

Accidents at work - statistics by economic activity

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in November 2020.

Planned update: November 2021.

This article presents a set of main statistical findings in relation to indicators concerning **non-fatal** and **fatal accidents at work** in the **European Union (EU)** ; the statistics presented have been collected within the framework of the **European statistics on accidents at work (ESAW)** administrative data collection exercise. This article analyses these statistics according to the type of activity in which accidents occur, focusing on selected activities, which are: agriculture, forestry and fishing (**NACE** Section A); mining and quarrying (NACE Section B); manufacturing (NACE Section C); construction (NACE Section F); wholesale and retail trade (NACE Section G); transportation and storage (NACE Section H); accommodation and food service activities (NACE Section I); administrative and support service activities (NACE Section N); public administration and defence (NACE Section O); and human health and social work activities (NACE Section Q).

Developments over time

Non-fatal accidents

In 2018, there were 3.1 million non-fatal accidents that resulted in at least four calendar days of absence from work in the **EU-27** (see Table 1). The total number of non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 rose between 2012 and 2018, up some 187 thousand (equivalent to an overall increase of 6.4 %). A closer examination reveals that the number of non-fatal accidents rose in a step-like manner, with the largest gains recorded in 2014 and 2016, while there was little change for the other years. These increases may to some extent reflect methodological changes in some of the EU Member States. For more information, please refer to the '**Data sources**' section of the main article on accidents at work. There was a slight decrease in the incidence rate (the number of non-fatal accidents at work for every 100 000 persons employed) between 2012 and 2018 (down 0.8 %), reflecting growth in the number of persons employed.

In absolute terms, non-fatal accidents in the EU-27 were most common in manufacturing, where 597 thousand people had non-fatal accidents in 2018, 19.1 % of the total. Wholesale and retail trade (12.1 %), construction (11.6 %), and human health and social work activities (10.8 %) were the only other activities to account for more than one tenth of all non-fatal accidents at work.

However, given that the workforces of the activities are different in size, the incidence rate gives a clearer impression of where workers are more likely to encounter non-fatal accidents. In 2018, the highest incidence of non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 was observed in construction, with 3 319 such accidents per 100 000 persons employed. Transportation and storage (2 759 per 100 000) and administrative and support service activities (2 570 per 100 000) were the only other NACE sections with incidence rates above 2 000 per 100 000 persons employed (although agriculture, forestry and fishing (1 964 per 100 000) was only slightly lower). Among the activities shown in Table 1, the lowest incidence rate was for wholesale and retail trade (1 431 per 100 000 persons employed).

Incidence rates for non-fatal accidents at work were generally somewhat lower in 2018 than in 2012; this situation was observed for 6 out of the 10 NACE sections for which data are shown in Table 1. However,

there were considerable increases in incidence rates for non-fatal accidents in the EU-27 for agriculture, forestry and fishing (up overall by 20.7 %) and public administration and defence (up 42.6 %). Note that the changes observed for the EU-27 in some activities may be linked to changes in coverage of specific activities for some EU Member States, for example because of the end of derogations or voluntary data collection.

Non-fatal accidents at work by economic activity, EU-27, 2012-2018

NACE (Section)	(thousands)								(incidence rate)							
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Total (all activities)	2 937.7	2 936.7	3 031.6	3 030.1	3 112.7	3 116.7	3 124.8	1 673.3	1 654.2	1 706.5	1 668.0	1 718.3	1 703.8	1 659.1		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	143.9	151.5	169.7	162.9	161.8	148.3	144.0	1 627.2	1 629.0	1 870.8	1 856.7	1 914.9	2 100.4	1 963.8		
Mining and quarrying (B)	12.0	11.4	10.0	9.2	9.0	9.5	8.4	1 946.6	1 878.5	1 743.3	1 456.1	1 717.5	1 628.0	1 507.6		
Manufacturing (C)	637.5	613.0	591.7	591.9	600.9	592.0	596.5	2 147.2	2 077.5	2 008.8	1 939.4	2 001.1	1 906.6	1 890.5		
Construction (F)	395.7	354.0	351.7	347.3	347.5	352.6	362.6	3 456.8	3 208.8	3 281.1	3 201.4	3 247.3	3 279.5	3 319.2		
Wholesale and retail trade (G)	387.8	392.3	377.7	380.3	386.5	384.1	377.2	1 482.8	1 508.9	1 465.1	1 488.9	1 488.6	1 495.7	1 430.6		
Transportation and storage (H)	251.2	254.8	241.7	245.4	242.7	272.7	280.2	2 748.7	2 767.7	2 613.2	2 567.8	2 542.9	2 765.5	2 759.2		
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	146.4	149.8	144.4	150.6	158.8	159.5	163.2	1 888.0	1 910.7	1 785.9	1 813.8	1 862.6	1 789.1	1 762.5		
Administrative and support service activities (N)	238.1	237.3	231.7	237.8	256.1	279.9	289.7	2 600.8	2 606.5	2 388.2	2 552.9	2 420.0	2 621.0	2 569.8		
Public administration and defence (O) (*)	112.6	155.9	222.3	217.2	211.8	186.5	194.6	1 015.2	1 333.5	1 774.8	1 720.8	1 687.0	1 434.1	1 447.5		
Human health and social work activities (Q)	263.7	279.7	326.8	329.3	339.0	336.2	338.7	1 462.3	1 493.1	1 753.9	1 654.8	1 752.6	1 694.7	1 663.7		

Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents).

(*) 2017: low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_01)

eurostat 

Table 1: Non-fatal accidents at work by economic activity, EU-27, 2012-2018 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_01)

Fatal accidents

In 2018, there were 3 332 fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 (see Table 2), resulting in a ratio of approximately 940 non-fatal accidents for every fatal accident.

There was a decrease in the total number of fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 between 2012 and 2018, some 425 fewer (equivalent to an overall reduction of 11.3 %). During this period the number of fatal accidents initially decreased from 3 757 to 3 408 between 2012 and 2013 (down by 9.3 %) before increasing to a relative high in 2015, falling for two consecutive years, and then increasing by a modest amount in the latest year for which data are available (up 1.8 % in 2018). The decrease in the incidence rate (the number of fatal accidents at work for every 100 000 persons employed) between 2012 and 2018 (down by 17.3 %) was somewhat greater than the decrease for the number of fatal accidents, reflecting growth in the number of persons employed. As such, during the period 2012-2018, there was a larger reduction in the number of and incidence of fatal accidents at work in the EU-27, when compared with developments for non-fatal accidents.

