



# Notified fatalities report

## January to June 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 23 fatalities to Safe Work Australia for the period January to June 2023.
- Of these 23 fatalities
  - 16 were workers and seven (7) were bystanders.
  - 17 fatalities were male and six (6) were female.
- The construction industry had the highest number of fatalities at five (5) followed by the manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and agriculture, forestry and fishing industries at three (3) fatalities each.
- Falls from a height at five (5), drowning or immersion at four (4) and being hit by moving objects at three (3) fatalities were the most common mechanism groups.
- Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay region had nine (9) fatalities, North and Central Queensland had eight (8) fatalities and Southwest, Logan, and Gold Coast had six (6).

### Summary tables




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

### Fatalities by industry

Industry			
 Accommodation and food services	3	 Manufacturing	3
 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3	 Other services	1
 Arts and recreation services	1	 Public administration and safety	2
 Construction	5	 Retail trade	1





## Industry


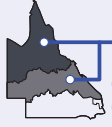

 Education and training	1	 Transport, postal and warehousing	1
 Health care and social assistance	2		

## Total 23 fatalities

### Fatalities by gender

Gender		
 Male		17
 Female		6
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

### Fatalities by region

Region		
 Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay	Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay	9
 North and Central Queensland	North and Central Queensland	8
 Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast	Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

### Fatalities by incident mechanism

Incident mechanism	
Falls from a height	5
Drowning/immersion	4
Being hit by moving objects	3
Rollover	2
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	2
Contact with electricity	2
Being hit by falling objects	1
Hitting stationary objects	1
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	1
Vehicle accident	1
Contact with hot objects	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

## Fatalities by occupation

Occupation	
Agricultural, forestry and horticultural plant operators	1
Beef cattle farmer	1
Crane, hoist and lift operators	1
Earthmoving plant operators	1
Equipment hire manager	1
Fencers	1
Fire and emergency workers	1
Forklift drivers	1
Midwifery and nursing professionals	1
Not applicable—bystander	7
Other cleaners	1
Production managers	1
Roof tilers	1
Sheetmetal trades workers	2
Telecommunications trades workers	1
Truck drivers	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

## 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.)

## Accommodation and food services

North and Central Queensland
A male worker was fixing a leaking poly water pipe and had to cut a section of the pipe to fix it. Unknown to the worker, running parallel to the water pipe and contained within a second run of identical size poly pipe, was active electrical cabling. The worker dug into the ground and unearthed the second pipe. Assuming it was the leaking water pipe, the worker cut the poly pipe. In doing so, the worker cut the active wire within the poly pipe, resulting in electrocution.
A tourist climbed over a pool fence and nearly drowned in a hostel pool. As a result of his injuries he died in hospital a few days later.
A female patron was a member of a small group invited to a resort. She was found face down in the resort pool. It is estimated that she was face down in the pool for over 10 minutes before assistance was provided to her by a member of the public. At the time of the incident, the resort did not have a facility specific supervision plan in place for the pool and additionally there was no supervision of the pool by a lifeguard.

## Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast
A male worker was electrocuted when the elevated work platform he was conducting maintenance on came into contact with a single wire, earth return power line while he was on the ground operating the platform via a control panel.
A male worker was operating a tractor when it is believed that he drove over an embankment and rolled while performing farm duties.
North and Central Queensland
A male worker was going to refuel a generator that powered a pump supplying water to the farm's cattle irrigation system from a creek. The generator was situated on a rocky ledge above the creek.
It is believed that the worker fell while he was carrying a jerry can of fuel up to refill the generator. The worker was found floating in the rock pool of the creek below the ledge access.

## Arts and recreation services

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay
A female patron was at an indoor skydiving centre. While performing a manoeuvre she lost control and her head contacted the glass cylinder surrounding the wind tunnel. While the patron was wearing the required body suit and helmet at the time of the incident, she became limp and was unresponsive immediately following the impact.

## Construction

Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay
A male worker was working with a skid steer when he lowered its bucket before standing in it. He then leant into the driver's compartment and removed the driver's seat and inspection panel under the seat. At the time, the engine of the loader was still running. While the worker was standing in the bucket, it lifted and compressed him between the front of the roof turret and the hydraulic arms, before carrying him up onto the roof turret. The worker was pronounced deceased enroute to the life flight helicopter.
A male worker was performing initial works to erect a boundary fence. Sometime later the worker was found motionless, with his left foot pinned under a hydraulic outrigger attached to a tractor's rear three-point linkage. The tractor was secured with the handbrake applied, gear engaged and there appeared to be no movement of the plant. It appears at this stage that the worker may have had a medical episode and hydraulic seepage caused the rear mechanism to drop over time and pin the deceased's foot, post the medical episode.
North and Central Queensland
A male worker was standing on a cherry picker completing maintenance while it was elevated. At some point the worker fell from the cherry picker and subsequently died from his injuries.
Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast
A male worker was part of a roofing crew receiving new sheets to screw in place. He was working along the exposed edge of the roof sheet, three to four metres up from the gutter, when he fell onto the ground.

