Workers' Memorial Day 2016

South Florida Council on Occupational Safety & Health
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Key Findings

- There were 4,821 workplace fatalities across all industries in 2014, up from 4,585 fatalities in 2013.
- Construction; transportation & warehousing; agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting remain nationwide the three industries with the highest numbers of workplace fatalities; each of the three has risen from 4-16% since 2013.

- Ninety-one percent of workplace fatalities in 2014 happened in private industry, up from eighty-nine percent in 2013.
- Seven of the ten industries nationwide with the highest levels of workplace fatalities have seen increases since 2013.
- The top three events or exposures related to fatalities nationwide are transportation incidents; falls, slips, & trips; and violence.
- Workplace fatalities in Florida have dropped slightly from 239 deaths in 2013 to 228 deaths, causing Florida to slip to number four in the list of states with the highest number of workplace deaths for the first time in many years.
- Construction; administrative & waste services; and transportation & warehousing remain the three industries with the highest number of workplace fatalities in Florida.
- The top three events or exposures related to fatalities in Florida are transportation incidents; falls, slips & trips; and violence, mirroring the national statistics.
- In a troubling development in Florida, the number of deaths from exposure to harmful substances or environments doubled in 2014 after several years of decline.

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All stories shared throughout the report are from occupational fatalities that occurred in Florida in 2015 and early 2016.

Workers' Memorial Day

> ***Every two hours, an American worker is permanently silenced. Speak out for safe jobs.***
>
> ***- US Dept. of Labor***

Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act forty-five years ago to ensure that every worker would have the right to a safe workplace. The OSH Act established the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which formally came into being on April 28, 1971, with the mission to "assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance" to both employers and employees.

OSHA provides employers and workers with a set of rules and regulations that, if followed, would lead to safer and healthier workplaces. As a result of OSHA, employers are required by law to provide workplaces that are free of known dangers that could harm their employees.

Despite these efforts and the efforts of worker advocates all over the country, there continue to be thousands of workplace deaths each year and on April 28 we join together in solidarity and remembrance of those individuals who were killed due to often preventable workplace tragedies. As a community of employers, employees, and individuals, there are steps that we can and must take to aid in the prevention of work related deaths.

Nationwide

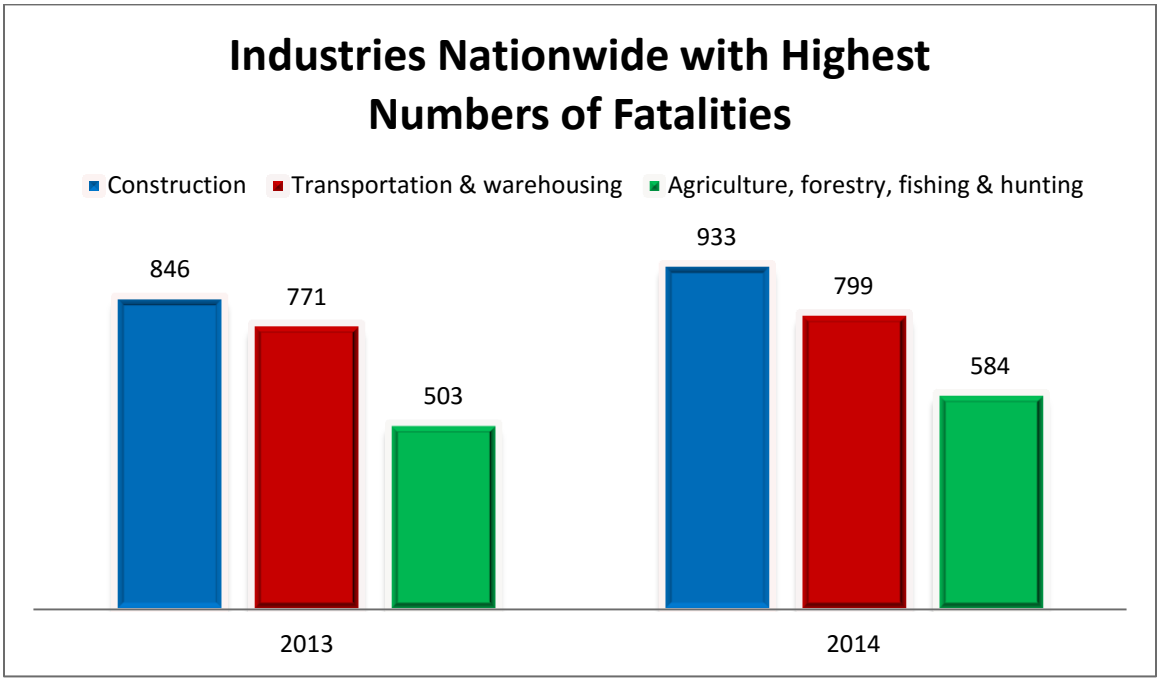
The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that there were a total of 4,821 workplace fatalities in 2014 across all occupations, which is a five percent increase from 4,585 fatalities in 2013.[1]

Nationwide, the top three industries in which work-related deaths occur are construction; transportation and warehousing; and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, which is consistent with 2013 data. In 2014 there were 933 deaths in construction, 799 in transportation and warehousing, and 584 in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting[2]. Construction shows a ten percent increase from 2013 when there were 846 work-related deaths. Transportation and warehousing has also increased slightly from 771 deaths in 2013, an increase of just four

[1] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf.

[2] Source: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

percent, while agriculture has increased a worrisome sixteen percent from 503 work-related deaths in 2013.[3]

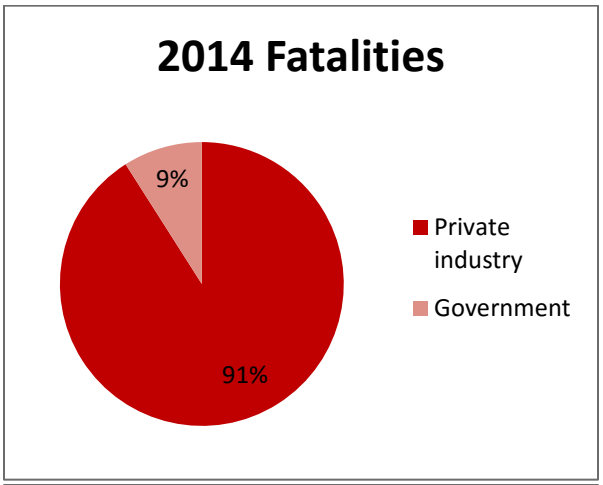


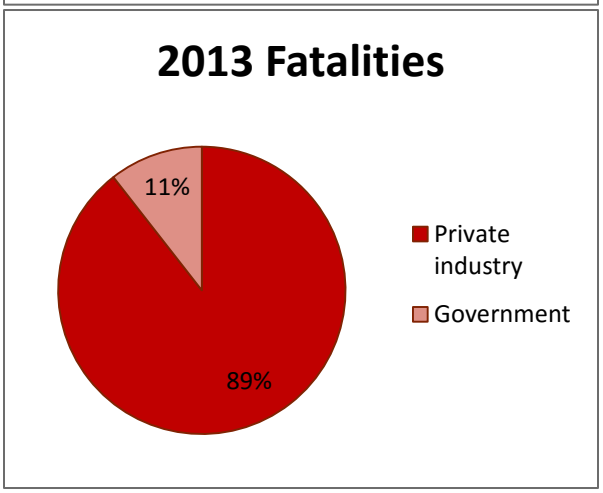
Graph above and pie chart below are based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. for the 2013 and 2014 years. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

On March 25, 2015, Walter Berry, an employee in New Smyrna Beach, was removing a 20-foot channel iron (bar) when he lost his footing and came into contact with an overhead power line while doing roofing work.