In absolute terms, fatal accidents were most common in construction, 682 people in the EU-27 had a fatal accident in 2018, 20.5 % of the total. Transportation and storage (16.7 %), manufacturing (15.2 %) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (13.2 %) also accounted for more than one tenth of all fatal accidents at work. In 2018, the highest incidence of fatal accidents at work was observed in mining and quarrying, with 52 fatal accidents resulting in a rate of 9.5 per 100 000 persons employed. Construction (6.3 per 100 000 persons employed), agriculture, forestry and fishing (6.0 per 100 000), and transportation and storage (5.5 per 100 000) were the only other NACE sections with incidence rates above 2.0 per 100 000 persons employed. Among the activities shown in Table 2, the lowest incidence rate was for human health and social work activities. While incidence rates for fatal accidents at work — as for non-fatal accidents — were generally lower in 2018 than in 2012 for most activities, relatively small increases were observed for accommodation and food service activities (13.7 %) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (9.7 %). Note again that these increases may be linked to the end of some derogations. The largest falls in the incidence of fatal accidents were observed for manufacturing (24.5 % lower in 2018 than in 2012), wholesale and retail trade (down 24.4 %) and mining and quarrying (down 23.0 %).

Fatal accidents at work, by economic activity, EU-27, 2012-2018

NACE (Section)	(number)							(incidence rate)						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total (all activities)	3 757	3 408	3 562	3 643	3 336	3 272	3 332	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	485	442	507	477	482	408	441	5.5	4.8	5.6	5.4	5.7	5.8	6.0
Mining and quarrying (B)	76	69	70	70	64	43	52	12.3	11.4	12.2	11.1	12.3	7.3	9.5
Manufacturing (C)	631	563	558	632	525	472	505	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.6
Construction (F)	826	733	740	767	672	679	682	7.2	6.6	6.9	7.1	6.3	6.3	6.3
Wholesale and retail trade (G)	332	314	306	300	282	283	252	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0
Transportation and storage (H)	556	486	570	585	562	558	557	6.1	5.3	6.2	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.5
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	40	55	70	68	56	77	53	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.6
Administrative and support service activities (N)	204	206	192	192	175	205	225	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.0
Public administration and defence (O)	72	104	93	110	125	83	80	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.6
Human health and social work activities (Q)	69	50	61	63	56	61	71	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_02)

eurostat 

Table 2: Fatal accidents at work by economic activity, EU-27, 2012-2018 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_02)

Analysis of non-fatal accidents by sex and age

Accidents at work were more likely to involve men than women. In 2018, just over two out of every three (68.4 %, excluding cases where the sex of the victim experiencing the accident was not reported) non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 involved men, a ratio of 2.2 non-fatal accidents involving men for every one involving a woman. To some extent this reflects the fact that more men than women work and so the difference in the incidence rates is slightly smaller, a ratio of 1.9:1. Another factor that influences gender differences is the different types of work that men and women carry out and the activities in which they work. For example, as already noted, incidence rates were highest in construction as well as transportation and storage activities, which tend to be male-dominated, as are agriculture, forestry and fishing as well as manufacturing, both of which have above-average incidences of non-fatal accidents. Furthermore, it is also generally the case that men tend to work on a full-time basis, whereas women are more likely to work on a part-time basis; as such, with women spending a shorter period of time (on average) in the workplace this may also reduce their chances of having an accident.

Focusing on the 10 activities presented in Table 3, the four highest incidence rates for non-fatal accidents at work among women in the EU-27 in 2018 were for: transportation and storage; human health and social work activities; accommodation and food service activities; and administrative and support service activities. For men, construction, administrative and support service activities, transportation and storage, and agriculture, forestry and fishing had the four highest rates. The difference in incidence rates for men and women in construction was particularly large, with the rate 5.9 times as high for men as for women, perhaps reflecting differences in the types of occupations of men and women in this activity. In a similar fashion, the incidence rate for men was 3.9 times as high as for women in mining and quarrying, although for both sexes in this activity had relatively low incidence rates of non-fatal accidents. The only activity with a higher incidence rate for non-fatal accidents at work for women than for men was human health and social work activities.

Non-fatal accidents at work by economic activity and sex, EU-27, 2018

NACE (Section)	(thousands)			(incidence rate)		
	Total (both sexes)	Men	Women	Total (both sexes)	Men	Women
Total (all activities)	3 124.8	2 137.9	986.1	1 659	2 131	1 121
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A)	144.0	113.0	30.9	1 964	2 321	1 257
Mining and quarrying (B)	8.4	8.1	0.3	1 508	1 669	426
Manufacturing (C)	596.5	497.8	98.7	1 890	2 256	1 039
Construction (F)	362.6	355.2	7.4	3 319	3 653	618
Wholesale and retail trade (G)	377.2	242.2	134.9	1 431	1 840	1 022
Transportation and storage (H)	280.2	226.0	54.1	2 759	2 924	2 230
Accommodation and food service activities (I)	163.2	81.9	81.3	1 763	1 933	1 618
Administrative and support service activities	289.7	207.1	82.5	2 570	3 378	1 605
Public administration and defence (O)	194.6	115.5	79.1	1 448	1 795	1 129
Human health and social work activities (Q)	338.7	74.0	264.6	1 664	1 636	1 671

Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents). The sum of the numbers of accidents for men and women does not equal the total because of missing information about the sex of the victim for some accidents; consequently in some activities the incidence rates for men and women may both be below the rate for both sexes combined.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_01)

eurostat 

Table 3: Non-fatal accidents at work by economic activity and sex, EU-27, 2018 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_01)

