



Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation

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To help inform workplace prevention strategies, researchers analyzed suicide deaths among workers by industry and occupation.

Using data from 32 states participating in the 2016 National Violent Death Reporting System, researchers calculated suicide rates among industry and occupational groups by sex. They used U.S. Census codes for major industry and occupational groups, and occupational subgroups, for occupations with 20 or more decedents.

The researchers found that suicide rates were highest among individuals working in five major *industries*: (1) mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; (2) construction; (3) agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; (4) transportation; and (5) other services like automotive repair. Suicide risk was also elevated among those working in six major *occupations*: (1) construction and extraction jobs; (2) installation, maintenance, and repair; (3) arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; (4) transportation and material moving; (5) protective services; and (6) health care support.

Within *occupational subgroups*, the following male workers had the highest suicide rates: (1) fishing and hunting workers; (2) machinists; (3) welding, soldering, and brazing workers; (4) chefs and head cooks; (5) construction managers; (6) farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers; and (7) retail salespeople. Among females, the following were at particularly high suicide risk: (1) artists and related workers; (2) personal care aides; (3) retail salespeople; (4) waitresses; and (5) registered nurses.

Industries and occupations at increased suicide risk would benefit from workplace prevention strategies that promote employee wellness. Programs that encourage help-seeking, train staff to recognize and respond to suicide risk, reduce access to lethal means for those at risk, and create opportunities for employee social connectedness could be especially useful.

Peterson, C., Sussell, A., Li, J., Schumacher, P. K., Yeoman, K., & Stone, D. M. (2020). Suicide rates by industry and occupation – National Violent Death Reporting System, 32 states, 2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(3), 57–62.



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

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