

Notified fatalities

July to December 2016

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and the Electrical Safety Office (ESO) report monthly to Safe Work Australia about notified fatalities that have occurred at a workplace or resulted from a work activity. This report includes fatalities resulting from work related trauma at the workplace only—a full explanation is provided at the end of the report.

Main issues

- Queensland notified 22 fatalities to Safe Work Australia for the period July to December 2016.
- Nineteen of the fatalities were male workers and three (3) were female workers.
- Arts and recreation services had the highest number of fatalities (eight).
- Being hit by falling objects (five), being trapped between stationary and moving objects (four) and drowning/immersion (four) were the most common mechanism groups with 13 fatalities reported in total.
- Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast; and North and Central Queensland had the highest number of fatalities (eight each).



Summary tables

The charts and graphs in this summary provide fatality data for the period July to December 2016.


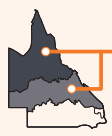

Fatalities by industry

Industry			
	Arts and recreation services	8	
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4	
	Transport, postal and warehousing	4	
	Public administration and safety	1	
	Manufacturing	1	
	Retail trade	1	
	Administrative and support services	1	
	Construction	1	
	Health care and social assistance	1	
Total 22 fatalities			

Fatalities by gender

Gender		
	Male	19
	Female	3
Total		22

Fatalities by region

Region		
	Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast	8
	North and Central Queensland	8
	Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay	6
Total		22

Fatalities by incident mechanism

Incident mechanism	Total
Being hit by falling objects	5
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	4
Drowning/immersion	4
Unspecified mechanism	2
Falls on the same level	2
Being hit by moving objects	1
Falls from a height	1
Vehicle accident	1
Contact with electricity	1
Rollover	1
Total	22

Fatalities by occupation

Occupation	Total
Bystanders	12
Building and plumbing labourers	2
Mobile plant operators	2
Other cleaners	1
Truck drivers	1
Safety inspector	1
Arborist	1
Bricklayers and stonemasons	1
Fruit or nut farm workers	1
Total	22

Narratives

Narrative data provides a basic description of what caused the fatal incident. This data can be used to identify common factors that bring about fatal incidences and therefore the types of risks that need to be identified and controlled.

The below summaries of fatal incidents indicate circumstances that should be avoided in a workplace.

Note: Industry coding of fatalities in this report is based on the incident location, not the industry of the employer. These may be different.

Administrative and support services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male self-employed tree-lopper was affixed to a tree trunk by a harness and climbing rope approximately 5 metres from ground level and approximately 1.2 metres away from power lines. While using a fully extended aluminium telescopic pole, the pole came into contact with power lines causing electrocution.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

North and Central Queensland

A male bulldozer was attempting to create a road with a dozer in a steep section of hills. He has lost control of the dozer causing the digger to lose traction and slide down a steep escarpment and has then proceeded to role an unknown amount of times. This has caused the cabin where he was sitting to be ripped from the dozer. He was found three metres from the dozer.

A male farm worker was trimming avocado trees in a fruit picking machine and contacted overhead power lines and was electrocuted.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A two year old boy was standing next to his father on an old tractor. When his father picked up a bale of hay the impact caused the boy to fall forward onto the ground in front of the tractor's rear wheel. As the father reached to lift the boy his foot slipped off the clutch causing the tractor to move forward, over the boy. The boy sustained significant head and brain trauma. He was airlifted to hospital and placed on life support. Due to the extent of his injuries his life support was turned off.

A 14 year old boy was struck by a falling tree branch at a residence. Tree lopping work was being undertaken by professional tree loppers.

Arts and recreation services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

Two male workers were crushed to death by an eight tonne precast concrete slab when it toppled over on top of them. The concrete slab was one of four that were to form the walls of an excavated square pit measuring approximately five metres deep. Three of the panels had already been lowered into the pit and stood vertically against three of the respective pit walls. The works being undertaken at the time involved the installation of a large underground concrete foul water tank.

A male worker was cleaning a glass balustrade while working from an aluminium A-frame ladder. He fell from the ladder and hit his head on pavers. He later died as a result of his injuries.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A three year old child died as a result of head injuries while playing at (an inflatable) theme park.

