



Notified fatalities report

July to December 2021

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 21 fatalities to Safe Work Australia for the period July to December 2021.
- Of these 21 fatalities, 16 were workers and five (5) were bystanders and 18 fatalities were male and three (3) were female.
- The Manufacturing industry had the highest number of fatalities at five (5) followed by the Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Health care and social assistance industry at three (3) fatalities each.
- Being hit by falling objects (3), being hit by moving objects (3), being trapped by moving machinery or equipment (3), contact with electricity (2), drowning or immersion (2) and rollover (2) were the most common mechanism groups.
- Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay region had nine (9) fatalities, North and Central Queensland and Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast both had six (6) fatalities each within their respective regions.

Summary tables




The charts and graphs in this summary provide fatality data for the period January to June 2021.

Fatalities by industry

Industry					
	Manufacturing	5		Transport, postal and warehousing	1
	Health care and social assistance	3		Rental, hiring and real estate services	1
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3		Arts and recreation services	1
	Electricity, gas, water and waste services	2		Accommodation and food services	1





Industry


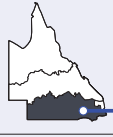
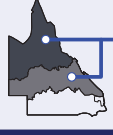
	Construction	2		Education and training	1
	Other services	1			

Total 21 fatalities

Fatalities by gender

Gender		
	Male	18
	Female	3
Total		21

Fatalities by region

Region		
	Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay	9
	Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast	6
	North and Central Queensland	6
Total		21

Fatalities by incident mechanism

Incident mechanism		
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	3	
Contact with electricity	3	
Being hit by moving objects	3	
Being hit by falling objects	3	
Drowning/immersion	2	
Rollover	2	
Vehicle accident	2	
Tray, loading board or table top of truck/semi-trailer	1	
Falls from a height	2	
Total	21	

Fatalities by occupation

Occupation	
Not applicable—bystander	5
Truck driver (general)	2
Ambulance officers and paramedics	1
Beef cattle farm worker	1
Beef cattle farmer	1
Boat builder and repairer	1
Delivery drivers	1
Diving instructor (open water)	1
Electrician (general)	1
Fruit or gut farm worker	1
Mechanical engineering draftspersons and technicians	1
Miscellaneous labourers	1
Motor mechanics	1
Transport services managers	1
Tree faller	1
Vehicle painter	1
Total	21

Narratives

Narrative data provides a basic description of what led to 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).

Accommodation and food services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

The deceased was a female customer of a fast-food outlet. Upon leaving the drive through carpark during an evening weather event, the vehicle was inadvertently driven into rising flood waters. The vehicle was then carried from the roadway and into a creek. The female customer was later located deceased in her vehicle by emergency services approximately 200 metres from the fast-food outlet carpark.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker fell off his horse while mustering and sustained fatal injuries. Paramedics arrived on the scene and found the worker semi-conscious. Police who also attended, observed a small log lying next to the worker, which he may have fallen onto. It is believed that the worker's horse may have tripped or stumbled in a nearby rut in the ground resulting in the worker falling off. The worker was not wearing a riding helmet.

North and Central Queensland

A male worker was electrocuted and fatally injured while undertaking pineapple picking work. The harvester was being pulled by a tractor at a slow walking pace when it came into contact with a high voltage power line. There were seven other workers working on or near the harvester and tractor at the time. Six of those workers who survived required medical treatment and were taken to hospital for treatment and observation.

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male worker was operating a quad bike on his own while mustering cattle. At some point the quad bike overturned on a soft, muddy slope and landed on him. He was found deceased sometime later that day by his father.

Arts and recreation services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male bystander was a spectator at his son's soccer game. He was standing between the players' boxes leaning up against a high fence at the field which is part of a sports complex. He was acting as the ground official for the match. An aluminium tower-frame scaffold, measuring approximately 3.0 m high, 1.2 m wide and 2.4 m long was adjacent to the area where he was standing. Shortly after midday, witnesses stated that there was a gust of wind which caused the scaffolding to tip over in his direction striking him on the back of the head, neck and back and trapping him against the fence he was leaning against. Despite medical attention he died during surgery.

Construction

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A worker was conducting a renovation at a house where the occupants of the house had moved out for the renovations. Late one afternoon, a supplier delivered a quantity of VJ MDF sheets weighing approximately 300 kgs and stacked them against a hallway wall. It is believed that the worker left the building site shortly after stacking the sheeting in the hallway.

Arrangements had been made between the occupants of the residence and their mother (the deceased), to attend the residence and feed the family's pet cats. At an unknown time and after the worker had left the site, it is believed the mother entered the residence to feed the cats. Later in the evening, the son unsuccessfully attempted to contact his mother, so he attended the residence. He gained entry and located his mother deceased, pinned with her back against the wall by a pile of the VJ sheets.