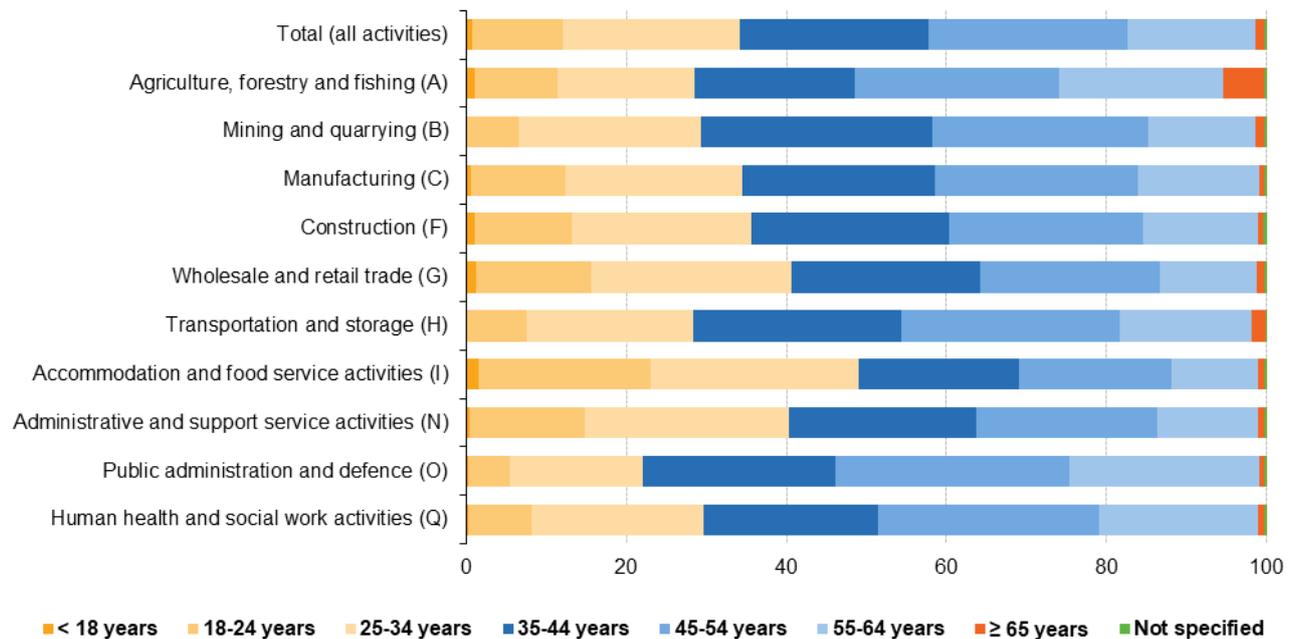
Figure 1 identifies those activities where workers of a particular age range make up a greater or lesser share of those having suffered a non-fatal accident at work. It should be borne in mind that the age profile of the workforce may vary between activities: for example the proportion of older workers in some physically demanding activities (like mining and quarrying, or construction) might be low, resulting in a lower share of accidents among older workers (if all other things are equal); or, in activities requiring relatively high levels of qualifications there may be a smaller proportion of relatively young people resulting in a lower share of accidents among younger workers.

Younger workers (those aged less than 25 years) accounted for 12.1 % of all non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 in 2018, but this share was slightly higher in manufacturing (12.3 %), construction (13.1 %), administrative and support service activities (14.8 %), and wholesale and retail trade (15.6 %), while it was much higher in accommodation and food service activities (23.0 %); some of these are activities that have large shares of younger workers in general.

Older workers (those aged 55 years and over) accounted for 17.1 % of all non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 in 2018. Higher shares of non-fatal accidents among older workers were reported for transportation and storage (18.2 %), human health and social work activities (20.8 %), public administration and defence (24.4 %) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (25.7 %); all of these have an above average share of older workers in their workforces, particularly agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Non-fatal accidents at work by age and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of non-fatal accidents for each activity)



Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_03)

eurostat

Figure 1: Non-fatal accidents at work by age and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of non-fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_03)

Severity of accidents

The data presented in Figure 2 include information for non-fatal and fatal accidents. This analysis identifies the number of calendar days (grouped into several classes) during which the victim was unfit for work, excluding the day of the accident itself, or whether there was a permanent incapacity or death (within one year of the accident) as a result of the accident at work.

In the EU-27, more than four fifths (86.1 %) of accidents at work in 2018 involved the victim being unfit for work for less than three months, while some 9.6 % were for longer periods (or resulted in permanent incapacity) and 0.1 % were fatal; for the remaining 4.1 % of cases the severity (in terms of duration of being unfit for work) was unknown.

Accidents at work resulting in the victim being unfit for work for less than three months made up a relatively large proportion of accidents at work in the EU-27 in 2018 in most service activities shown in Figure 2, most notably for accommodation and food service activities (90.6 %) and for wholesale and retail trade (89.7 %).

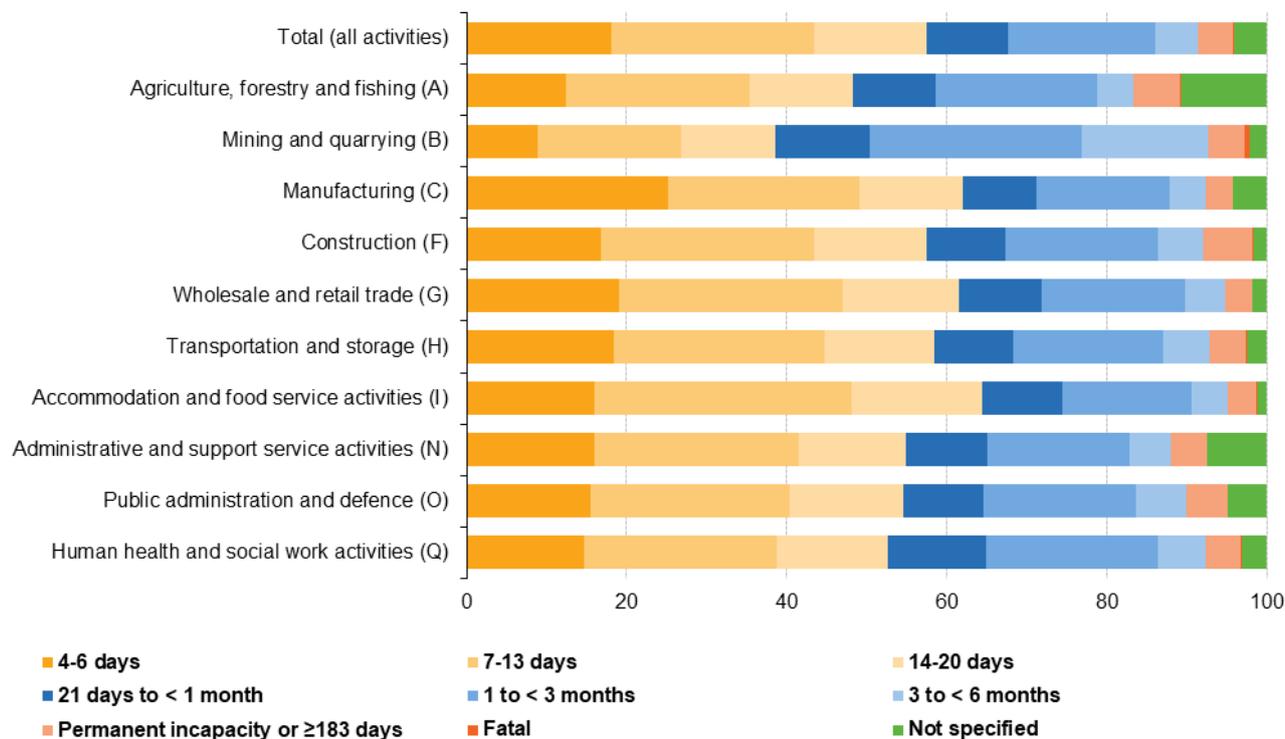
By contrast, the share of workplace accidents in the EU-27 in 2018 that were non-fatal but resulted in the victim being unfit for work for three months or more made up a relatively large share of all workplace accidents for mining and quarrying (20.4 %), more than double the share for all activities (9.6 %). Construction (11.8 %) and public administration and defence (11.6 %) were the activities shown in Figure 2 that reported the next highest shares of their workforces being impacted by longer absences from work as a result of workplace accidents.