Four patrons were killed when the raft they were passengers in overturned on the Thunder River Rapid Ride at Dreamworld.

Construction

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male earthmoving plant operator passed away as a result of blood clot and stroke due to injuries (fractured bones in neck). He may have sustained these during a fall from plant, but the exact circumstances are unknown.

Health care and social assistance

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A four month old male child was in day care. He was found unresponsive by a day care worker and passed away on route to hospital.

Manufacturing

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker was entrapped under two slabs of falling granite which were being stored.

Public administration and safety

North and Central Queensland

An on duty electrical safety inspector suffered fatal crush injuries when, after alighting from his vehicle, he was run over by the driver's side front wheel when the vehicle rolled in an uncontrolled manner after being stopped and parked on a sloping driveway.

Retail trade

North and Central Queensland

A male truck driver was killed when a load of timber mouldings on the back of his truck fell on top of him while the truck was being unloaded.

Transport, postal and warehousing

North and Central Queensland

Two separate incidents in quick succession involving one male and one female passenger who were found unconscious by company lookouts one shortly after another shortly after entering water and commencing snorkelling. Passengers rescued from water. CPR and defibrillation was performed.

Snorkel lookout noticed that a snorkeler was motionless face down in the water. The alarm was raised and a snorkel rescue crew member was sent out immediately to the passenger. The victim was unresponsive. CPR continued until arrival in Cairns and the paramedics declared him deceased.

During a Guided Certified Dive, the dive buddy of the deceased noticed he was drifting off course and noticed his regulator was not in his mouth. He was immediately brought to the surface and taken to the vessel where CPR was commenced by crew. Following a long period of CPR and life support assistance the decision was made by a doctor to cease all efforts and the person was declared deceased.

Considerations

'Being hit by falling objects', 'being trapped between stationary and moving objects' and 'drowning/immersion' were the most common mechanisms of injury in this period.

Further information regarding being hit by falling objects, being trapped between stationary and moving objects, and drowning/immersion can be obtained from the following:

- Automotive mechanic run over by vehicle
- Worker run over by forklift
- Heavy vehicles and trailers hitting or crushing workers
- Safe systems to immobilise heavy vehicles and trailers
- Workers injured when concrete pipe toppled over

- Worker crushed under his own truck while unloading on a slope
- Worker crushed by hoist
- Guards and discs on angle grinders
- Diving and snorkelling industry
- Snorkelling sense
- Managing the risk of cardiac death
- Effective lookouts
- How to manage work health and safety risks Code of Practice 2011 (PDF, 1.0 MB)
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace Code of Practice 2013 (PDF, 1.0 MB)
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- *Safety in Recreational Water Activities Act 2011*
- Safety in Recreational Water Activities Regulation 2011
- Recreational Diving, Recreational Technical Diving and Snorkelling Code of Practice 2018

About this report

The fatalities data set used in this report includes fatalities resulting from a work related traumatic injury, as defined by legislation. This may involve:

- employees
- self-employed workers/contractors
- fatalities occurring at a private residence where work activity was involved, such as a person working from home or work carried out on a house by a contractor
- fatalities caused by work where the death occurs in hospital rather than at the workplace
- homicide where there is a close nexus with work
- work related road traffic fatalities on public
- bystanders, such as visitors to a workplace, who die as a consequence of work activity.

The categories listed below are not included in the fatalities data set, regardless of whether work related factors can be identified:

- commuting fatalities (travelling to or from work)
- injuries where the worker died due to medical intervention
- natural causes such as heart attacks and strokes (except where a work related injury was the direct cause of the heart attack or stroke)
- diseases including cancers and mesothelioma
- self-inflicted injuries (suicide).

The fatalities detailed in this report are those that occurred between July and December 2016 that WHSQ reported to Safe Work Australia. Further investigation of any of these incidents could reveal additional information that may deem an incident to be non-work related. WHSQ reports any changes to notified fatalities to Safe Work Australia.

Notes

The approximately 100 workplace fatalities per year regularly compensated by the Queensland workers' compensation scheme includes injuries due to commuting fatalities (travelling to or from work) and diseases in addition to fatalities resulting from work related traumatic injuries.

For more information on work health and safety, visit worksafe.qld.gov.au or call 1300 362 128.

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