



Notified fatalities report

July to December 2023

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and the Electrical Safety Office (ESO) report monthly to Safe Work Australia about notified fatalities that have occurred at a workplace or resulted from a work activity. This report includes fatalities resulting from work-related trauma at the workplace only—a full explanation is provided at the end of the report.








Main issues

- Queensland notified 14 fatalities to Safe Work Australia for the period July to December 2023.
- Of these 14 fatalities
 - nine (9) were workers and five (5) were bystanders
 - 13 fatalities were male and one (1) was female
- The construction industry had the highest number of fatalities at five (5) followed by the manufacturing; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and arts and recreation services industries at two (2) fatalities each.
- Being hit by moving objects (3), being hit by falling objects (2), rollover (2) and falls from a height (2) were the most common mechanism groups.
- Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay region; and North and Central Queensland had five (5) fatalities each while Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast had four (4).

Summary tables



The charts and graphs in this summary provide fatality data for the period July to December 2023.

Fatalities by industry


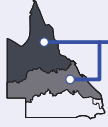

Industry					
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2		Other services	1
	Arts and recreation services	2		Transport, postal and warehousing	1
	Construction	5		Wholesale trade	1
	Manufacturing	2			
Total 14 fatalities					



Fatalities by gender

Gender		
	Male	13
	Female	1
Total		14

Fatalities by region

Region		
	Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay	5
	North and Central Queensland	5
	Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast	4
Total		14

Fatalities by incident mechanism

Incident mechanism	
Being hit by falling objects	2
Being hit by moving objects	3
Contact with electricity	1
Drowning/immersion	1
Exposure to environmental heat	1
Falls from a height	2
Falls on the same level	1
Vehicle accident	1
Rollover	2
Total	14

Fatalities by occupation

Occupation	
Building and plumbing labourers	1
Construction, distribution and production managers	1
Earthmoving plant operators	1
Farmers and farm managers	2
Nothing found or not applicable	5
Other machinery and equipment repair and maintenance	1
Other sales assistants and salespersons	1
Railway track workers	1
Surveyors and spatial scientists	1
Total	14

Narratives

Narrative data provides a basic description of what led to the fatal incident. This data can be used to identify common factors that bring about fatal incidences and therefore the types of risks that need to be identified and controlled.

The below summaries of fatal incidents indicate circumstances that should be avoided in a workplace.

(Note: Industry coding of fatalities in this report is based on the incident location, not the industry of the employer. These may be different).

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

Energy line technicians were tasked to find the cause for a widespread power outage. They identified a branch of the powerline outside a rural property as the suspect section of line. The technicians followed the line into the property where they observed the headlights of a tractor and fire burning in the grass around the tractor which was stationary on a dam wall. The tractor engine was idling. A male person was found deceased on the ground beside the tractor. The tractor had apparently been pulling a trailer with spraying apparatus including an extendable boom with arms which lift to vertical position when being transported. The boom arms contacted the overhead 11kV powerline which likely caused the power fault, electrocuted the man and started the grass fire.

North and Central Queensland

A male person was driving a tractor spreading rat poison around his cane farm. After some time the man's wife called her son as she was concerned that her husband hadn't returned. Sometime later a neighbour saw a tractor driving in the paddock with no-one at the seat. The neighbour stopped the tractor and called for assistance. It was identified that the tractor belonged to the deceased, who was found lying in the paddock with head injuries.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A driver was driving a modified vehicle during an event at a raceway, with a passenger in the vehicle. The vehicle was driving next to and on the left of another vehicle on the back straight. As the vehicles passed through bollards indicating the start of an increased speed zone, the driver accelerated and then lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle swerved and cut across the path of the other vehicle and entered into a complicated and multiple roll over. This resulted in the driver being ejected and then the passenger being ejected. The driver received fatal injuries. The passenger sustained injuries requiring hospitalisation.

Construction

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male worker was working as a labourer on a rail corridor project, in the sun in hot weather. On the second day after working for about six hours, the worker felt unwell and after discussion with the site leading hand, obtained approval to go home. After driving some kilometres towards home, the worker hit some domestic wheelie bins and pulled over his vehicle in a side street. The worker was seen to remove his clothing and act erratically. When emergency services arrived, he was found dead behind the wheel of his vehicle.