Fatal accidents accounted for 0.1 % of all workplace accidents in the EU-27 in 2018, with most of the activities shown in Figure 2 recording values within the range of 0.0-0.2 %. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (0.3 %) and mining and quarrying (0.6 %) were the only activities with higher shares.

It should be noted that the share of accidents at work with unknown severity also varied greatly between activities across the EU-27 in 2018, from just 1.2 % for accommodation and food service activities to 10.6 % for agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Accidents at work by severity and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of accidents for each activity)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_04)

eurostat

Figure 2: Accidents at work by severity and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_04)

Analysis by enterprise size class

Earlier in this article the underlying age structure of the workforce was cited as a factor in the distribution of accidents by age group, and a similar situation occurs for the analysis by enterprise size class presented in Figures 3 and 4: each economic activity is made up of micro, small, medium-sized or large enterprises to a greater or lesser extent. For example: agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, and accommodation and food service activities all have very many smaller enterprises; wholesale and retail trade as well as transport and storage also have many smaller enterprises, although they also have (relatively) few very large enterprises. Another issue to be considered is that the likelihood of reporting an accident, particularly a non-fatal one, may also be influenced by enterprise size.

Non-fatal accidents

Concerning the share of non-fatal accidents within the smallest enterprises — those with no employees (just self-employed and unpaid family workers) — one activity stands out: in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 12.7 % of all non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 in 2018 were in this size class. This can be contrasted with an average of 1.2 % across all activities — see Figure 3. The particularly high share in this smallest enterprise size class within agriculture, forestry and fishing influenced the average for all activities such that it was the only activity to record an above average share, as the next highest share for enterprises with no employees was 0.7 % for construction.

Four activities recorded relatively high shares of non-fatal accidents at work in 2018 among the broader category of micro enterprises (with 0 or 1-9 employees) in the EU-27, namely wholesale and retail trade (20.0 %), accommodation and food service activities (28.8 %), agriculture, forestry and fishing (31.0 %) and construction (34.2 %); these shares were above the average of 15.8 % for all activities. Small enterprises (with 10-49 employees) had a particularly high share of non-fatal accidents at work in construction (38.5 %) and accommodation and

food service activities (36.5 %), compared with an average of 24.0 % for all activities. The largest shares of non-fatal accidents at work within medium-sized enterprises (with 50-249 employees) were observed for manufacturing (32.2 %) and administrative and support service activities (30.5 %); the average for all activities was 23.9 %. Large enterprises have 250 or more employees (they are shown for two different categories in Figure 3 — enterprises with 250-499 employees and those with 500 or more employees). In public administration and defence, some 47.8 % of non-fatal accidents at work were in large enterprises, while in mining and quarrying and human health and social work activities the shares were 42.2 % and 39.6 %; all three of these values were considerably higher than the 27.5 % average for all activities.

Non-fatal accidents at work by size of enterprise and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of non-fatal accidents for each activity)

