

Oregon OSHA, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 430, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

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Contact information:  
Melanie Mesaros, Public Information Officer  
503-580-5689 (cell)  
[melanie.l.mesaros@state.or.us](mailto:melanie.l.mesaros@state.or.us)

## **Workplace deaths continue to decline**

*2010 figure represents all-time low*

(Salem) – Seventeen people covered by Oregon’s workers’ compensation system died on the job during 2010, the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) announced today.

The total represents an all-time low in Oregon and is likely tied, to some degree, to the economic downturn and increased unemployment.

Statistics for the past decade illustrate a continuing and positive trend. In 2009, there were 31 fatalities, which is also among the lowest numbers reported since the state started tracking workplace deaths in 1943. In 2008, 45 people died on the job (eight workers were killed in a firefighting helicopter crash) and in 2007, the fatality total was 35. That compares to an average of 55 workplace deaths per year in the 1990s and 81 in the 1980s.

On-the-job injuries have also been declining in recent decades. The statewide rate of reported workplace injuries and illnesses has decreased more than 50 percent since the late 1980s.

“Employers and workers deserve credit for focusing their efforts on reducing accidents and injuries over the past several years,” said Scott Harra, DCBS acting director. “We must remain committed to minimizing workplace risks, especially as the economy improves and people new to trades or industries enter the workforce.”

Trucking, logging, and manufacturing industries saw the largest concentration of deaths in 2010. There were no construction deaths in 2010 – a significant improvement from 2007 when 12 fatalities occurred.

“While encouraging, the reduction in fatalities doesn’t lessen the pain and loss felt by the family and friends of these individuals,” said Michael Wood, administrator of Oregon OSHA, a division of DCBS. “Each lost worker is a reminder that we not only can, but must do better to eliminate hazards in the workplace.”

Oregon OSHA offers educational workshops, consultation services, training videos, and website information to help Oregon employers create or improve their safety and health programs.

DCBS compiles fatality statistics from records of death claim benefits paid by Oregon workers’ compensation insurers during the calendar year. The data reported may exclude workplace fatalities involving self-employed individuals, city of Portland police and fire employees, federal

employees, and incidents occurring in Oregon to individuals with out-of-state employers. These workers are either not subject to Oregon workers' compensation coverage requirements or are covered by other compensation systems.

Deaths that occur during a prior calendar year may appear in the compensable fatality count for a later year because of the time required to process a claim.

Complete data on all deaths caused by injuries in Oregon workplaces, regardless of whether they are covered by workers' compensation insurance, are computed separately and reported in the annual Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) administered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The 2010 CFOI report is not expected for release until the fall of 2011.

The link to the full DCBS fatality report can be found here:

[http://www.cbs.state.or.us/imd/rasums/ra\\_pdf/wc/fatal/annual\\_rpt\\_10.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/imd/rasums/ra_pdf/wc/fatal/annual_rpt_10.pdf)

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Oregon OSHA, a division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, enforces the state's workplace safety and health rules and works to improve workplace safety and health for all Oregon workers. For more information, go to [www.oroasha.org](http://www.oroasha.org).

The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit [www.dcbs.oregon.gov](http://www.dcbs.oregon.gov). Follow DCBS on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/OregonDCBS>. Receive consumer help and information on insurance, mortgages, investments, workplace safety, and more.