



Bulletin No. 6

April 13, 1992

Occupational Fatalities in Alaska - 1991

Commercial fishing led all Alaskan industries in the number of workplace deaths in 1991, according to preliminary findings from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

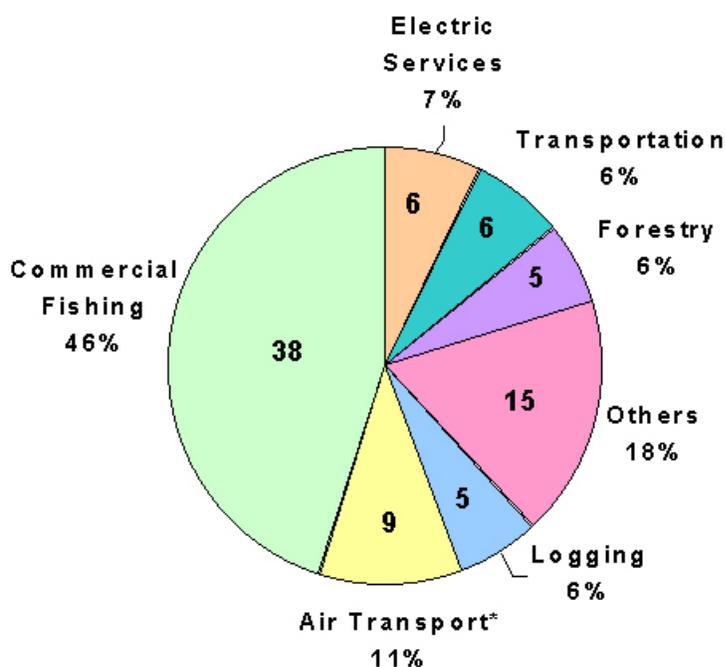
Of 83 workers who died on the job in Alaska in 1991, 38 were employed in the commercial fishing industry. Of the fishers who died, 35 either drowned or were presumed drowned, and most (90.5%) of those who drowned were not wearing personal flotation devices, according to NIOSH investigators. Nearly two-thirds (62.5%) of the commercial fishers who were saved in incidents where others died, such as a sunk or capsized vessel, were wearing personal flotation devices. These data suggest that wearing such flotation devices increases the chance of being saved, and would therefore be a prudent preventive measure for commercial fishers.

Another 24 workers died in airplane crashes in Alaska, including nine workers employed in the air transportation industry and 15 workers employed in other industries. Among the 15 workers were five forestry workers who died in a single airplane crash, and five workers in the electrical services industry who died in two separate airplane crashes. The logging and non-air transportation industries each had five workers who died on the job in 1991 in separate, unrelated incidents.

NIOSH established a research activity in Anchorage, Alaska in 1991 after finding that Alaska is the highest risk state in the U.S. for traumatic worker deaths. For the years 1980 through 1988, 33.1 worker deaths occurred for every 100,000 workers employed in Alaska. This workplace death rate is over four times the U.S. rate (7.2 deaths per 100,000 workers). NIOSH is investigating worker deaths in Alaska to identify preventive measures that may be implemented to reduce the toll in Alaska, and in other states where workers face similar risks. Due to the prevalence of deaths related to commercial fishing, NIOSH is focusing research efforts on this dangerous sector.

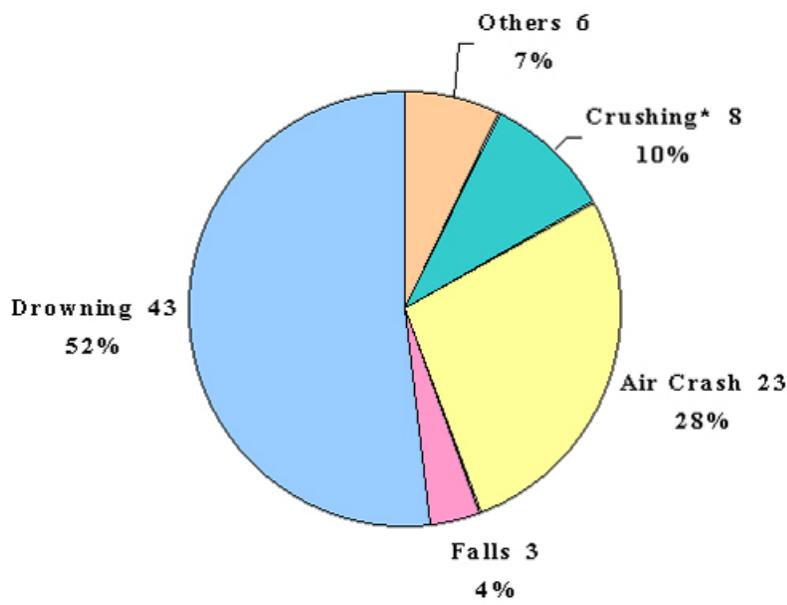
High-risk Industries

Alaska, 1991, N=83

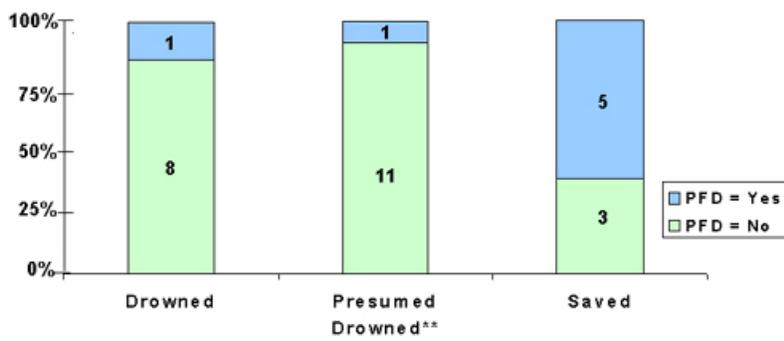


Occupational Fatalities by Cause of Death

Alaska, 1991, N=83



**Drowned, Presumed Drowned, or Saved*
By Personal Floatation Device Usage
Alaska Commercial Fishing Industry, 1991, N=29**



*Saved: Number of persons saved in events involving a fatal outcome

**No PDF usage data exists for the other 14 presumed drowned commercial fishers.

Source: AK FACE 1991

(Contributed by Michael Klatt, Acting Chief, Alaska Activity, Division of Safety Research, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 3601 C Street, Suite 250, Anchorage, AK 99503)