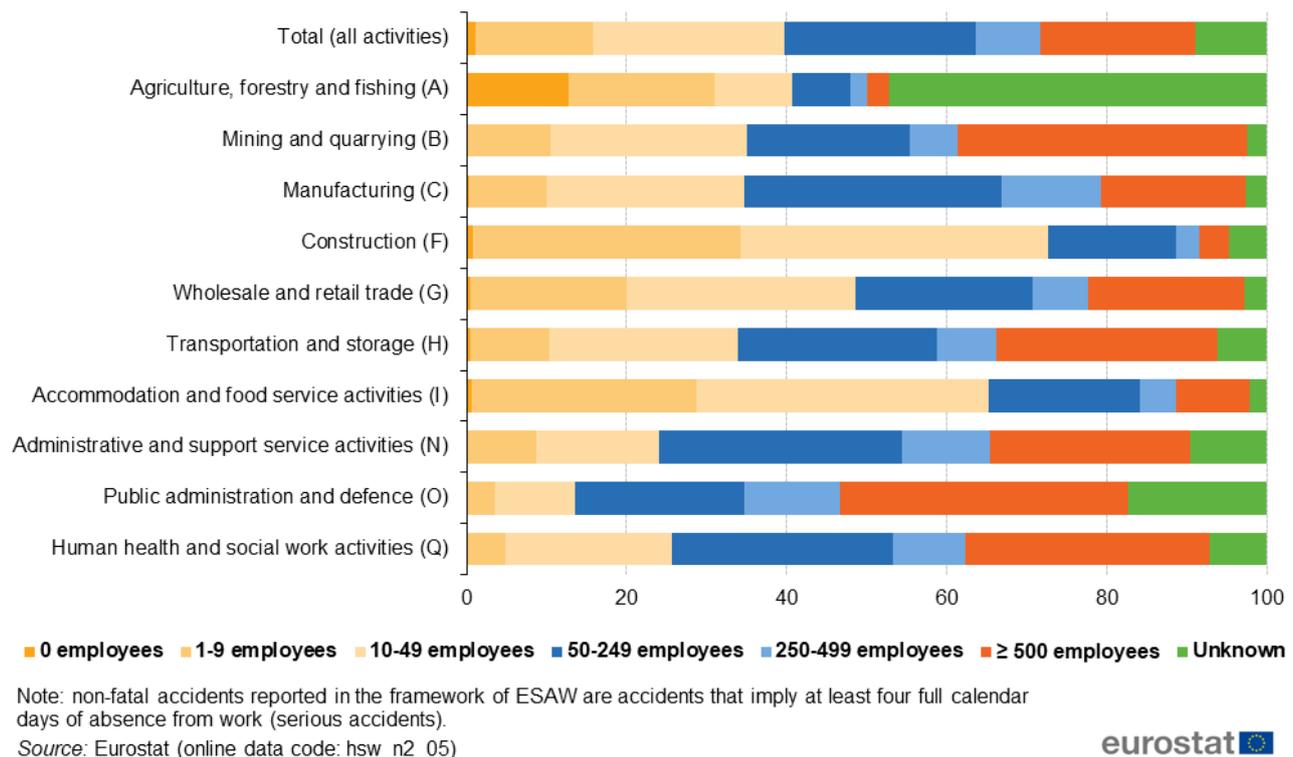


Figure 3: Non-fatal accidents at work by size of enterprise and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of non-fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_05)

Fatal accidents

Concerning fatal accidents at work, a similar pattern was observed for the EU-27 in 2018 as for non-fatal accidents, with only a few notable differences. For example, as for non-fatal accidents, by far the highest share of fatal accidents among enterprises with no employees was recorded for agriculture, forestry and fishing (where 20.0 % of all fatal accidents took place in enterprises with no employees). Most of the activities that reported high shares for small enterprises for non-fatal accidents at work also reported high shares for fatal accidents, although for transportation and storage the share of non-fatal accidents among small enterprises (23.6 %) was below the average for all enterprises, whereas for fatal accidents it was above the average for all activities. For medium-sized enterprises, the same four activities that reported high shares of non-fatal accidents also reported relatively high shares for fatal accidents (above the average for all activities), namely administrative and support service activities (29.8 %), human health and social work activities (28.2 %), manufacturing (26.5 %) and transportation and storage (23.2 %); they were joined by public administration and defence (30.0 %). For large enterprises, the same three activities — mining and quarrying (40.4 %), human health and social work activities (33.8 %), and public administration and defence (30.0 %) recorded the highest shares of fatal accidents, as was the case for non-fatal accidents (although their order changed).

Fatal accidents at work by size of enterprise and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of fatal accidents for each activity)

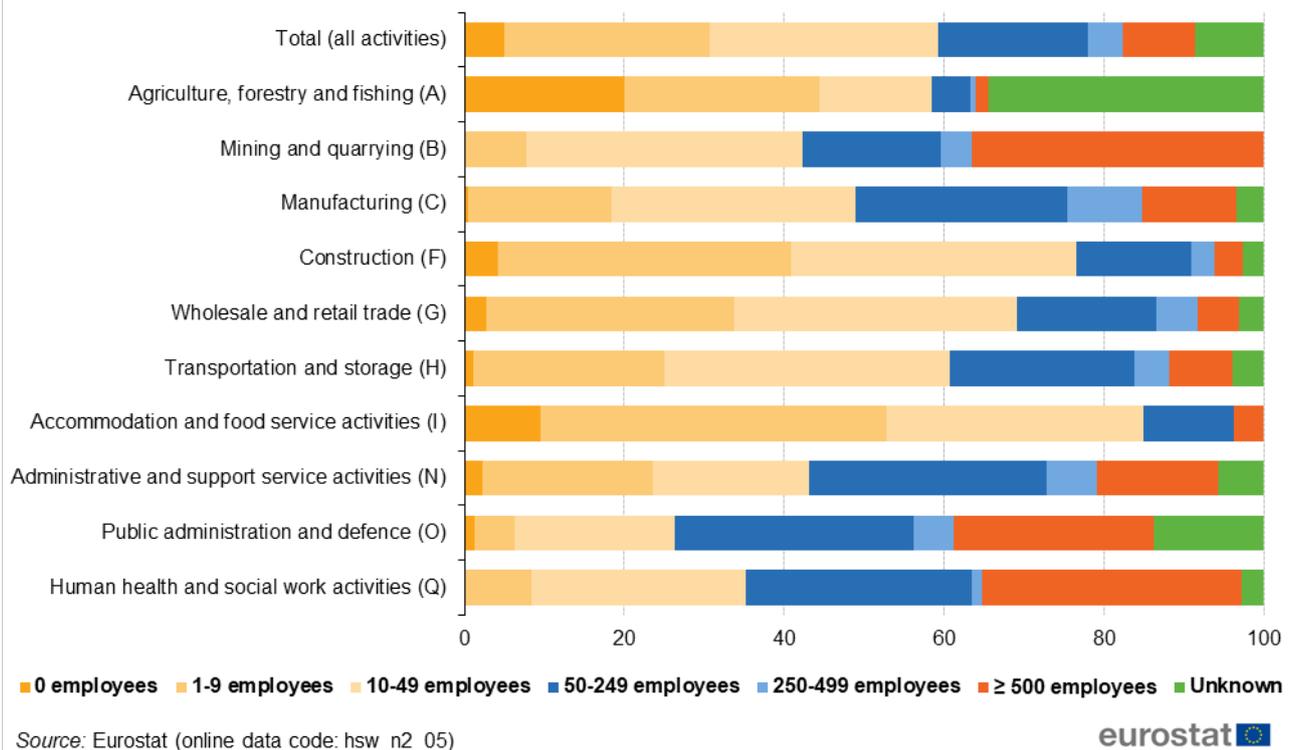


Figure 4: Fatal accidents at work by size of enterprise and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_05)

Analysis by injured body part

Figures 5 and 6 present an analysis of the type of body part injured in non-fatal and fatal accidents.