A male patron disembarked from a ferry and walked towards a riverside bike/pedestrian walkway. He then collided with two cyclists who were travelling on the bike path. As a result, he sustained fatal head injuries. At the time of the incident there was temporary fencing around some construction activities next to where the collision occurred, potentially creating a blind spot.

A male apprentice fell through a penetration in the floor of a building construction site onto the floor below. He was taken to hospital and later succumbed to his injuries.

Arts and recreation services

North and Central Queensland

A female worker of a bowls club came in to play bowls on her day off. While walking upstairs with two loaves of bread in one hand and a carton of soft drinks in the other, she either clipped the stairs with her foot or hit the carton on the stairs and lost her balance. She fell down two concrete steps and hit her head when landing. She later died in hospital.

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A road upgrade was being undertaken at an intersection. A driver was operating a truck and trailer delivering road mix and gravel to the site and was reversing up a slight incline on a corner nearest to some kerbing. The driver had the trailer tipped up to unload but as he was reversing, the left wheels of the trailer drove over a small ledge where the fill was to be spread. The trailer, while still coupled to the truck, toppled to the left with a substantial amount of gravel still inside. This fell onto a surveyor in close proximity to the vehicle, causing him fatal injuries.

A male worker was driving a dozer from top to bottom of a hill clearing small trees. It appears that while he operated the dozer it rolled several times before coming to a rest near the bottom of the hill. The worker was ejected from the cabin of the dozer causing fatal injuries. It was observed during the investigation that the dozer was fitted with a seatbelt which was not worn by the worker at the time of the incident. The seatbelt was secured around behind the seat and fastened by the buckle, presumably to silence the alarms which activate when the seatbelt is not worn.

Manufacturing

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male person appeared to have been working on his boat situated on the dry dock at a marina. A staff member working nearby located the man in a critical condition on the concrete floor next to his boat. He had suffered catastrophic head injuries.

North and Central Queensland

A male worker was repairing a crush machine parked beside a concrete spoil heap. An excavator bucket slid down the stockpile of rubble and hit the worker.

Other services

North and Central Queensland

A male worker was crushed/trapped underneath a large solid rear axle. Jacks/stands/stilts were observed near the axle that was on top of the worker, potentially meaning that the axle had rolled off the jacks. The worker was wearing gloves and a helmet consistent with welding and was working by himself at the time of the incident.

Retail trade

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A forklift was being operated in the workshop area of a wrecker to straighten a damaged car when it reversed into a male worker causing fatal crush injuries. CCTV shows the forklift reversing and crushing the worker between the rear of the forklift and the steel upright of a vehicle hoist.

Transport, postal and warehousing

North and Central Queensland

A passenger on a day trip to the Great Barrier Reef died while snorkelling at a dive/snorkelling site on Norman Reef. It appears the man was recovered unconscious from the water and medical assistance was rendered to no avail.

About this report

The fatalities data set used in this report includes fatalities resulting from a work-related traumatic injury, as defined by legislation. This may involve:

- employees
- self-employed workers/contractors
- fatalities occurring at a private residence where work activity was involved, such as a person working from home or work carried out on a house by a contractor
- fatalities caused by work where the death occurs in hospital rather than at the workplace
- homicide where there is a close nexus with work
- work-related road traffic fatalities on public
- bystanders, such as visitors to a workplace, who die as a consequence of work activity.

The categories listed below are not included in the fatalities data set, regardless of whether work-related factors can be identified:

- commuting fatalities (travelling to or from work)
- injuries where the worker died due to medical intervention
- natural causes such as heart attacks and strokes (except where a work-related injury was the direct cause of the heart attack or stroke)
- diseases including cancers and mesothelioma
- self-inflicted injuries (suicide).

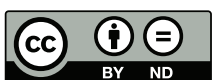
The fatalities detailed in this report are those that occurred between July and December 2023 that WHSQ reported to Safe Work Australia. Further investigation of any of these incidents could reveal additional information that may deem an incident to be non-work related. WHSQ reports any changes to notified fatalities to Safe Work Australia.

Notes

The approximate 100 workplace fatalities per year regularly compensated by the Queensland workers' compensation scheme includes injuries due to commuting fatalities (travelling to or from work) and diseases in addition to fatalities resulting from work-related traumatic injuries.

For more information on work health and safety, visit [WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or call **1300 362 128**.

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