

Forbes Most Dangerous Jobs Report Highlights Need for Improved Safety

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It is always been clear that some occupations are more dangerous than others. However, the increasing number of injuries and death occurring on the job have highlighted the need for improving safety procedures in many careers.

Identifying the Most Dangerous Jobs

Dangerous and hazardous occupations are defined by two major factors: fatality frequency and fatality rates. In the first, fatality frequency is recognized as the number of job-related deaths in a given occupation involving a specific group of workers. Alternatively, fatality rates take into account the different numbers of fatalities occurring in various career fields.

Although fatality frequency and fatality rates are the most commonly used tools to determine the most dangerous occupations, an index of relative risk is another method of expressing hazards faced by some workers. The index of relative risk is a measurement that calculates the potential hazards for a group of workers. Essentially, an index of relative risk compares the hazardous conditions that one group of workers face compared to all workers in general.

Another measurement of [hazardous jobs](#) requires tracking the median days away from work to recuperate from a work-related injury. In many incidences, the worker is forced to take time off away from their work duties because of a work-related injury in an effort to recover to a point that allows them to return to their duties.

Characteristics of Dangerous Occupations

Outdoor jobs tend to be at greater risk to workers and those working in factories or offices. In addition, homicides in the workplace are an increasingly growing problem where the workers at highest risk include those who work long hours, work late at night or those handling money.

Overexertion is also a leading characteristic as are dangerous and hazardous occupations. The overexertion is usually created by characteristics of the job itself such as heavy lifting, including lifting heavy objects or the need to lift patients in a nursing home or hospital setting.

Top 10 Most Dangerous Jobs the United States

In 2013, Forbes released a list of the 10 [deadliest jobs](#) in the United States. At that time, worker deaths totalled between three and 4000 each year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the following jobs were the deadliest.

- Lumberjacks - Logging workers (lumberjacks) are considered the nation's most dangerous job where 127.8



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per 100,000 full-time workers lost their lives in 2012 as a result of on-the-job events. These workers tend to perform tasks including harvesting, cutting and transporting timber. The intermediate and low-paying work involve strenuous labor in a hostile environment.

- Fisherman – Those catching fish at lakes are the second deadliest job nationwide. The fatality rate among fishermen is 117 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers (2012). Most fishing -related professionals are at the highest risk for injury and death, particularly Alaskan shellfishers.
- Airplane Pilots – Piloting aircraft continues to be the third deadliest job in the United States. This is because pilots deal with malfunctioning machinery, falling heavy objects and other serious on-the-job conditions. The death rate among pilots is 53.4 per 100,000 full-time workers (2012).
- Roofers – Working at extremely tall heights and intense summer heat places roofing workers fourth on the list of most dangerous jobs.
- Steelworkers – Structural iron and steel workers working dangerous conditions including at high heights, while welding and lifting heavy materials.
- Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors – These workers tend to suffer serious fatal injuries because they work around hazardous materials and in traffic using heavy equipment.
- Electrical Power-Line Installers/Repairers – Working at very tall heights under hazardous conditions around live electrical power lines makes electrical power line installers and repairers an extremely dangerous job.
- Farmers and Ranchers – Agricultural workers including ranchers and farmers who handle heavy machinery are at great risk for serious on-the-job injuries and fatalities.
- Construction Workers – The dangerous conditions and hazardous environment of a [construction site](#) increases the potential of serious injury or death to all workers on the job site.

The Causes of Death and Injury

The most common causes of death among workers is transportation incidences, where 41 percent of all work-related deaths occur in car accidents and other vehicle incidences. Nearly one out of every five on-the-job deaths involve violent acts or assaults. One out of every six workplace injuries involve slips, falls, and trips. More than nine out of every 10 on-the-job fatalities have been to male workers compared to female workers due to the disproportionality of men working in extremely dangerous occupations.

The high incident rate of fatalities occurring on the job calls for a change in policies and procedures to ensure workers remain as safe as possible when fulfilling their job duties. Many federal agencies including OSHA have taken great steps to ensure on-the-job safety. However, more work needs to be done.

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