



# Oregon Compensable Fatality Characteristics Calendar Year 2021

## October 2022

**AUTHOR** Andrew Schiek

The Workers' Compensation Division received notification of 44 compensable fatalities in 2021, 11 more workplace fatal accidents than during 2020, and approximately 10 higher than the 10-year average of 33.5 fatalities. The number of compensable fatalities in 2021 is the highest since 2008, when 46 notifications were received for workers who perished on the job.

### OREGON COMPENSABLE FATALITIES 2012-2021

Year	WC covered employment	Fatal claims	Fatal rate
2012	1,664,000	30	1.80
2013	1,697,600	30	1.77
2014	1,743,800	31	1.78
2015	1,796,400	27	1.50
2016	1,855,600	29	1.56
2017	1,899,400	35	1.84
2018	1,943,000	35	1.84
2019	1,986,100	41	2.06
2020	1,857,800	34	1.83
2021	1,908,000	44	2.31

Note: Employment figures are based on data from the Oregon Employment Department. Fatality rates are the number of accepted fatal claims per 100,000 workers. The 2021 employment and fatality rate estimates are preliminary.

Data exclude deaths of workers not subject to Oregon workers' compensation coverage, such as workers who were self-employed, who worked for out-of-state employers, City of Portland police and fire employees, and federal employees.

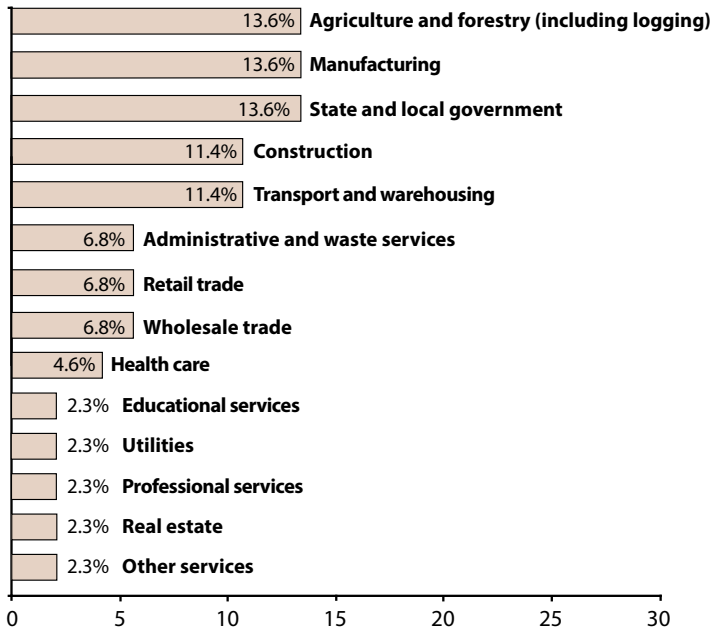
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**OREGON INDUSTRIES**  
by percent of 2021 compensable fatalities



Note: Due to rounding, percents may not sum to 100.

EVENT resulting in injury	2021 fatalities	Percent of total
Roadway accident	9	20.5
Infection with COVID-19	8	18.2
Struck by or against object	6	13.6
Pedestrian accident	4	9.1
Fall or jump to lower level	3	6.8
Homicides	3	6.8
Exposure to harmful environment	3	6.8
Fires, explosions	2	4.6
Non-roadway accident	2	4.6
Exposure to harmful substances	2	4.6
Caught in or compressed by	1	2.3
Pedal cycle accident	1	2.3

Of the nine workers killed in roadway accidents, five were wearing seatbelts, one was not wearing a seatbelt, and one was riding a motorcycle, moped, or other roadway vehicle that does not have a seatbelt. In the other two incidents, seatbelt usage could not be determined.

Note: Due to rounding, percents may not sum to 100.

SOURCE of injury or disease	2021 fatalities	Percent of total
Vehicles	16	36.4
Persons, plants, animals, and minerals	8	18.2
COVID-19	8	18.2
Machinery	4	9.1
Other sources	4	9.1
Parts and materials	2	4.5
Structures and surfaces	1	2.3
Chemicals and chemical products	1	2.3

Trucks were the source for 10 of the 16 vehicles involved in fatal accidents, four of which involved semi-trucks.

Note: Due to rounding, percents may not sum to 100.

TENURE of worker	2021 fatalities	Percent of total
1st year	9	20.5
<i>One month or less</i>	2	4.5
<i>2nd-3rd months</i>	2	4.5
<i>4th-6th months</i>	2	4.5
<i>7th-12th months</i>	3	6.8
2nd year	3	6.8
3rd year	5	11.4
4th-5th years	2	4.5
6th-10th years	7	15.9
11th-25th years	8	18.2
26 or more years	2	4.5
Unknown	8	18.2

