

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-001001

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

SWA - Industries That Have the Highest Workplace Deaths

- Which industries were those tragic deaths highest in 2015? Has there been a change this year?
- Is there any explanation for that?
- Are there any policy differences that you think have had an effect on the fatality count?
- What things is Safe Work Australia working on to ensure our workplaces are safer?
- Is there anything preventing you from doing that work effectively? Any policy inhibitors?

Answer

- Safe Work Australia data (see [Table 1](#)) show that in 2015, the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest number of worker fatalities with 52 fatalities, followed by the Transport, postal and warehousing industry (40 fatalities) and the Construction industry (33 fatalities).
 - The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry and the Transport, postal and warehousing industry also recorded the highest worker fatality rates in 2015 with 16.7 fatalities per 100,000 workers and 6.6 fatalities per 100,000 workers, respectively.
- Preliminary data for 2016 (derived from initial reporting) show that these industries continue to record the highest number of fatalities in 2016 (see [Table 2](#)).
 - As at 2 November 2016, the Transport, postal and warehousing industry has recorded the highest number of fatalities (50 fatalities) to date in 2016. This is compared with 47 fatalities recorded over the same period in 2015.
 - The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the next highest number of fatalities to date in 2016 (34 fatalities compared with 41 fatalities over the same period in 2015), followed by the Construction industry (23 fatalities compared with 18 fatalities over the same period in 2015).
- Work health and safety is regulated separately by Commonwealth, state and territory governments. It is difficult to attribute changes in fatality numbers and rates directly to any policy changes.
- Year on year changes in fatality rates are volatile. Longer term trends show incidence rates in serious claims and fatalities across all industries continue to fall.
- Agriculture, road transport and construction are identified as national priority industries under the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022.

- Please refer to the response to EMSQ16 000999 for information on activities being undertaken by Safe Work Australia to improve work health and safety outcomes.
- There is nothing preventing Safe Work Australia from doing its work, including policy inhibitors.

Table 1: Number of worker fatalities and worker fatality rates (fatalities per 100,000 workers) by industry, 2015

Industry of employer	Number of worker fatalities 2015	Fatality rate 2015
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	52	16.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	40	6.6
Construction	33	3.2
Manufacturing	13	1.5
Mining	10	4.4
Administrative and support services	7	1.7
Arts and recreation services	7	3.1
Other services	7	1.5
Public administration and safety	6	0.8
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	4	2.8
Wholesale trade	3	0.8
Retail trade	3	0.2
Accommodation and food services	3	0.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	2	0.2
Education and training	2	0.2
Health care and social assistance	2	0.1
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1	0.5
Information media and telecommunications
Financial and insurance services
All industries	195	1.6

Source: Safe Work Australia, Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities data set.

Table 2: Preliminary worker fatalities by industry, year-to-date* 2015 and 2016

Industry of workplace	Preliminary worker deaths year-to-date 2015	Preliminary worker deaths year-to-date 2016*
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	41	34
Transport, postal & warehousing	47	50
Construction	18	23
Manufacturing	8	1
Mining	10	5
Other services	3	5
Arts & recreation services	5	6
Administrative & support services	5	2
Public administration & safety	3	2
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	6	7
Accommodation & food services	2	2
Retail trade	2	2
Wholesale trade	0	1
Health care & social assistance	2	1
Education & training	0	0
Professional, scientific & technical services	0	2
Government administration & defence	1	0
Financial & insurance services	0	0
Information media & telecommunications	0	2
All industries	153	145

* Fatalities as at 2 November.

Note: The preliminary data are derived from initial media reports and therefore are subject to change as further information becomes available following investigation by relevant authorities.