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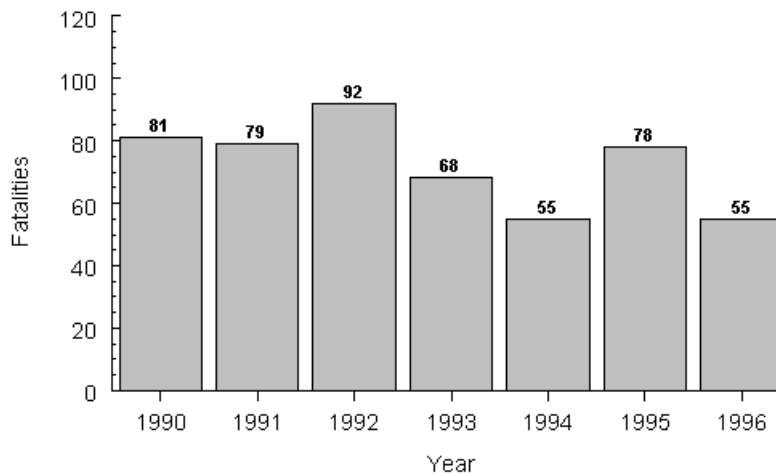
Bulletin No. 15
March 17, 1997
Occupational Fatalities in Alaska - 1996

The Occupational Injury Prevention Program of the Section of Epidemiology and the Alaska Field Station of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) worked cooperatively to collect and analyze occupational fatality data for 1996.

For the years 1980 through 1989, an average of 58 deaths occurred among workers employed in Alaska. This workplace death rate (34.8/100,000 workers) is almost five times the US rate (7.0/100,000 workers) for the same period. The State and NIOSH are investigating worker deaths in Alaska to identify preventive measures that may be implemented to reduce the toll in Alaska and in other states and countries where workers face similar risks.

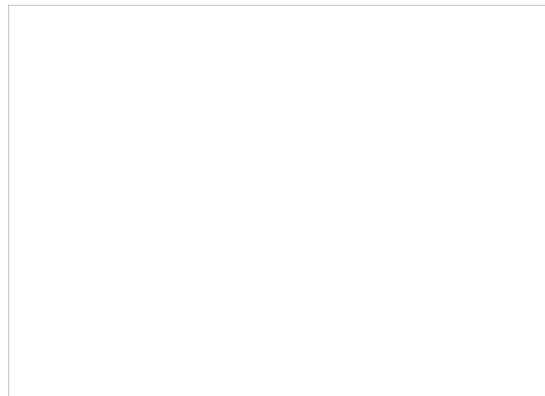
Occupation-related Fatalities in Alaska

1990 - 1996
(N = 508)

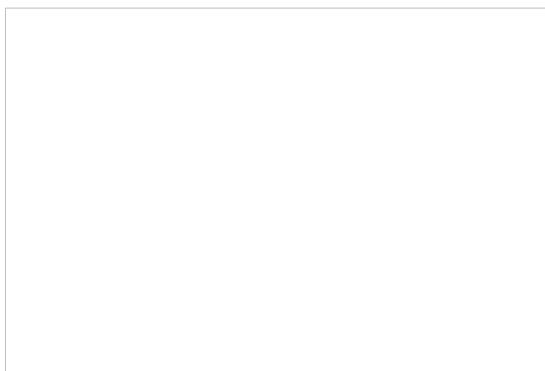


Sources: Alaska FACE Program and NIOSH, 1990 - 1996

Of 55 workers who died on the job in Alaska in 1996, 24 were in the commercial fishing industry, 14 in the air transportation industry, and six in the tour operations industry. There were also two work-related deaths in the logging industry and one in helicopter logging industry, two industries that have historically experienced disproportionately high numbers of occupational fatalities in Alaska.



A total of 23 workers drowned while on the job in Alaska in 1996, all of whom were commercial fishermen and three of which were conducting underwater diving operations at the time of their deaths. Of 14 workers who died in aircraft crashes, 11 were airplane pilots and crew members, two were helicopter pilots, and one was a biologist. Another six workers died as a result of fires, including five who died in a single fire aboard a cruise ship. Three occupational-related homicides were also reported.



NIOSH established a research field station in Anchorage in 1991 after identifying Alaska as the state with the highest traumatic worker fatality rate in the US. In 1992 the Section of Epidemiology established the Occupational Injury Prevention Program (OIPP) that administers the Alaska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program under a cooperative agreement with NIOSH. The Occupational Injury Prevention Program focuses on preventing workplace fatalities and injuries, especially in

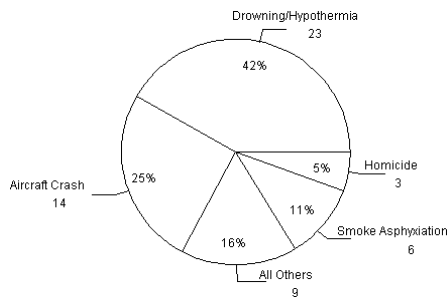
construction, skilled trades, logging, and other industrial settings. In addition to these target areas of investigation, the OIPP program will be examining occupational-related motor vehicle and snowmobile injury deaths in Alaska.

Due to the frequency of deaths related to commercial fishing, aviation, and logging, NIOSH is focusing research efforts on these industries. An international Fishing Industry Safety and Health Workshop and three international Helicopter Logging Safety Workshops were sponsored by the NIOSH Alaska Field Station to help address these needs. The NIOSH Alaska Field Station will sponsor a second Fishing Industry Safety and Health Workshop in Seattle, Washington, November 21-22, 1997, with international speakers and attendees from government, industry, and academia.

Correction: In *Epidemiology Bulletin* no. 15 (March 17, 1997), the data depicted in the two pie charts was incorrect. The correct charts are below.

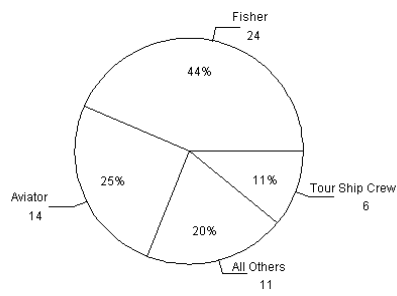
Occupational Fatalities in Alaska, 1996

by Circumstance (N = 55)



Occupational Fatalities in Alaska, 1996

by Occupation (N = 55)



(Submitted by Deborah Choromanski, Occupational Injury Prevention Program, Section of Epidemiology; Michael Klatt and Jennifer Lincoln, Alaska Field Station, NIOSH.)