It should be noted that with the upturn in the economy, there are more jobs nationwide, which could account for an increase in fatalities although it is still troubling to see consistent increases across industries, particularly when many of the incidents resulting in fatalities are both foreseeable and preventable. Additionally, the majority of the injuries occur in the private sector, which indicates that private industry should be actively engaged in promoting safety and health.

[3] Source: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf.



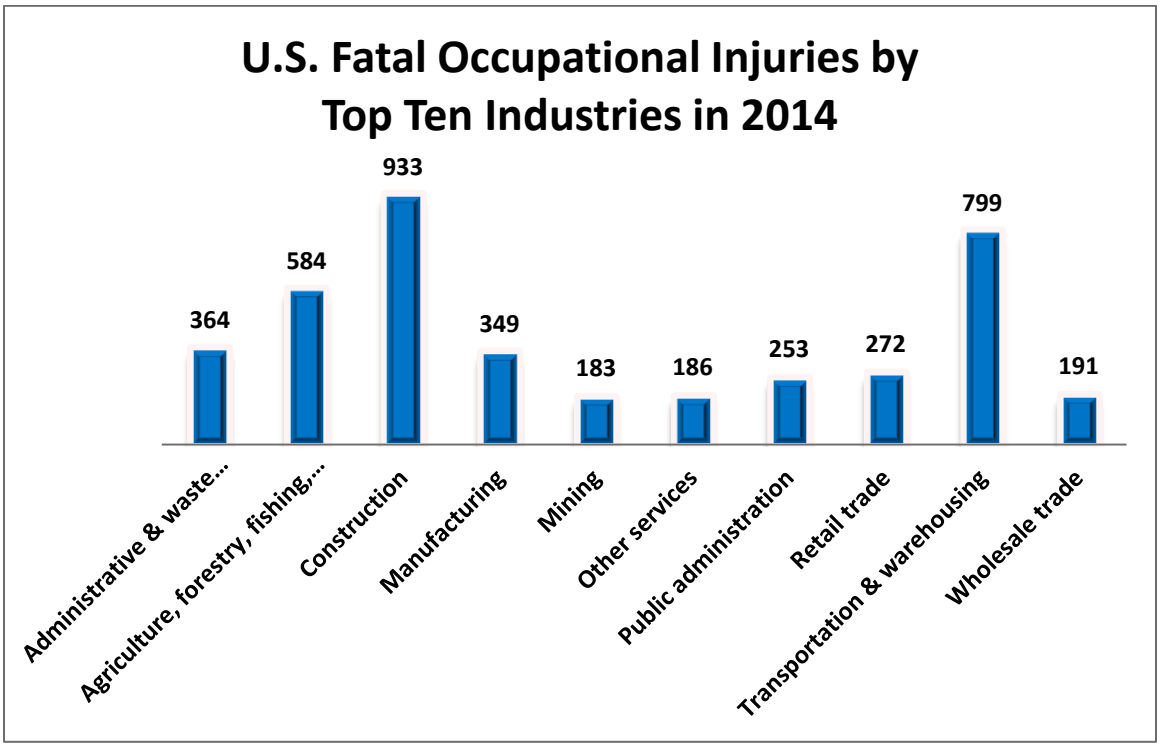


On January 14, 2015, Daniel Serna, an employee doing forming work on a residential construction project in Naples was found lying on the first floor of a house under construction with injuries to the back of his head from a fall. He died later that day.

Ivan Figueras-Pino, 37, died on June 23, 2015 when he was hit by a car while unloading vehicles from a car hauler on South Dixie

A tree-removal worker, Robert Wayne Smith, 40, was killed on November 12, 2015 in Ormond Beach after a limb snapped and fell on top of him. He was part of a crew working to remove a palm tree when a branch from an old oak tree snapped and struck him.

On January 21, 2015, the owner of a roofing company in Fort Myers fell through a sheathing hole while working on a roof. He was wearing a rope, rope grab, and harness but fell 14 feet to the ground because the rope was too long and had not been properly adjusted.



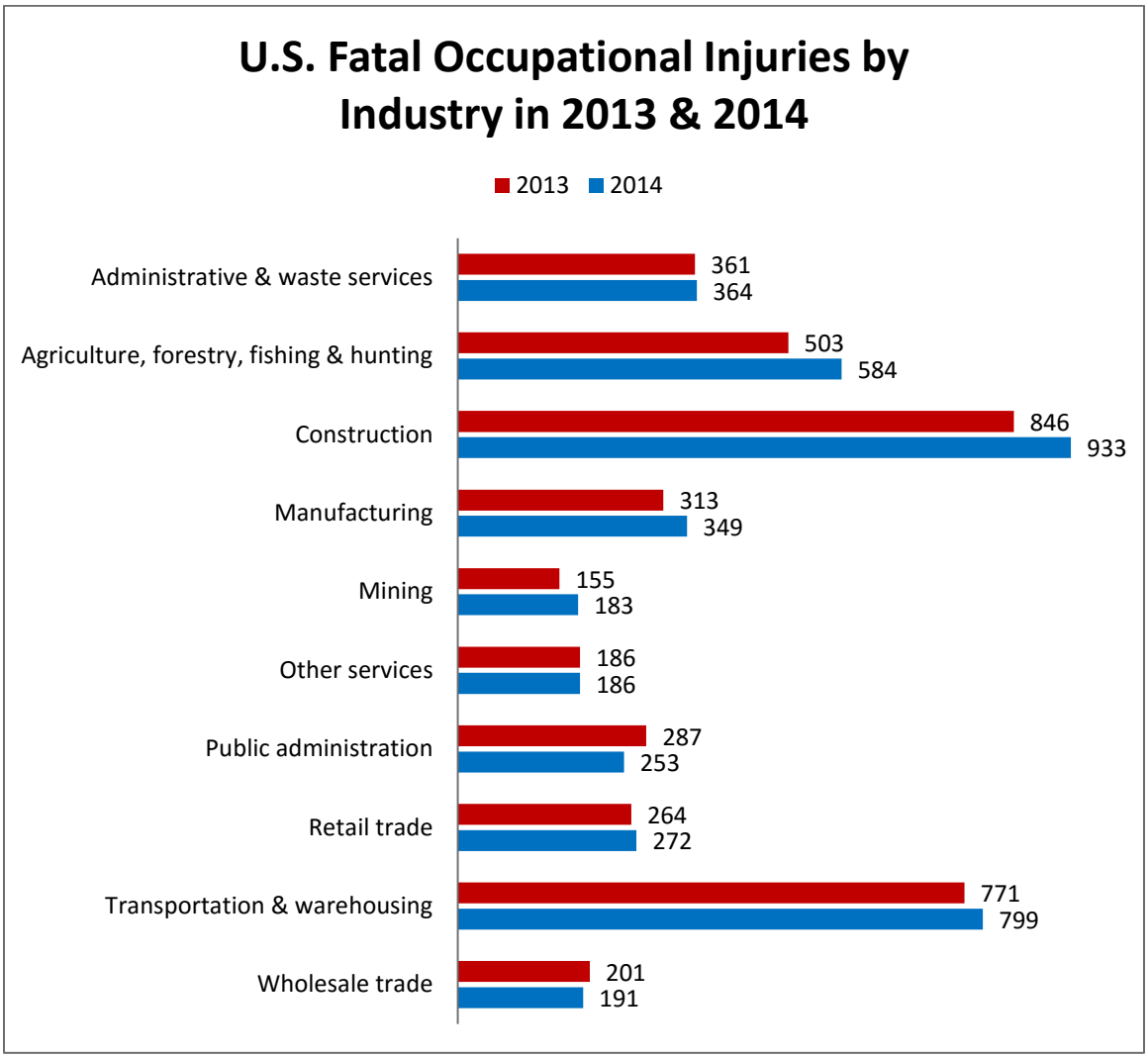
Graph is based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. for the 2014 year. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

With the exception of public administration, wholesale trade, and other services, occupational injuries resulting in death have increased nationwide in the top ten industries in 2014.[4]

On August 2, 2015, Wastewater Department employee Peter Cyr, who had been a lift station operator since 2007, was standing in the middle of State Road 19, just south of County Road 19A in Eustis, when he was struck by a vehicle and died at the scene.

