

HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today released its [annual figures for work-related fatal injuries for 2017/18](#), as well as the number of people known to have died from the asbestos-related cancer, [mesothelioma, in 2016](#).

The provisional annual data for work-related fatal injuries revealed that 144 workers were fatally injured between April 2017 and March 2018 (a rate of 0.45 per 100,000 workers).

Although this represents an increase of nine fatalities from 2016/17, there has been a long-term reduction in the number of fatalities since 1981 and the number has remained broadly level in recent years.

HSE Chair Martin Temple said:

“Despite the fact that Britain’s health and safety record is the envy of much of the world, the increase in the number of workers fatally injured is clearly a source of concern.

“Published in the same week as the 30th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster, the figures serve as a reminder of why health and safety is so important and that we must not become complacent as we continue on our mission to prevent all forms of injury, death and ill health at work.”

The new figures show how fatal injuries are spread across the different industrial sectors:

- 38 fatal injuries to construction workers were recorded, accounting for the largest share of any industry. The annual average rate over the last five years in construction is around four times as high as the all industry rate.
- 29 fatal injuries to agricultural workers were recorded. This sector continues to account for a large share of the annual fatality count. It has the highest rate of fatal injury of all the main industry sectors, around 18 times as high as the all industry rate.
- 12 fatal injuries to waste and recycling workers were recorded. Despite being a relatively small sector in terms of employment, the annual average fatal injury rate over the last five years is around 16 times as high as the all industry rate.
- 15 fatal injuries were recorded in both the manufacturing and the transport and storage sectors. Both industries have an annual average rate of fatal injury around 1.5 – 2 times the rate across all industries over the last five years.

The three most common causes of fatal injuries continue to be due to; workers falling from height (35), being struck by a moving vehicle (26) and being struck by a moving object (23), accounting for nearly 60 per cent of fatal

injuries in 2017/18.

The new figures also highlight the risks to older workers; 40 per cent of fatal injuries in 2017/18 were to workers aged 60 or over, even though such workers made up only around 10 per cent of the workforce.

In addition, there were also 100 members of the public fatally injured in incidents connected to work in 2017/18 with just over half of these fatalities occurring on railways.

Mesothelioma, contracted through past exposure to asbestos and one of the few work-related diseases where deaths can be counted directly, killed 2,595 in Great Britain in 2016. The current figures are largely a consequence of occupational asbestos exposures that occurred before 1980. Annual deaths are expected to remain broadly at current levels for the rest of the decade before beginning to decline.

A fuller assessment of work related ill-health and injuries, drawing on HSE's full range of data sources, will be provided as part of the annual Health and Safety Statistics release on 31 October 2018.

Notes to Editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk
2. The average rate of fatal injury over the last five years has been 0.45 per 100,000 workers. In each of the last five years, the number of fatal injuries has been:
 - 2016/17 – 135 workers died
 - 2015/16 – 147 workers died
 - 2014/15 – 142 workers died
 - 2013/14 – 136 workers died
 - 2012/13 – 150 workers died
 - 2011/12 – 171 workers died
3. Mesothelioma is a form of cancer that takes many years to develop following the inhalation of asbestos fibres, but is usually rapidly fatal following symptom onset. Annual deaths in Britain increased steeply over the last 50 years, a consequence of mainly occupational asbestos exposures that occurred because of the widespread industrial use of asbestos during 1950-1980. 4. There were 2,595 mesothelioma deaths in 2016 compared with 2,542 deaths in 2015. The long-term increase in mesothelioma deaths has been driven mainly by deaths among those aged 75 and above. Of the deaths in 2016, 398 were among women and 2,197 were among men – again this ratio is broadly similar to previous years. The latest projections suggest there will continue to be around 2,500 deaths per year for the rest of this current decade before annual numbers begin to decline.
4. The published fatal injury statistics also include a breakdown by

country and region. Recent research suggests that variations in fatal injury rates between the countries and regions of Great Britain are largely explained by differences in the industry composition of the workforce between the countries and regions.

5. Britain has consistently had one of the lowest rates of fatal injuries to workers. In 2015 the standardised fatality rate for Britain was one of the lowest of all European countries and compared favourably with other large economies such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/fatalinjuries.pdf>
6. The reporting of health and safety incidents at work is a statutory requirement, set out under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). A reportable incident includes: a death or specified injury; any accident which does not result in a specified injury, but the injured person still has to take more than seven days off their normal work to recover; a work-related disease; a member of the public being injured as a result of work related activity and taken to hospital for treatment; or a dangerous occurrence, which does not result in a serious injury, but could have done.
7. The fatal injury figures do not include fatal accidents on non-rail transport systems or work-related deaths from fatal diseases.
8. The Office of Rail and Road has enforcement responsibility for members of the public fatally injured on railways.
9. Further information on these statistics can be found at:
Fatal injuries: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm>
Mesothelioma deaths: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/mesothelioma/mesothelioma.pdf>