

# Oil and Gas Industry Deaths Oklahoma, 1998-2008

May 2011

## Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

From 1998 to 2008, 129 people were killed in oil and gas-related incidents in Oklahoma (11% of all work-related deaths in Oklahoma during this time). The most common types of fatal oil and gas-related injuries were motor vehicle crashes (36%) and being struck or crushed by an object (26%). One-fifth of deaths were machine-related. Almost all (99%) fatal injuries involved male workers; ages ranged from 19 to 81 with a median age of 37. Fatal injuries were most common July through September. The largest number of fatal injuries occurred in Texas and Roger Mills Counties. Sixteen percent of workers were not Oklahoma residents.

- A young adult male worker was killed when he was struck by the Kelly bushing and drill pipe slips blown out by compressed air used during cleanout of the conductor hole.

- An adult male floor hand was working the tongs on a well servicing unit replacing tubing back in a hole. A setting plate fell from the top of the elevators and struck him in the head. The worker remained in a vegetative state in a nursing home until his death.

- An adult male worker was killed when the rig's guyline anchors came loose, causing it to collapse. The worker, secured to the derrick with a safety harness, fell with the rig and was crushed by falling drill pipe.

- An adult male worker was killed while adjusting counterweights on a pumping unit. The worker made his adjustments, started the unit, and stepped close to the unit while it was running. He had his back to the counterweights and was struck in the head and back by one of them.

- An older adult male production foreman was driving a pickup back and forth on a country road to work on a well and check a meter. He crossed a set of train tracks (marked only with a railroad crossing sign) several times before being hit by a train on the passenger side of his truck. He was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected through the back passenger window, hit by the train, and thrown against the front of the truck.



**Contact Information:**  
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**Department of Health**  
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**Service**  
**1000 NE 10th Street**  
**Oklahoma City, OK**  
**73117**  
**405-271-3430 or**  
**1-800-522-0204**

## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop, implement, and enforce comprehensive safety programs.
- Conduct a pre-job inspection to identify, then eliminate or correct hazards.
- Follow proper lockout/tagout procedures when hazards are identified.
- Ensure that personal protective equipment is worn, including fall protection and respiratory protection where appropriate.
- Double check any rigging or cables to ensure that they are secure and in proper working order.
- Ensure that all equipment is properly maintained, inspected prior to use, and suitably conditioned for the work to be performed.
- Be aware of areas where hazardous energy is released; stand clear of valves and fittings when removing or bleeding off pressure.
- Provide well-lighted work environments.
- Plan for emergencies and identify escape routes.
- Always wear a seat belt when driving.
- Obey posted road signs including speed limits.
- Drive an appropriate speed for road conditions – this may be less than the posted speed limit.
- Secure tools and equipment before traveling to prevent movement of materials.

**The Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program collects statewide information on 19 occupational health conditions in order to develop and inform occupational injury and illness prevention programs.**

**For detailed reports, please go to the Occupational Injuries section at:**  
**<http://ips.health.ok.gov>**