William Stormant, age 57, was killed on January 26, 2015 when an excavator in Jasper overturned, submerging the cab in water.

[4] Other services include repair and maintenance; personal and laundry services; and religious, civic, professional, and similar organizations.



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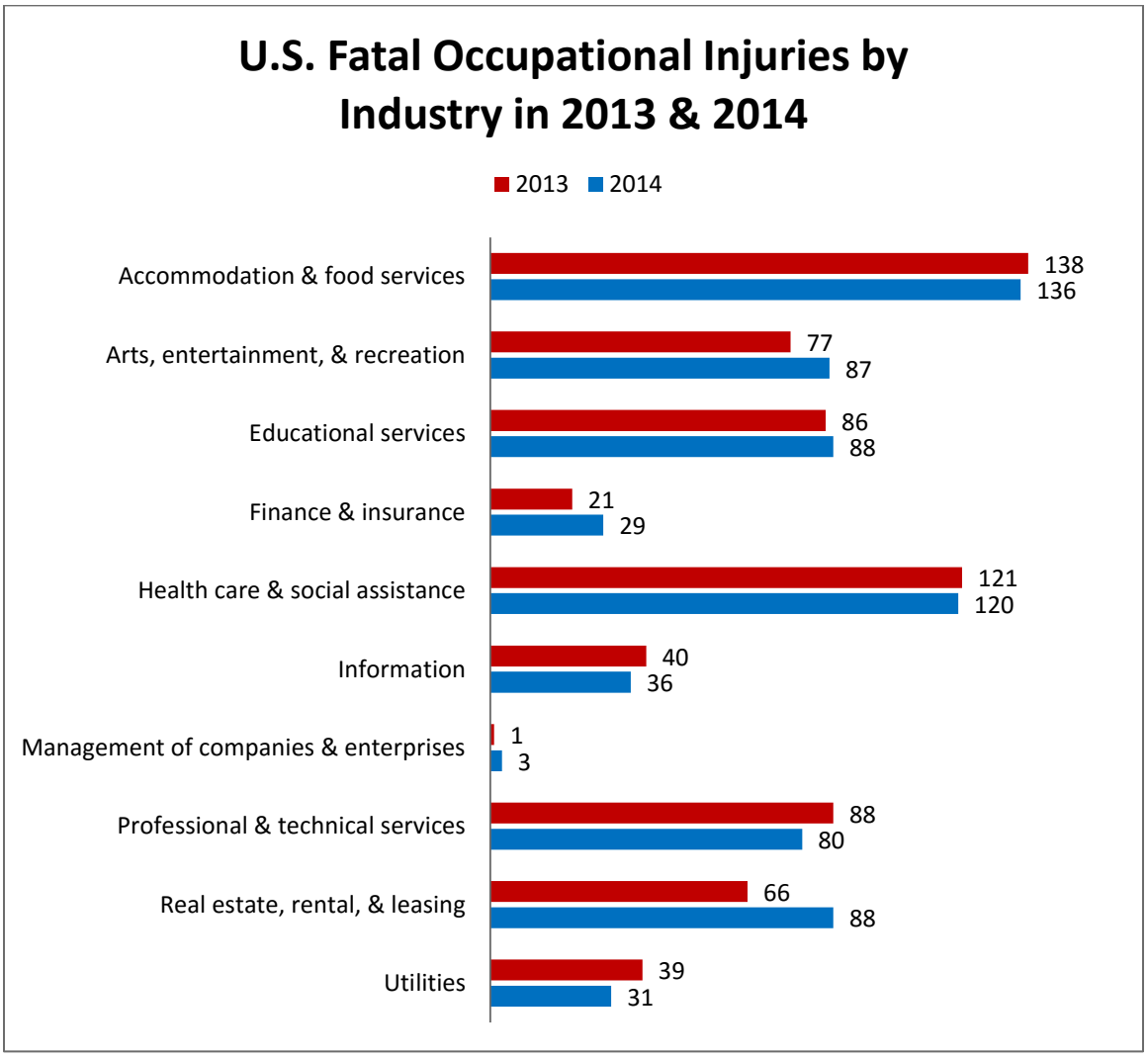
It is noteworthy that the majority of fatalities within public administration occur in the justice, safety, and security professions with 69 deaths at the federal level in 2014, 15 at the state level, and 135 at the local level. This is a decrease of 26% from 2013 when there were 87 fatalities at the federal level, 20 at the state level, and 150 at the local level. The majority of workplace deaths at the local level are police and fire protection.[5]

Although the following industries were not in the top ten nationwide for workplace fatalities, there are some concerning statistics including the high number of deaths within accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and educational services. The majority of

[5] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

deaths within accommodation and food services occur within drinking places and restaurants, most often due to violence. [6] Within the health care and social assistance fields, most deaths occurring within hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities are caused by violence while ambulatory health care service deaths are frequently caused by transportation incidents.[7] Workplace related fatalities within educational services primarily occur due to transportation incidents although violence and falls, slips, and trips are also prevalent causes.[8]



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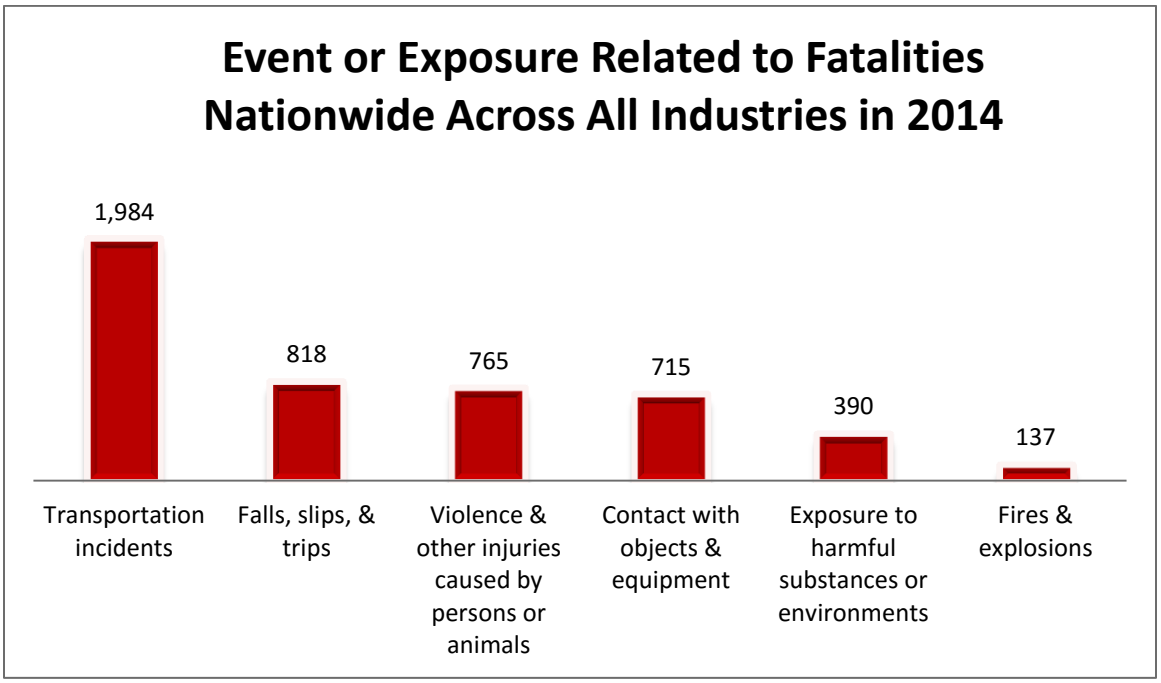
[6] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.
[7] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.
[8] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