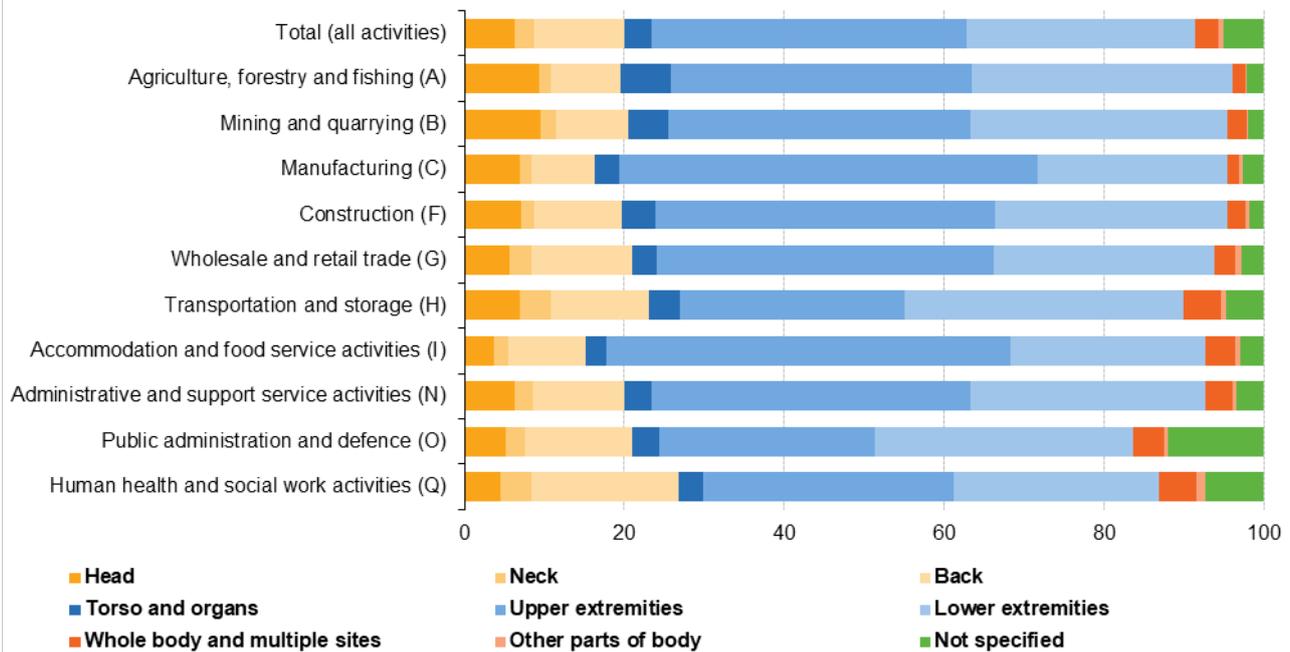
Non-fatal accidents

For all activities combined, the most common body parts injured in non-fatal workplace accidents in the EU-27 in 2018 were the upper (shoulders, arms and hands) and lower extremities (hips, legs and feet), with 39.3 % and 28.7 % shares of the total number of non-fatal accidents at work respectively. The only other type of body part with a share that was more than one tenth of the total was the back, accounting for 11.3 % of all injuries.

In 2018, non-fatal accidents at work that resulted in injuries of the upper extremities were particularly common in the EU-27 within manufacturing (52.4 % of all accidents) and the accommodation and food service activities (50.4 %), but were less common within transportation and storage (28.1 %) and public administration and defence (27.0 %). For injuries of the lower extremities, there was less variation by activity, with shares ranging from 23.7 % for manufacturing to 34.8 % for transportation and storage. Back injuries were relatively more common within human health and social work activities (18.5 %) as well as several other tertiary (service) activities and less common within primary and secondary activities: back injuries occurred in 8.6 % of non-fatal accidents within agriculture, forestry and fishing and 7.9 % of non-fatal accidents within manufacturing. Some of the body parts that were, on average, less frequently injured in non-fatal accidents recorded relatively high shares of injuries within one or a few activities. For example, head injuries made up 9.5 % of all injuries from non-fatal accidents at work in mining and quarrying and 9.4 % in agriculture, forestry and fishing, compared with 6.3 % on average. Neck injuries were generally more common among service activities, peaking at 3.9 % for transportation and storage activities. Injuries to the torso and organs were relatively common in agriculture, forestry and fishing (6.4 %) compared with an average for all activities of 3.5 %.

Non-fatal accidents at work by part of body injured and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of non-fatal accidents for each activity)



Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_06)

eurostat

Figure 5: Non-fatal accidents at work, by part of body injured and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of non-fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_06)

