTREME HEAT AND HUMIDITY

Recommendations for Employers:

- Create and follow a plan to allow new and returning workers to acclimate to working in the heat. This should include shorter work periods with more frequent breaks, monitoring new workers for symptoms, and not allowing new workers to work alone. These increased precautions should last at least 1-2 weeks.
- Train supervisors and workers on how to identify and control heat hazards, recognize signs and symptoms, administer first aid, and to be ready to engage emergency medical services quickly.
- When possible, use methods to make the environment cooler with air conditioning, misting fans, increased ventilation, reflective shields, etc. Reduce manual workload with mechanization where possible.
- Modify work schedules with mandatory increased breaks in cooler areas, scheduling work at a cooler time of day, and rotating job functions to help minimize exertion or heat exposure.
- Provide cool water for workers to drink and remind workers to drink regularly, not just when thirsty. For longer jobs that exceed two hours, employers should provide electrolyte-containing beverages.
- Ensure workers are wearing light colored, loose fitting clothing that doesn't trap heat or moisture. Some types of personal protective equipment can increase the risk of heat-related illness.

What is the hazard?

Heat is the leading cause of death among all weather-related phenomena in the United States. From 1992 to 2022 in the United States, 986 workers across all industries died from exposure to heat. Thirty-four percent of those fatalities were in the construction industry.¹ Nearly 3 out of 4 heat-related deaths occur during a worker's first week on the job.² From 2018 to 2022, 616 Kentucky workers visited the emergency department due to heat-related illnesses.³

Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat Stroke	- Slurred speech, confusion - Loss of consciousness - Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating - Very high body temperature - Seizures
Heat Exhaustion	- Headache, nausea, dizziness - Weakness, irritability - Thirst, decreased urine - Heavy sweating - Elevated body temperature
Heat Syncope	- Fainting (short duration) - Dizziness - Light-headedness when standing for long periods or changing position
Heat Cramps	Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs
Heat Rash	Red clusters of pimples or small blisters
Rhabdomyolysis	- Muscle pain/cramps - Weakness - Exercise intolerance - Abnormally dark urine



Worker Safety During Flooding and Cleanup

Flooding is Kentucky’s most frequent natural disaster. Kentucky workers may be exposed to a number of hazards both during the flooding and the subsequent response and cleanup efforts, including drowning, electrical hazards, exposure to chemical or biological hazards, sharp or jagged debris, tree/limb removal injuries, lifting injuries, hypothermia, mold, and carbon dioxide.

Versión en español:
[Protección de los trabajadores durante inundaciones y tareas de limpieza](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Bunn, T. L., Northcutt, C. A., Honaker, R., & Maloney, P. (2025). Quantitative and Narrative Analysis of Dump Truck-Related Injuries and Fatalities in the United States. *Safety*, 11(1), 17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/safety11010017>

[Read the article](#)

Reports and press releases

[Worker Safety in Flood Recovery: KOSHS Releases Hazard Alert](#)

[Kentucky Fatalities, Inpatient Hospitalizations, Outpatient Hospital Visits, and Worker’s Compensation First Reports of Injury Involving an Occupational Heat-Related Injury, 2019–2024](#)

KY FACE Data Source

This report was produced by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as a bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Data source: KY FACE database. The KY FACE database collects occupational fatality data from multiple surveillance sources, including but not limited to death certificates, OSHA-36 forms, Mine Safety and Health Administration Fatalgrams, newspaper clippings, workers' compensation forms, Kentucky State Police Crash Data, coroner reports, and toxicology reports.



Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center

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KY FACE Social Media

KY FACE maintains a social media presence, enabling us to share references and links to occupational injury prevention materials and sources. Please visit us:



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