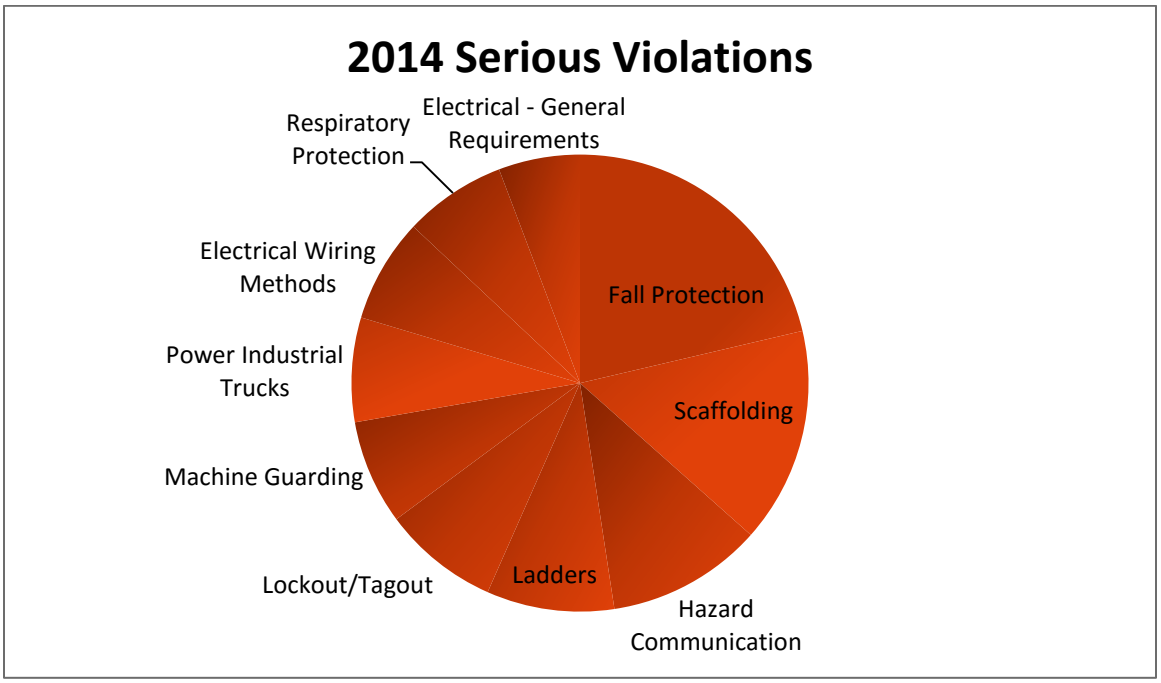
Across all industries nationwide in 2014 there were 1,984 deaths resulting from transportation incidents, 765 deaths from violence, 715 from contact with objects and equipment, 390 from exposure to harmful substances or environments, and 137 from fires and explosions.[9]

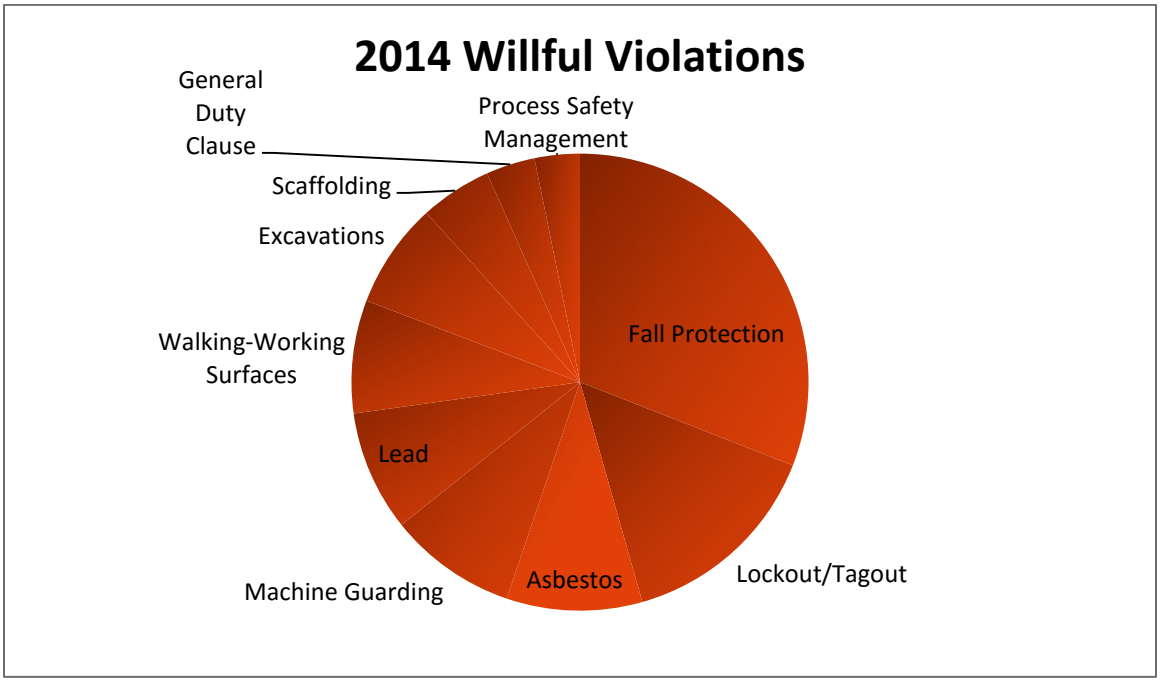


Graph is based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. for 2014. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.

