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Explaining the Science of Everyday Life

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The Most Dangerous Jobs in America

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It may be romantic to make a living as a fisherman, logger or aircraft pilot. But according to a [new report](#) that the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued on Thursday, those are the three most dangerous occupations in the United States.

“Fishers and related fishing workers” died from workplace injuries at the rate of 200 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers in 2009, according to the B.L.S., 60 times greater than the rate of 3.3 per 100,000 for the overall American work force. For loggers, the fatality rate was 61.8 per 100,000 and for aircraft pilots and flight engineers, 57.1 per 100,000.

*Data for 2009 are preliminary. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010.

If you want something safe, then think about education, training and library occupations, which with 0.3 deaths per 100,000 had the lowest fatality rate of any occupations. And business and financial operations certainly have their advantages, with a rate of 0.4 fatalities from workplace injuries.

Among the incidents that cause workplace fatalities are highway accidents, homicides, falls and being struck by objects.

*Data for 2009 are preliminary. Data for prior years are revised and final. Note: Data from 2001 exclude fatal work injuries resulting from the September 11 terrorist attacks. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010.

Other dangerous occupations include farming and ranching (38.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers), roofing (34.7), structural iron and steel work— those who put up the steel frames for skyscrapers (30.3) and refuse and recycling (25.2)

Maybe it's because men work in more hazardous jobs or maybe it's because they're daredevils or just plain stupid risk-takers, but the fatality rate from workplace injuries is more than nine times higher for men than for women: 5.5 per 100,000 for men, compared with 0.6 per 100,000 for women. The B.L.S. reported that 4,021 men died from workplace injuries in 2009, compared with 319 women.

Data for 2009 are preliminary. SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2010.

The B.L.S. reported a 17 percent overall decline in workplace fatalities in 2009, compared with 2008. Some of that, the bureau said, was caused by a 6 percent decline in total work hours. But the B.L.S. acknowledged another likely reason for the decline: deficit-plagued state agencies had been delayed in collecting information on and reporting deaths resulting from workplace injuries.