

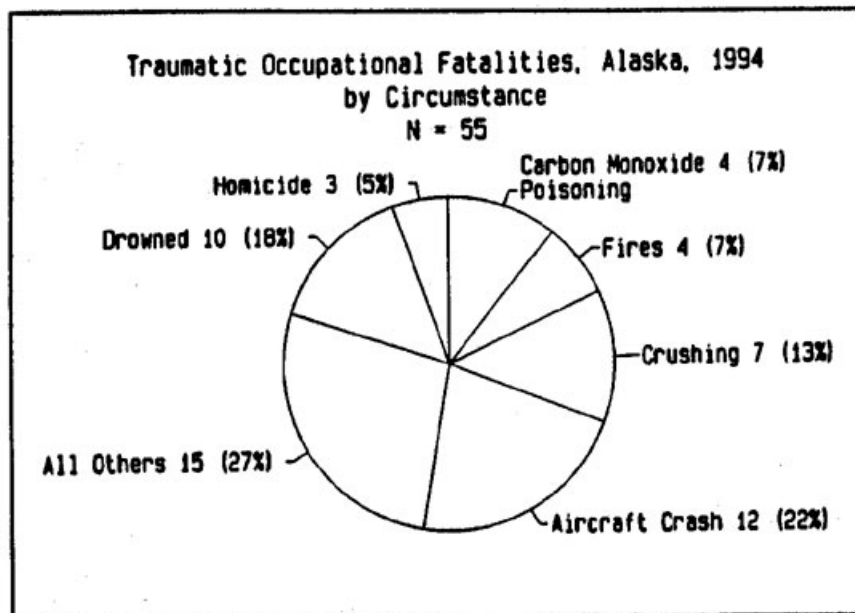


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Bulletin No. 9
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Occupational Fatalities in Alaska - 1994

Commercial fishing (11 deaths) and aviation (12 deaths) led all Alaskan industries in the number of workplace deaths in 1994.

Of 55 workers who died on the job in Alaska in 1994, 11 were employed in the commercial fishing industry. Of 5 fishers who drowned, 3 were not wearing a personal flotation device. Other causes of death in this industry were carbon monoxide poisoning (2), freon asphyxiation (1), crushing (1), fire injuries (1), and hypothermia (1). Significant changes in the causes of death in the fishing industry were noted in 1994. Only 46% of victims drowned in 1994, compared to 82% in 1993 and 94% in 1992. This may be due to an increased safety awareness in the fishing industry and use of EPIRBs and survival suits. Commercial fishing fatalities were reduced by 50% in 1994 compared to 1993.



A total of 12 workers (22%) were killed as a result of aircraft crashes in 1994, compared to 22 (34%) in 1993 and 27 (31%) in 1992. These workers include seven civilian pilots, two tribal council members, one biologist, one domestic helper, and one teacher.

In addition, 2 Alaskan workers were killed in an aircraft crash in Canada while on approach to the Juneau airport. These deaths are not included in these data because they did not occur inside the state's boundary.

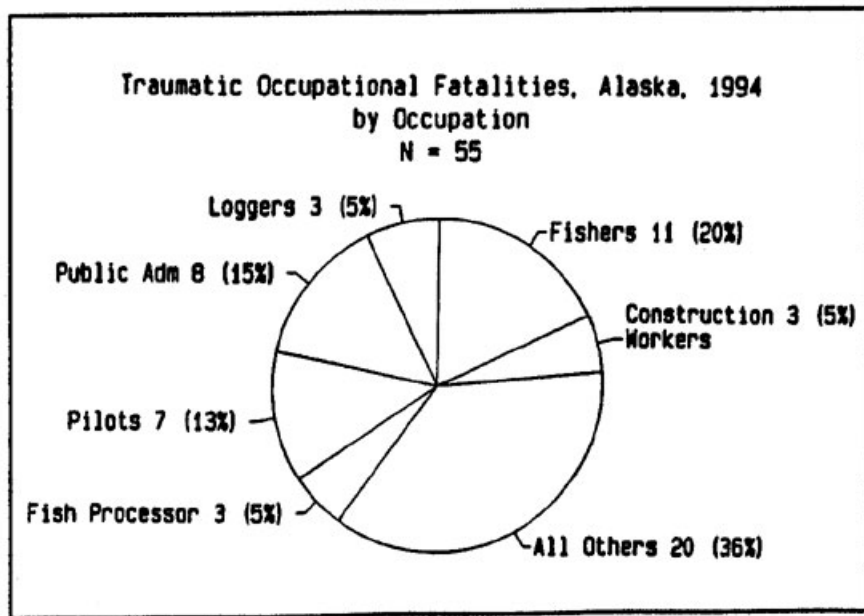
The logging industry had four (7%) workers who died on the job in 1994 in separate, unrelated incidents. These include three loggers and one crane operator. No helicopter logging fatalities occurred in 1994, compared to three in 1993 and six in 1992.

The occurrence of homicide on the job also declined in 1994. Three (5%) workers died as a result of homicide occurring on the job compared to 11 (16%) in 1993.

Deaths among workers in Public Administration (U.S. military and civilian governments), 3 military, 3 biologists, and 2 tribal council members, represented 15% of the total traumatic occupational deaths in 1994.

NIOSH established an office in Anchorage in 1991 after identifying Alaska as the highest risk state in the U.S. for traumatic worker fatalities. Due to the frequency of deaths related to commercial fishing, NIOSH has been focusing research efforts on this dangerous employment sector.

Supported by a grant from NIOSH, the Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology established an Occupational Injury Prevention Program in 1992 to focus on preventing workplace fatalities and injuries, especially in construction, skilled trades, petrochemical, and other industrial settings. The Section of Epidemiology is collaborating with the Anchorage Police Department to assess the risk of homicide for taxicab drivers and to develop recommendations to prevent such deaths.



(Submitted by: Gary Bledsoe, Occupational Injury Prevention Program, Section of Epidemiology; Michael Klatt and Jennifer Lincoln, NIOSH, DSR, Alaska Activity)

The Alaska Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology, Occupational Injury Prevention Program, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Division of Safety Research, Alaska Activity, worked cooperatively to collect and analyze occupational fatality data for 1994.