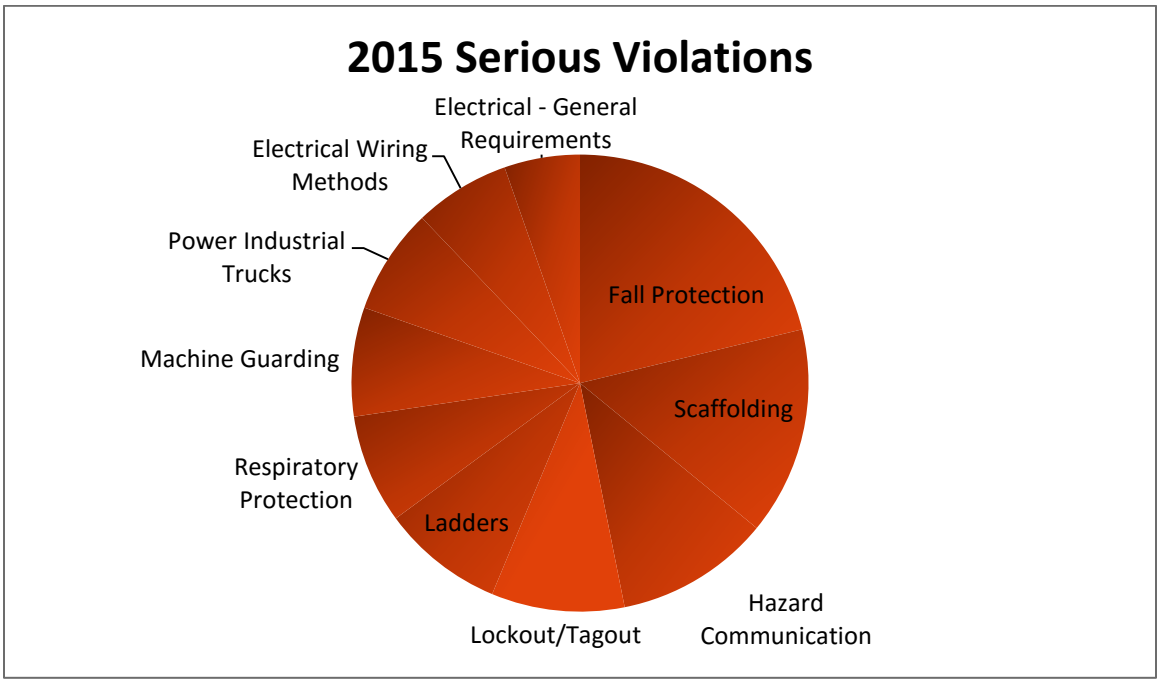
Nationwide, OSHA cited 29,760 serious violations in 2014 in the top ten categories, including 6,348 for fall protection, the category with the second highest number of incidents above and 375 willful violations, including 116 for fall protection.[10] A "serious" violation is defined by OSHA as "one in which there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result, and the employer knew or should have known of the hazard."[11] OSHA defines a "willful" violation as one "committed with an intentional disregard of or plain indifference to the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and requirements."[12] The violations cited for 2014 remain very similar in 2015 and also reflect several of the industries that placed in the top ten for workplace fatalities in both 2014 and 2013, including construction, transportation and warehousing, and agriculture.[13]

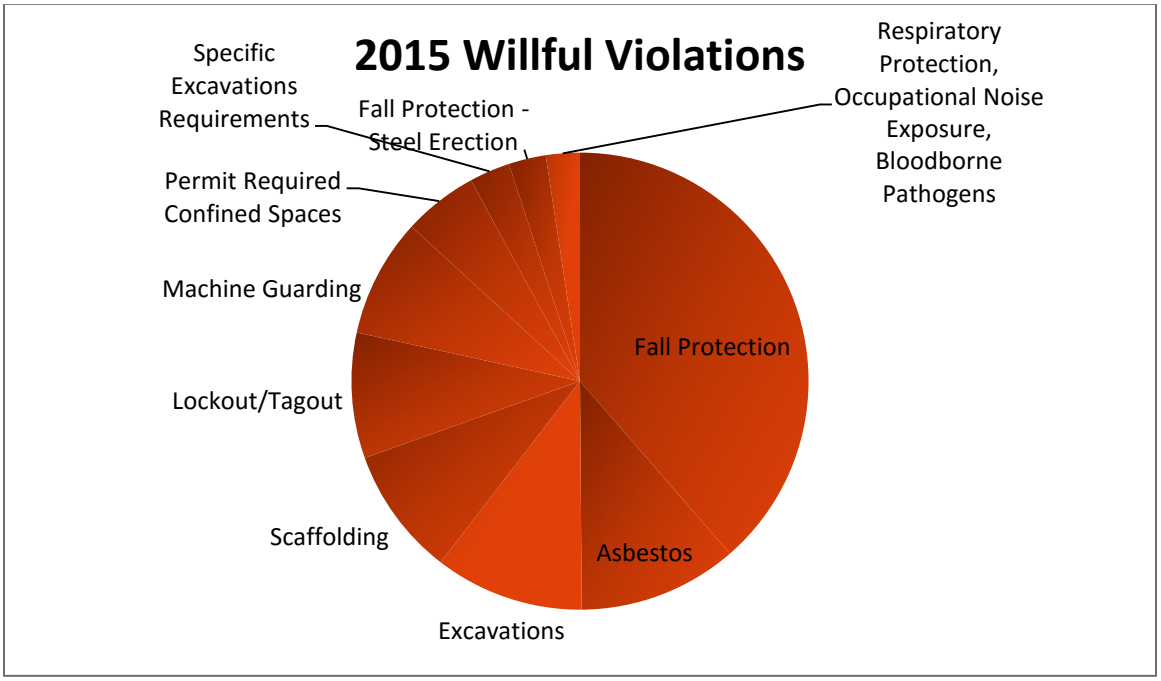
[9] Source: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.
[10] Source: http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/11414-osha-top-10-2014-the-more-things-change.
[11] Source: http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/11414-osha-top-10-2014-the-more-things-change.
[12] Source: http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/11414-osha-top-10-2014-the-more-things-change.
[13] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0277.pdf & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0286.pdf.





Data available at http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/11414-osha-top-10-2014-the-more-things-change.

