Notified fatalities
January to June 2015

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 18 fatalities to Safe Work Australia for the period January to June 2015.
- Fifteen of the fatalities were male workers.
- The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had the highest number of fatalities (four).
- Being hit by moving objects was the most common mechanism group with five fatalities reported.
- Central Queensland had the highest number of fatalities (six).

Summary tables
The charts and graphs in this summary report provide fatality data for the period January to June 2015.

Fatalities by industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and recreation services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, water and waste services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport, postal and warehousing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public administration and safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental, hiring and real estate services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fatalities by gender

- 15 Male
- 3 Female
- Total: 18

Fatalities by region

- South West Queensland: 3
- Central Queensland: 6
- Brisbane North and Sunshine Coast: 1
- Brisbane South and Gold Coast: 3
- North Queensland: 5

Fatalities by incident mechanism

- Being hit by moving objects: 5
- Being hit by falling objects: 3
- Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment: 2
- Contact with electricity: 1

- Drowning/immersion: 3
- Vehicle accident: 2
- Being trapped between stationary and moving objects: 1
- Falls on the same level: 1

Total: 18
### Fatalities by occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bystanders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm workers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other factory process workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and wood processing machine operators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck driver (general)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arborist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrician (general)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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.

### Agriculture, forestry and fishing

**Brisbane North and Sunshine Coast**

An arborist died from head injuries when he was hit on the head by a tree he was felling.

**Central Queensland**

A worker riding a motorbike was carrying a horse halter over his shoulder and around his neck. The horse halter reins got stuck in the motorbike’s chain and sprocket causing the rider to come off the motorbike and get dragged along the ground. The worker died from his injuries.

A worker was operating a quad bike when he hit a large ditch in the road. He was found on his back approximately one metre from the quad bike and had sustained fatal injuries.

A worker was on a quad bike spraying along a fence line when he fell off. He suffered shoulder pain and superficial lacerations to his lower back. Scans revealed he also had fractured ribs. A few days after the incident, he suffered breathing difficulties and was taken to emergency where he died from his injuries.

### Arts and recreation services

**North Queensland**

A certified diver got caught in a current and became separated from the dive instructor. She was seen in a distressed state when she submerged and drowned.

A man on a snorkelling day trip was found unconscious in the water and later died.

### Construction

**Central Queensland**

A man was disconnecting a transportable step-up transformer when it went from 415 volts to 1000 volts. He was electrocuted from the increase in voltage.

**Brisbane South and Gold Coast**

An owner/operator received crush injuries to his chest when his mini excavator lost stability and toppled over.
Notified fatalities — January to June 2015

Education and training

**Central Queensland**
A diver was on an introductory dive and became separated from her diving companion and diving instructor. She did not return to the surface and was found dead.

Electricity, gas, water and waste services

**Central Queensland**
A worker at a waste facility noticed an oil leak from a front end loader and he instructed the operator of the front end loader to raise the bucket. The worker stood under the bucket to further investigate when the bucket dropped crushing him.

**Brisbane South and Gold Coast**
A worker was operating an excavator, loading demolition waste, when he was hit in the head by a projectile. The operator lost control of the excavator and it rolled over the edge of a retaining wall. The operator died from his injuries.

Manufacturing

**North Queensland**
A man was crushed by a train positioner’s hydraulic arm as it came down over the wagon couplings when moving between train carriages.

Two men were operating forklifts to move a large tank. While they were in the forklifts moving the tank they were not able to see each other and coordinated the move by yelling to each other. One of the men was found with his head between the forks and carriage, with fatal head injuries.

**Brisbane South and Gold Coast**
A worker was moving a large paper roll (15-18 tonne) with a gantry crane. He received fatal head injuries when the paper roll hit him in the head while he was in the confines of a loading station.

Public administration and safety

**South West Queensland**
A worker was returning two children to their carer. When leaving the residence, the worker reversed over one of the children in her car. The child received fatal injuries.

Rental, hiring and real estate services

**North Queensland**
A woman was using a walking aid with wheels when one of her wheels became stuck in a trench. The woman lost her balance as her walking aid fell into the trench and she died as a result of her injuries.

Retail trade

**South West Queensland**
A man was working on a bobcat with the arms and bucket raised in the air. The man unscrewed a pressurised hydraulic connector used to support the arms and bucket in the air. The arm and bucket of the bobcat fell onto the man, crushing him.

Transport, postal and warehousing

**South West Queensland**
A truck driver was greasing a component of his unattached truck trailer. The truck driver had his back to his truck and the attached trailer when the truck and trailer rolled backwards crushing him.

Considerations

Being hit by moving objects was the most common mechanisms of injury in this period. Below are important considerations for any business and worker where these hazards may pose a risk to workers’ health and safety.

Vehicle incidents

Fatalities and serious injuries as a result of vehicle incidents are too common in Queensland workplaces. These are important considerations when operating vehicles:

- Maintain vehicles regularly.
- Handbrake warning devices may be appropriate.
- Vehicle choice – consider if a quad bike is the best vehicle for the task.
- Wear a properly fitting helmet and look out for rough or uneven ground when operating farm vehicles.
- Implement a traffic management plan that includes signage, training and well managed safety systems.

For more information, download copies of the Plant Code of Practice 2005 and the How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2011. For more information about quad bikes, see quad bikes in the workplace.
Being hit by moving or falling objects

Workers being hit by moving or falling objects continues to be a common mechanism of serious injury and death in Queensland workplaces. It is necessary to identify hazards in the workplace (things and situations) that could potentially cause harm to people. Hazards generally arise from the following aspects of work and their interaction:

- Physical work environment.
- Equipment, materials and substances used.
- Work tasks and how they are performed.
- Work design and management.

Consider and implement ways to eliminate or manage these risks by applying the hierarchy of risk control measures. Controls such as traffic management plans, demarcated exclusion zones, safe work method statements, plant and equipment maintenance and worker training and instruction may be appropriate.

For more information about managing work health and safety risks in your workplace, download a copy of the How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2011.

Develop safe systems of work to ensure that any person operating mobile plant is competent and holds the appropriate licence.

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 traffic fatalities on public roads
- 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 January to June 2015 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

There are approximately 100 workplace fatalities per year compensated by the Queensland workers’ compensation scheme. This 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.