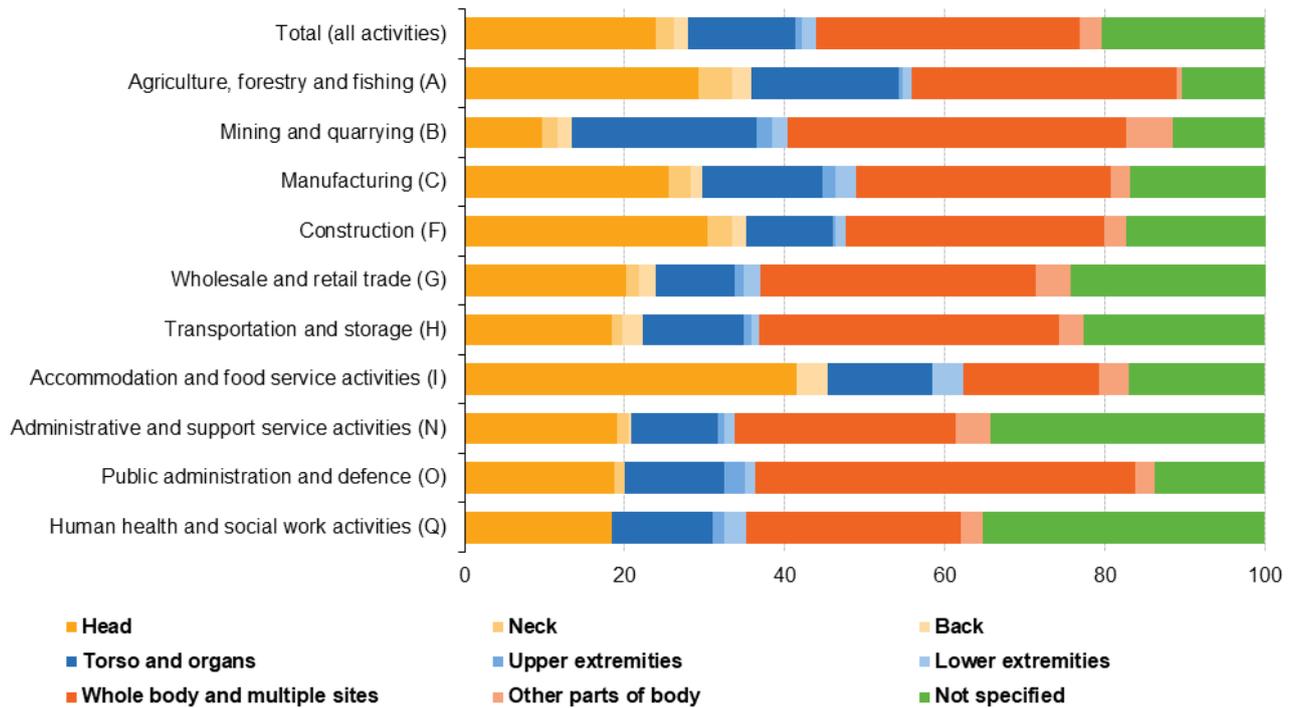
Fatal accidents

Turning to fatal accidents at work, the distribution by the body part that was injured is very different. For all activities combined, around one third of fatal accidents in the EU-27 in 2018 related to injuries of the whole body or multiple sites (32.9 %), while nearly one quarter (23.9 %) were head injuries and 13.4 % were injuries to the torso and organs.

Figure 6, shows that the most common injuries in fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 in 2018 concerned the whole body and multiple sites; this pattern was reproduced in 9 out of the 10 activities shown (when excluding the residual category of 'not specified'). Accommodation and food service activities were the only exception, as their highest share of fatal accidents was linked to head injuries. Head injuries were generally the second most common injuries in fatal accidents at work, while injuries to the torso and organs completed the list of the three most common types of fatal injuries. Mining and quarrying and accommodation and food service activities (already mentioned above) were the only exceptions to this general pattern. For mining and quarrying, a higher proportion of fatal accidents at work could be linked to injuries of the torso and organs (23.1 %) than to head injuries (9.6 %). Looking at the less common body parts injured in fatal accidents at work, activities with relatively high shares included: agriculture, forestry and fishing for neck injuries; accommodation and food service activities for back injuries and injuries of the lower extremities; public administration and defence for injuries of the upper extremities.

Fatal accidents at work by part of body injured and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of fatal accidents for each activity)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_06)

eurostat

Figure 6: Fatal accidents at work by part of body injured and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_06)

Analysis by type of injury

Figures 7 and 8 contain analyses of data according to the type of injury sustained when people were involved in accidents.

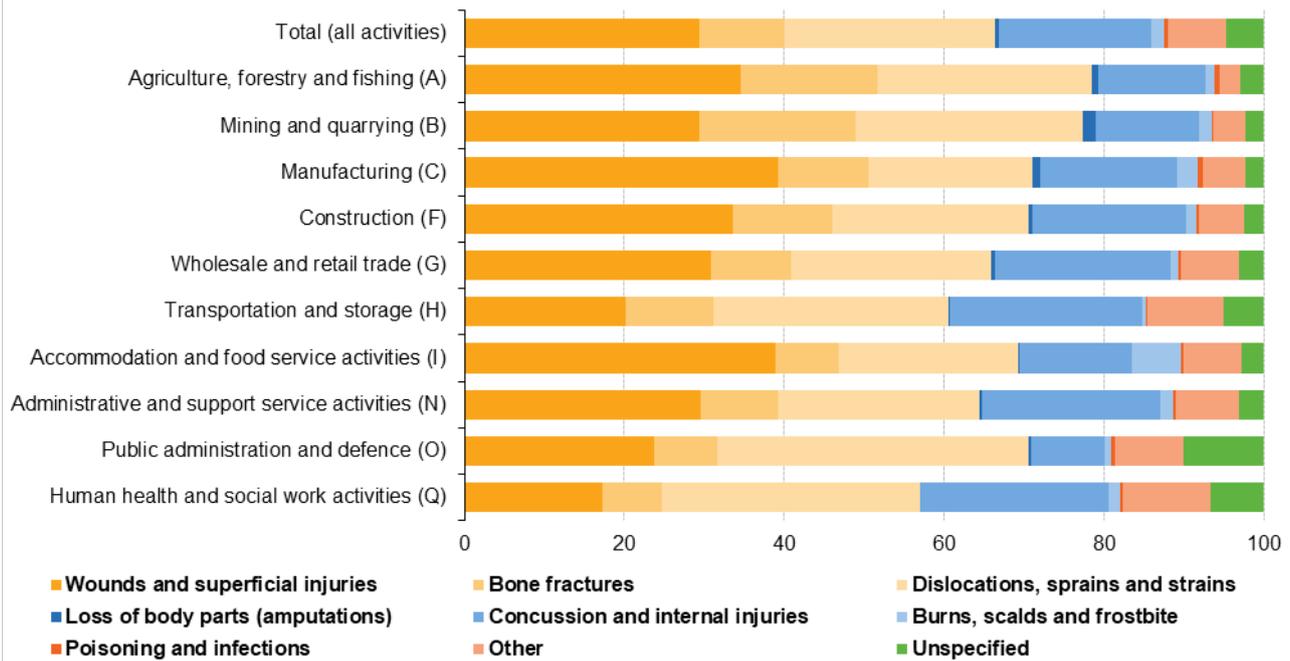
Non-fatal accidents

In 2018, there were two types of particularly common injuries in the EU-27 resulting from non-fatal accidents, namely, wounds and superficial injuries (29.3 % of the total) and dislocations, sprains and strains (26.4 %). The next most common types of injuries were concussion and internal injuries (19.1 %) and bone fractures (10.7 %); none of the other types of injury accounted for a double-digit share of the total number of non-fatal workplace accidents in the EU-27.

The most common type of injury from non-fatal accidents at work in the EU-27 — wounds and superficial injuries — had the highest share of non-fatal accidents across 7 of the 10 activities shown in Figure 7. The three exceptions were: transportation and storage; public administration and defence; and human health and social work activities. For all three of these, dislocations, sprains and strains accounted for a higher share of non-fatal accidents. Looking at the less common types of injuries resulting from non-fatal workplace accidents, some were quite common in particular activities. Bone fractures were relatively common in mining and quarrying (19.5 %) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (17.0 %) compared with the average for all activities (10.7 %). The loss of body parts (amputations) were also relatively common in mining and quarrying (1.7 %), as well as manufacturing (0.9 %) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (0.7 %) compared with the overall average (0.4 %). Burns, scalds and frostbite were 3.6 times as common in accommodation and food service activities (6.1 %) as the average for all activities (1.7 %), while poisoning and infections were relatively common in agriculture, forestry and fishing and in manufacturing (both 0.6 %) compared with the average for all activities (0.4 %).