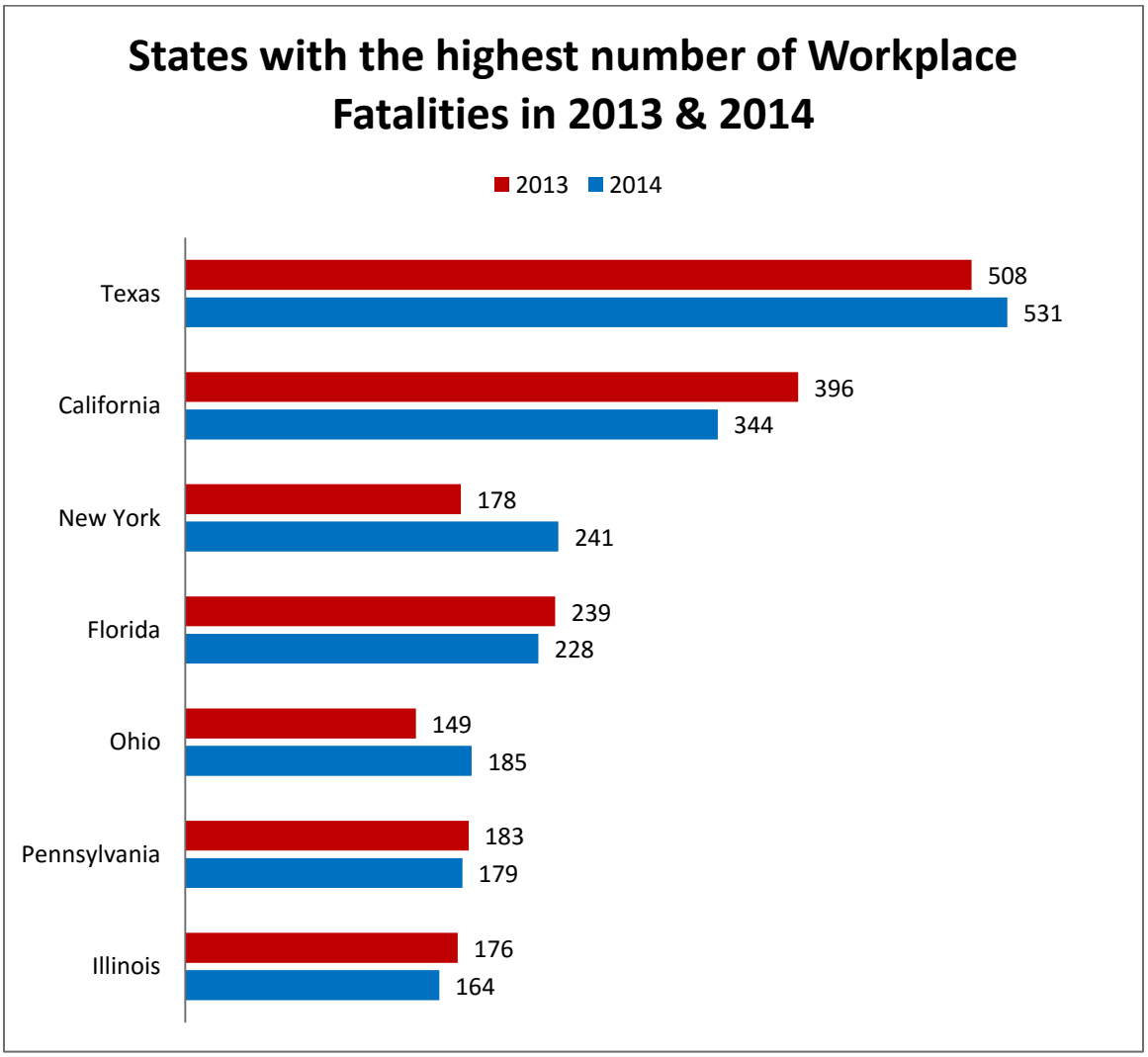




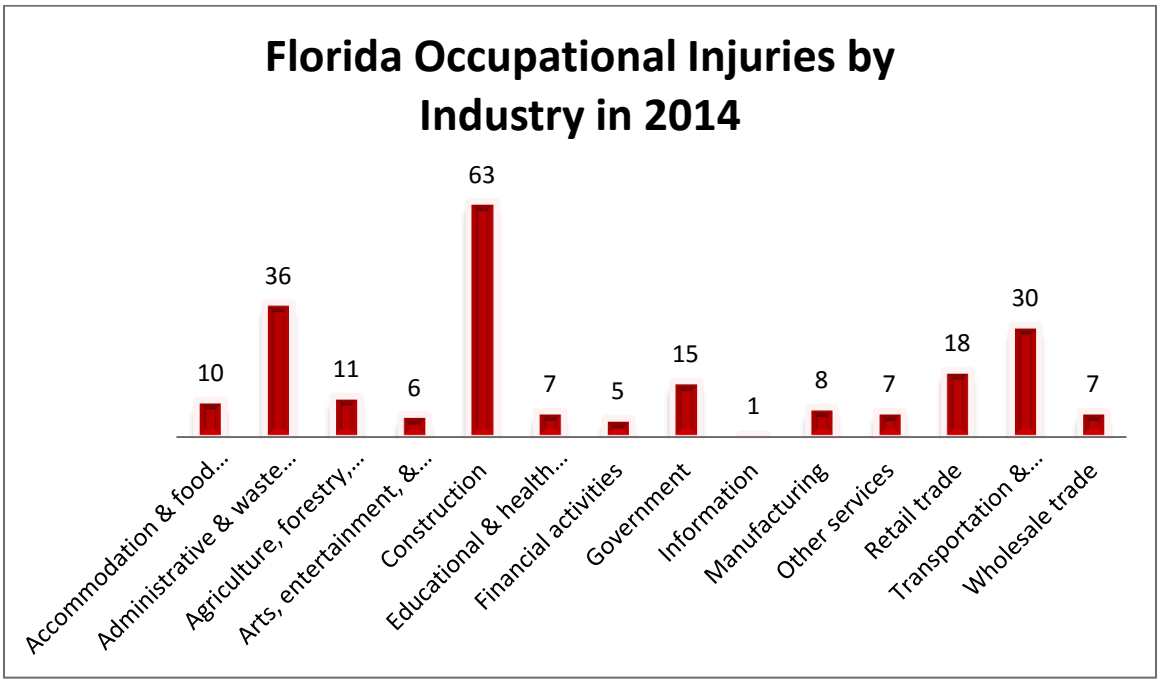
Data available at http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/13283-oshas-top-10-most-cited-violations-for-fiscal-year-2015.

Florida

There were 228 fatal injuries in Florida in 2014, slightly down from 239 in 2013.[14] It should also be noted that for the first time in many years, Florida did not place in the top three states for workplace deaths, slipping to number four. While the top seven states remain somewhat consistent, Georgia, Michigan, and North Carolina have entered the top ten with 152, 143, and 137 workplace fatalities respectively.[15] Neither Georgia nor North Carolina was in the top ten in 2013.[16]



[14] Sources: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2014/iiffw12.htm & http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2013/iiffw12.htm.
[15] Source: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cfch0013.pdf.
[16] Source: http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cfch0013.pdf.



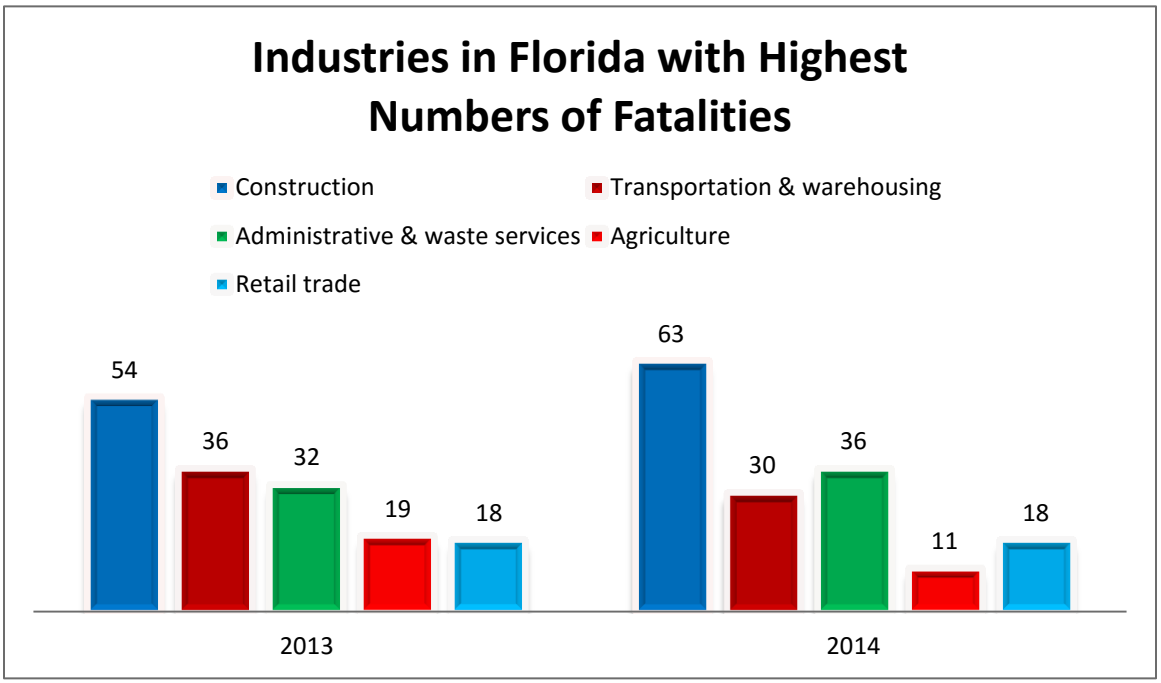
Graph is based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. for 2014. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2014/iiffw12.htm.

Work related fatalities in Florida somewhat mirror the national statistics with 63 construction deaths or a 16% increase in 2014; 36 deaths in administrative and waste services, and 30 in transportation and warehousing. Agriculture places fifth in Florida with 11 workplace fatalities although it is likely that this particular number is low based on long-term deaths related to pesticide exposure or exposure to other chemicals or hazardous materials in the workplace. Further, a significant percentage of the workers in this industry may be undocumented and also transient, thus leading to underreporting of both occupational injuries and fatalities.