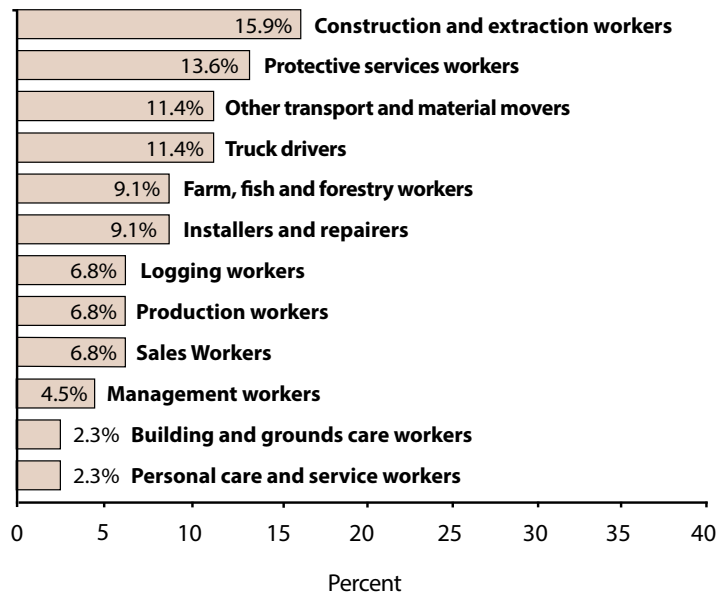
Note: Tenure is the amount of time the employee worked for the employer at the time-of-injury and is not necessarily indicative of the worker's level of experience.

Note: Due to rounding, percents may not sum to 100.

## Compensable Fatality Facts, Oregon, 2021

- Of the 44 compensable fatalities in 2021, eight were the result of infection with the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, COVID infection accounted for 80 percent of all compensable fatalities resulting from exposure to harmful substances, and 50 percent of compensable fatalities with people, plants, animals, or minerals as a source. The previous year, there was only one compensable fatality that was the result of COVID infection. Because of this, we have separated instances of COVID from the "Exposure to Harmful Substances" event category and the "Persons, plants, animals, and minerals" source category, which is where viral infection would normally be classified.
- The average age of workers with fatal claims accepted during 2021 was 47 years, which is two years higher than the average age from the previous year (the average age of workers with fatal claims from 2020 was 45). The average age from 2012 to 2021 was approximately 47 years of age. The previous 10-year average from 2002 to 2011 was about 43 years of age.
- The oldest worker with a fatal claim was a 77-year-old landscaper who was struck by a falling tree branch. The youngest worker was a 22-year-old pipefitter whose pickup truck ran off the roadway.
- There were four fatal claims accepted for female workers in 2021, the same as the previous two years. During the five-year period from 2017 to 2021, female workers accounted for 8.5 percent of accepted fatalities, a decrease from the 10.2 percent in the previous five-year period (2012 to 2016).
- Six of the compensable fatalities in 2021 were workers employed in the public sector. This is the highest number in the last five years. The next highest was in 2019, when there were three compensable fatalities for public sector workers. The five-year average is now 5.3 public sector workers. Of the six compensable fatalities for workers in the public sector in 2021, three were the result of infection with the COVID-19 virus.
- Of the 44 compensable fatalities, four were out-of-state. There was one fatality in Arizona and three in Washington.
- During 2021, 13 (30 percent) of compensable fatalities occurred to workers of Hispanic ethnicity, compared to six (18 percent) during 2020.
- There were nine fatal claims accepted for roadway incidents in 2021, one higher than in 2020. This is below the five-year average (10.8).

**OCCUPATION OF FATALLY INJURED OREGON WORKERS  
by percent of 2021 compensable fatalities**



Note: Due to rounding, percents may not sum to 100.



## OREGON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION (Oregon OSHA)

The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA) offers a wide range of services to Oregon's employers and workers to improve workplace safety and health. These services include:

- Consultations
- Education/conferences
- Technical resources and film library
- Educational grants
- Hazard abatement assistance

For more information, contact:

350 Winter St. NE  
3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 14480  
Salem, OR 97309-0405

**503-378-3272** or **800-922-2689** (toll-free)

[osha.oregon.gov](http://osha.oregon.gov)

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Information Technology and Research Section  
Central Services Division  
350 Winter St. NE, Room 300  
P.O. Box 14480  
Salem, OR 97309-0405  
503-378-8254

## Fatality/claims data

Visit <http://www.oregon.gov/DCBS/reports/Pages/index.aspx> for more workers' compensation claims data and other statistical reports, or call the Information Technology and Research Section at 503-378-8254.

## Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

National work-related fatality data can be found on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' website at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>.

## Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation

Information about Oregon Health and Science University's Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program (FACE) can be found at <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-fatality-assessment-control-evaluation>.

## Employer workers' compensation coverage

For more information about employer coverage requirements, contact the Workers' Compensation Division Employer Compliance Program at [wcd.employerinfo@oregon.gov](mailto:wcd.employerinfo@oregon.gov), call 888-877-5670 (toll-free), or visit [wcd.oregon.gov](http://wcd.oregon.gov).

## Classification systems

Data are classified according to the following classification systems:

Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System (OIICS), Standard Occupation Classification System (SOC), North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)



Call 503-378-8254.

Visit the DCBS website [oregon.gov/dcbs](http://oregon.gov/dcbs) and select the "Statistical Reports" link at the bottom of the page for additional claims data and statistical reports, or call 503-378-8254.