### Southwest, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker suffered fatal injuries as a result of his excavator rolling 300 metres down an embankment after the land subsided from underneath his machine. It is believed that the worker attempted to secure his 20-tonne excavator against his D6 front end dozer, should there be any issues with the embankment he was working on. When emergency services attended the incident scene, there were steel chains wrapped around the rear of the dozer, and a broken sling and other chains located at the bottom of the embankment.

## Education and training

### Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male diver was participating in a supervised dive with others including the dive supervisor. The diver used his own equipment with the exception of two hired air-cylinders that were provided to him following the appropriate verifications. After a period of time the diver signalled that he wished to re-surface. A short time later, after he surfaced, the skipper observed that the diver was unwell and activated emergency response procedures. The diver was retrieved from the water, CPR commenced, and the remaining divers were recalled to the vessel.

## Health care and social assistance

### Brisbane Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A female resident of an aged care facility fell down a set of fire stairs which resulted in fatal injuries.

A female worker was travelling home in her car following the completion of her shift at a hospital. She was involved in a motor vehicle accident and sustained fatal injuries.

## Manufacturing

### Brisbane Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A de-barker machine operator at a timber mill called the mill coordinator over to alert him of smoke exiting from the machine. After a discussion, the coordinator accessed the machine via a work platform to ascertain the cause of issue. Once the coordinator accessed the machine, he was struck in the chest area by a large piece of timber and knocked to the ground as he was trying to move out of the way.

### North and Central Queensland

A male worker was working with a colleague as they pressed a piece of metal to an eventual 90-degree radius formed angle. The worker and his colleague successfully completed the first plate and commenced pressing an identical second plate to the same specifications. The worker mistakenly inputted 139 degrees instead of the required 169 degrees for the press. The colleague was holding the opposite end of the metal sheet when the worker bent down and appeared to inspect the press as he was controlling the foot pedal to complete the pressing. The metal plate then fractured and was ejected at speed from the press at the worker's head, causing fatal injuries.

### South West, Logan and Gold Coast

A male worker who was working alone attempted to use a crane with chains to lift/move an old pool mould marked to be destroyed. At some point the worker went underneath the mould, which suddenly came down on top of him, trapping the worker. The worker uses his work mobile to call the office asking for help. Other workers on site removed the worker from underneath the pool mould. The worker later succumbed to his injuries and died.

## Other services

### Brisbane Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male worker who was hired to clean solar panels on a building climbed onto the roof of the building. He fell approximately 5.5 metres through a skylight panel on the roof, to the concrete below and died from his injuries.

## Public administration and safety

### North and Central Queensland

A male worker was part of a team that undertakes road maintenance. He was driving a truck that had two side tipper trailers attached. The worker loaded, moved and tipped the first load of the day when it was detected that there was an air leak in the rear axle of the rear trailer. The worker went to investigate and raised the side tipper up off the rear trailer and then stepped up onto the passenger side mud guard of the rear axle to look for the air leak. A colleague went to his vehicle to get some tools to assist with repairing the leak. It is believed that during this time the worker lent over the chassis of the trailer when the tipper bucket of the rear trailer somehow lowered and crushed him between the chassis and the tipper bucket.

### South West, Logan and Gold Coast

Two firefighters were among a crew tending to a fire when they both became separated. Both had to be searched for and then removed from the building by their colleagues. One firefighter had nil oxygen remaining in her tank and went into cardiac arrest and could not be revived.

## Retail trade

### Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

A male worker was removing sheets of steel reinforcing from inside a shipping container. The sheets were arranged vertically and the different grades were pre-slung to facilitate removal and grouping into the different categories. The worker was using a forklift that had a tow point at its rear. A sling and chain was attached to the tow point and to a load of the reinforcing steel. The forklift was used to pull each load out after being attached to the nylon sling. It appears that the load was either so heavy (or caught up on something) that it caused the forklift's wheels to lose traction and spin against the concrete surface. To overcome this, the worker reversed back a distance and then travelled forward at speed to shock the load loose. The shock applied by this action caused the nylon sling attached to the load to fail. This in turn energised the chain to be propelled back toward the forklift at high speed, striking the worker in the face causing significant injury. The worker was transported to hospital in a serious condition where he later died.

## 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 roads
- 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

## Transport, postal and warehousing

### North and Central Queensland

A tourist went missing while swimming in a gorge as part of a tour group. The tourist was swimming in a prohibited section of the gorge due to the dangerous conditions. The Queensland Police Service consider the tourist a missing person who is believed to be deceased.

- 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 January and June 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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