On July 20, 2015, a 40-year old lawn maintenance worker in Heritage Harbour was mowing the grass on a large riding mower next to a pond when the mower apparently overturned. According to the local sheriff's office, "He was trapped under it in approximately four feet of water." The man's coworkers had not seen him for approximately an hour when he was found in the pond.

A temp worker in Palm Harbor employed by Homes by Westbay was found lying dead next to a dumpster on June 30, 2015.

Comparing the industries with the highest numbers of occupational fatalities in Florida for 2014 and 2013, construction continues to place first in the number of workplace deaths in the state followed by transportation and warehousing, administrative and waste services, agriculture, and retail trade.



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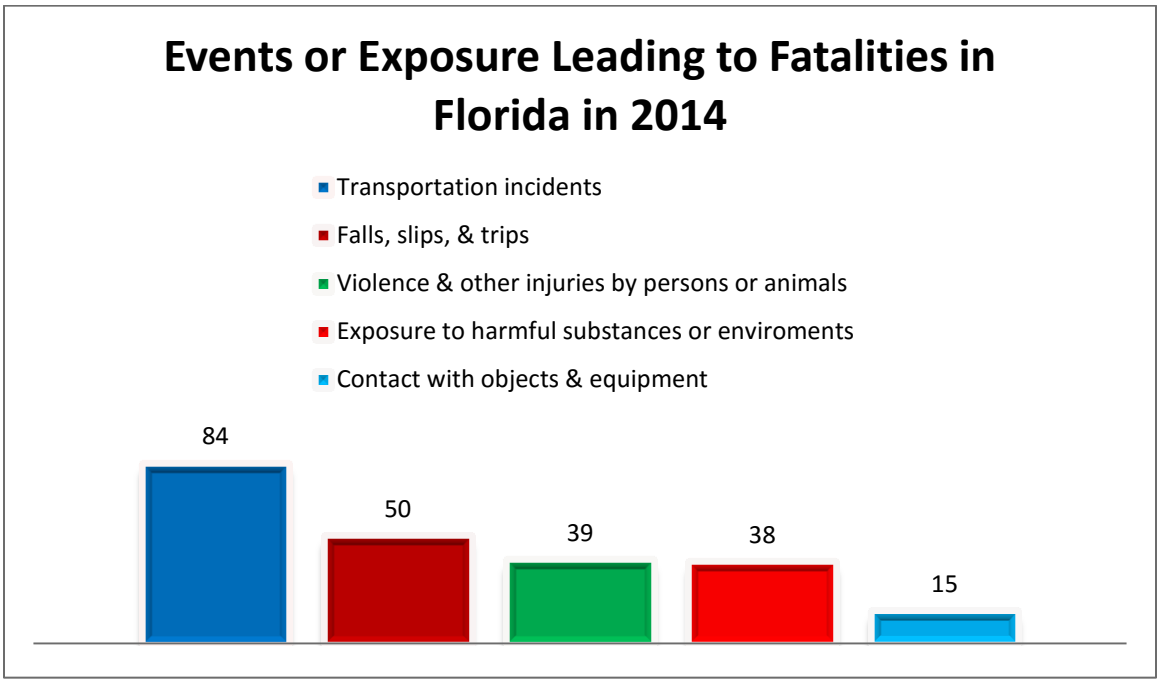
On October 27, 2015, Joshua Alain, a 21-year-old mechanic in Naples, was changing the rollers of a bulldozer when he was struck and crushed as it fell off the lift.

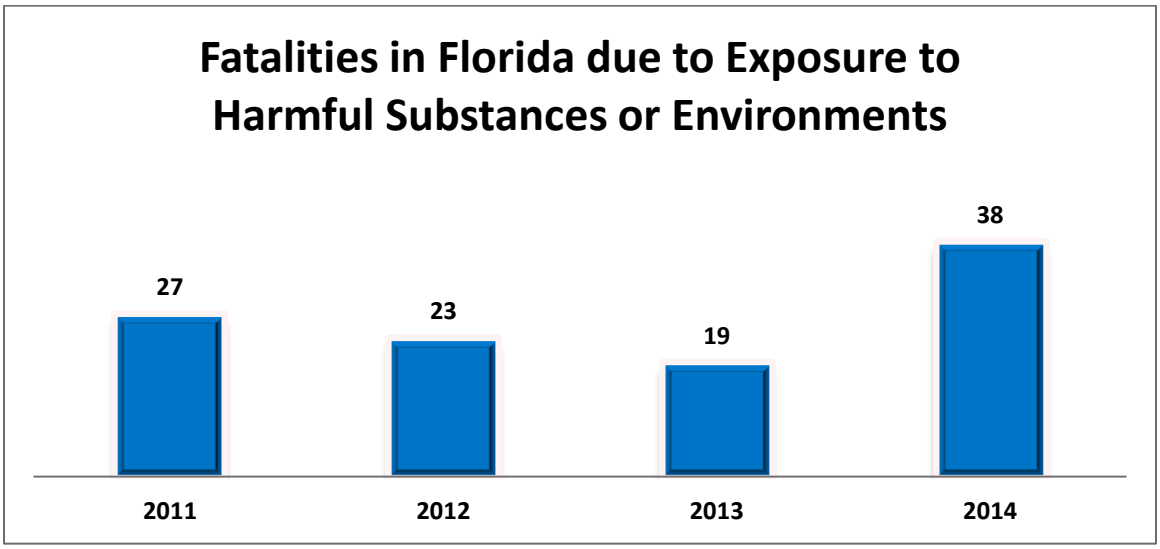
Justin Smith, 27, of St. Petersburg was also crushed by a bulldozer on October 7, 2015. His employer did not immediately report the death to OSHA as required; it was reported by the St. Petersburg Police.

Patricia Ann Hersey was fatally struck by a dump truck while standing near a drain silt fence on November 19, 2015 in Kissimmee.



Graph is based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries in the U.S. for 2014. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2014/iiffw12.htm.

Events or incidents of exposure that resulted in fatal occupational injuries in Florida in 2014 include violence and other injuries by persons or animals; transportation incidents; falls, slips, and trips; exposure to harmful substances or environments; and contact with objects and equipment. It is particularly concerning that the number of deaths from exposure to harmful substances or environments doubled in 2014 after several years of decline.



Graph is based on data acquired from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Fatal Occupational Injuries by Selected Characteristics, by Major Event or Exposure, Florida for 2011 to 2014. For more information, please visit http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2014/iiffw12.htm.

Just a Few of the Many Stories Behind the Numbers

On January 14, 2016 in Tampa, Joseph Lammlein, 45, was operating a front end loader and taking sulfur from a 30-foot high pile when the pile collapsed on him. He was buried within the cabin of the machine. Coworkers were trying to dig him out when law enforcement arrived, but were unable to get to him in time.

An employee at Port Everglades in Ft. Lauderdale was killed on February 10, 2016 when a semi-trailer truck struck him as he was preparing to leave work.

Clinton Van-Kraayenburg, 23, lost his life while doing routine maintenance on the ride known as "Hurricane" at the fairgrounds in Miami on April 5, 2016. This incident is still under investigation.

On October 16, 2015, Guillermo Solis, 25, was working in Ocoee when a concrete pylon that was being driven into the ground hit a soft spot in the soil causing a wood block that was being used as a buffer on top of the pylon to fall 25 yards, killing Guillermo.

Construction worker John Markle, 53, of Port Charlotte was working on Interstate 75 when a construction vehicle struck him on April 1, 2016.