North and Central Queensland

A male worker was the driver and sole occupant of a truck that was being driven for work along the Peaks Down Highway. The vehicle veered off the road resulting in it rolling over and subsequently entrapping the deceased in the vehicle.

Education and training

North and Central Queensland

A male dive instructor working at a pool was observed by his co-worker practising breath holding techniques at the deep end of the pool—a depth of 2 m. He was wearing shorts, booties, flippers, mask with snorkel and a weight belt. The activity was during a lunch break. A member of the public swimming laps of the pool raised the alarm when he observed the deceased underwater and unconscious.

Electricity, gas, water and waste services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

An electrical contractor who was on a cherry picker conducting maintenance work on high voltage lines came into contact with the line and was fatally electrocuted.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A refuse truck was not functioning as required. The driver stopped under an overpass and an auto electrician was dispatched to assess and repair the truck. The auto electrician could not find any electrical fault and from his testing believed that the fault was in the hydraulic system.

A hydraulics mechanic then attended. With the truck engine running, the hydraulics mechanic climbed into the rear of the scoop and hopper to repair the fault. He was fatally injured while in the rear of the truck. The rubbish compactor and scoop activated and he became trapped, asphyxiating (due to being crushed) within the hopper.

Health care and social assistance

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A female resident was admitted into the sensitive care unit of an aged care facility. After completing her admission, she began to wander the halls and external gardens of the sensitive care unit. She walked the courtyard footpath several times before walking off the path and into some garden shrubbery. In this part of the garden she put her foot on a powder coated steel raised garden bed and lost her balance, falling backwards and hitting her head on the corner of the concrete walkway. Two days later she died in hospital.

North and Central Queensland

An ambulance was transferring a patient from a small regional hospital to a larger hospital when it stopped on the highway at a temporary traffic light. A male ambulance officer was tending to the patient in the back of the ambulance. There were temporary traffic lights in place due to a contractor undertaking vegetation management and litter collection. A truck travelling in the same direction as the ambulance failed to stop and collided with the ambulance killing both the patient and the ambulance worker tending to the patient.

Manufacturing

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A trailer manufacturing company worker was tasked to spray paint the underside of a trailer. He elevated the trailer using a forklift. At some point he suffered fatal crush injuries to his neck because of the flatbed trailer falling from the tynes of the forklift.

A male worker and his father were felling trees in scrubland on private property. They were performing work for a milling company.

The male worker was using a chainsaw while wearing a protective helmet and ear protection. When he cut a particular tree down it collected a branch from a nearby tree as it fell. The branch from this tree was previously damaged by fire and impacted by ants, and it fell onto the head of the worker. He was found deceased around 10 minutes later by his father who was having lunch out of sight of the incident.

North and Central Queensland

A deceased male worker was found lying between a homemade sand dryer and a storage tower. Upon the removal of his body, there were several electrical burn marks on his body suggesting he had been electrocuted. The investigation found that the three (3) pin 15 amp plug was wired incorrectly (active and neutral had reverse polarity) and that the wiring that was under the deceased's body was connected to a switch that was labelled as the light switch.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker was walking in front of a mobile crane that was transporting a slung fibreglass pool. He was guiding the fibreglass pool shell by a rope tether line by holding it with his hand at the end closest to the crane and walking with and guiding the load in front of the mobile crane as it travelled to a storage area. He was fatally injured when he was run over by the front left wheel of the mobile crane.

CCTV footage showed a male worker driving into the works yard. He pulled up to the loading dock and then reversed. He stopped the vehicle and got out of the vehicle to check the distance, when the vehicle rolled backwards. He then jumped back into the vehicle and drove forward and got out of the vehicle as the vehicle rolled backwards again. The worker got back into the vehicle and drove it forward. He then did this two to three more times before it appears he tried to chock the vehicle. The vehicle rolled back and trapped him against the loading dock, causing fatal injuries.

Other services

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker sustained fatal injuries when the tray of a truck he was working on experienced hydraulic failure. This resulted in the tray coming down onto him. He sustained fatal neck and head injuries. The safety prop in situ at the time also failed.

Rental, hiring and real estate services

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker was working underneath the front passenger side of a utility vehicle registered to a rental company. The vehicle was jacked up by a bottle jack and two scissor jacks on the same side, in various positions. At some point the worker was using a hammer underneath the vehicle when it slipped from the jacks causing the ball joint and disc rotor on the front passenger side of the vehicle to fatally crush his chest.

Transport, postal and warehousing

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male worker was fatally struck by an unmanned truck that he was in the process of warming up.

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 to December 2021 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 approximate 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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