Michael Murphy was working from a bucket truck on September 9, 2015 when he came in contact with live wires and was killed in Seffner.

On June 16, 2015 in Miami Beach, Joseph Block fell two stories from a ledge and was pronounced dead at the hospital.

A 38-year-old employee of Eagle Beaver Tree Service was killed on February 18, 2016 in Pensacola when a tree fell on him.

In Sarasota on January 5, 2015, a crew of six employees was laying pipe when the foreman, who was inside a concrete box leveling poured concrete complained that he was not feeling well before climbing out of the box and collapsing. The crew attempted CPR and chest compressions but were unable to save him.

Nicholas Pflaum and Christopher Garcia, two high voltage line specialists were killed on January 19, 2016 in South Bay when a dirt road apparently gave way under their truck, which toppled into a Palm Beach County Canal. Nicholas was working overtime to pay for a vacation when the incident occurred.

On May 12, 2015, Pedro Sanchez was working on a back-hoe in Marathon when it rolled over him, killing him.

Dewey Keith Summerlin, 40, Jeffery Max Estes, 34, and Jeremy Scott Bradshaw, 35, lost their lives on April 2, 2015 when they were working on power lines as part of a utility crew. The three employees were on the ground working between 40-50 feet from the edge of the pavement when a car on the road rear-ended another car and sent it down an embankment and into the employees and a company vehicle.

On October 20, 2015, Jose Joaquin Pizzano-Rodriguez was killed in Frostproof when he fell through a metal deck roof that he was repairing.

The Death of an Iron Worker

On December 2, 2015, just before Christmas, 29-year-old Iron Worker Rene Carrero was killed when he was struck by a piece of equipment weighing more than 2,000 pounds that was being hoisted by a crane and came loose. Rene was working on the 37th floor of the Biscayne Beach condo project in Miami. Rene's coworkers tried to help him but he died at the scene before rescue workers could arrive.

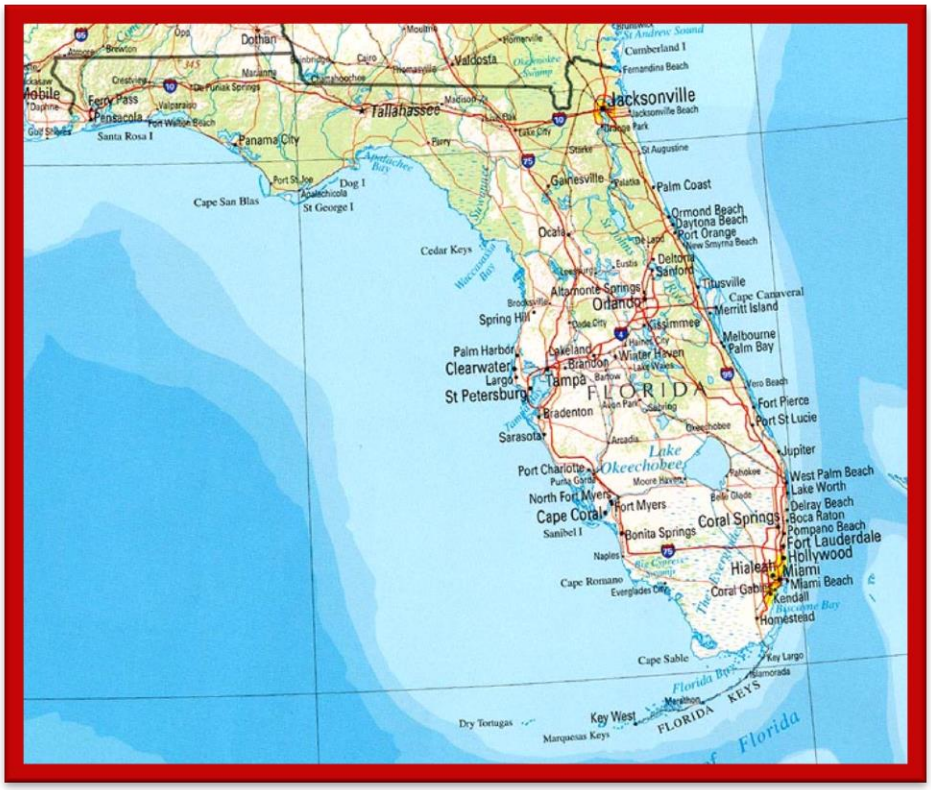
While his family, who said that Rene had been working in construction for several years and had been injured before, waited in desperation, a special team was brought in to bring the body down by crane because the building's elevator could not yet reach the 37th floor.

And the Many Names

Due to confidentiality factors, it is often very difficult to attain specific details from OSHA as to the nature of workplace fatalities although we can tell from the data that many of the deaths are in industries for which OSHA standards and guidance do exist.

228 deaths in Florida in 2014

Daniel Gonzalez , April 28, 2015, Miami, Exposure: Shock
Jose Morales, May 7, 2015, Orlando, Exposure: Struck
Rigoberto Diaz-Segura , May 13, 2015, Bonita Springs, Exposure: Struck
John Walden, May 14, 2015, Westville, Exposure: Struck
Alexander Cordova , May 14, 2015, Jacksonville, Exposure: Struck
Gary Higgins, July 19, 2015, Fort Myers, Exposure: Struck
Darryl Roberts, August 11, 2015,Tampa, Exposure: Fall (from elevation)
Eduardo Jaramillo, August 11, 2015, Stuart, Exposure: Fall (from elevation)
Felix Bryant, August 25, 2015, Ft. Lauderdale, Exposure: Caught in or between
David G. Cardwell, September 14, 2015, Pompano Beach, Exposure: Fall (from elevation)
Andres Garcia, September 15, 2015, Miami, Exposure: Struck
Harry Palmer, September 23, 2015, Cocoa, Exposure: Fall (from elevation)
Jesus Lopez, September 24, 2015, Avon Park, Exposure: Caught in or between
Ernesto Solano, September 26, 2015, Delray Beach, Exposure: Fall (from elevation)
Delbert Howard, October 19, 2015, Okeechobee, Exposure: Struck
Enrique Treviño, December 11, 2015, Davenport, Exposure: Caught in or between
Jerry Holt, December 20, 2015, Jacksonville, Exposure: Fall (same level)
Trave Williams, December 21, 2015, Sanford, Exposure: Struck



Conclusion -- What Can Be Done

Although Florida no longer placed in the top three states for workplace deaths in 2014, that was less because of a decrease in occupational fatalities in the state than because of a significant increase in another state. It is still troubling that many of the state's industries have seen an increase in workplace fatalities that are both foreseeable and preventable and that the state should see a doubling in the number of fatalities related to harmful substances or environments.

Moreover, based on the fact that ninety-one percent of the state's fatalities occur within private industry, private industry should be actively engaged in addressing workplace safety and health issues by establishing comprehensive injury and illness prevention programs to promote the identification and control of workplace hazards. Additionally, employers should withdraw all programs that discourage the reporting of workplace injuries and illnesses or other programs that shift employer responsibility for health and safety onto workers. Employers should also support workers who are concerned about workplace safety.

Communities and elected officials should prioritize workplace safety so that an employee is not put in the position of having to choose between safety and a paycheck. Community members and elected officials should become educated on issues related to workplace safety and support the efforts of OSHA to assist both employers and employees in establishing safe and healthy workplaces. There are resources available to both employers and employees to ensure that workplace safety trainings and worksite evaluations are put in place and the use of these resources should be highly encouraged.

The goal within the state of Florida should be to continue to slip down the list of states with the highest numbers of occupational fatalities and instead to set a high bar of safety that other states can follow.

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