Non-fatal accidents at work by type of injury and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of non-fatal accidents for each activity)



Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_07)

eurostat

Figure 7: Non-fatal accidents at work by type of injury and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of non-fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_07)

Fatal accidents

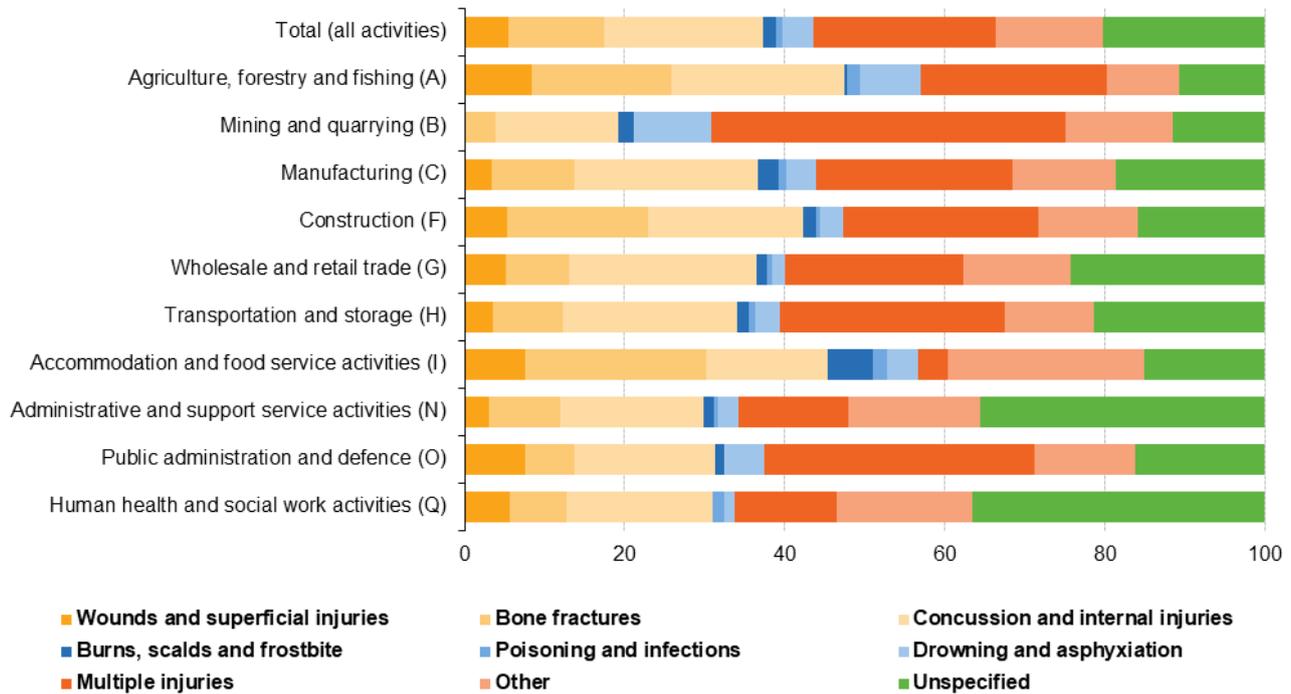
There were also two types of particularly common injuries for fatal accidents in the EU-27 in 2018, but these were different from those observed for non-fatal accidents. Multiple injuries accounted for almost one quarter (22.9 %) of all fatal accidents, while concussion and internal injuries accounted for one fifth (20.0 %) of the total. The next most common type of injury for fatal accidents was bone fractures (11.9 %).

In the EU-27, multiple injuries were the most common type of injuries in 2018 for 6 of the 10 activities shown in Figure 8, with concussion and internal injuries the most common injuries for wholesale and retail trade, administrative and support service activities, and human health and social work activities, while bone fractures were the most common for accommodation and food service activities (excluding the residual categories of 'other' and 'unspecified'). Aside from accommodation and food service activities, multiple injuries as well as concussion and internal injuries were the two most common types of injuries for fatal accidents in the nine remaining activities shown.

Like for accommodation and food service activities (22.6 %), bone fractures were a relatively common type of injury among fatal accidents in the EU-27 for construction (17.6 % of its fatal accidents) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (17.5 %). Looking at the less common types of injuries resulting from fatal workplace accidents, some were quite common in specific activities. Wounds and superficial injuries were relatively common within agriculture, forestry and fishing (8.4 % of its fatal accidents) and in accommodation and food service activities and public administration and defence (both 7.5 %), compared with the average for all activities (5.4 %). Accidents involving drowning and asphyxiation were more than twice as common for mining and quarrying (9.6 % of its fatal accidents) as the overall average (3.8 %), while burns, scalds and frostbite were more than three times and poisoning and infections were more than two times as common in accommodation and food service activities (5.7 % and 1.9 % of its fatal accidents) than they were across all activities (1.6 % and 0.8 %).

Fatal accidents at work by type of injury and economic activity, EU-27, 2018

(% of fatal accidents for each activity)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_07)

eurostat

Figure 8: Fatal accidents at work by type of injury and economic activity, EU-27, 2018 (% of fatal accidents for each activity) Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_07)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Accidents at work by activity: tables and figures](#)

Data sources

In December 2008, the [European Parliament](#) and the [Council](#) adopted [Regulation \(EC\) No 1338/2008](#) on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work. The Regulation is designed to ensure that health statistics provide adequate information for all EU Member States to monitor Community actions in the field of public health and health and safety at work. In April 2011, a [European Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 349/2011](#) on statistics on accidents at work was adopted specifying in detail the variables, breakdowns and metadata that Member States are required to deliver; this legislation is being implemented in a number of phases. Note also that a [Commission Decision No 2011/231/EU](#) from April 2011 granted derogations to certain Member States with respect to the transmission of statistics on accidents at work.

European statistics on accidents at work (ESAW) is the main data source for EU statistics relating to health and safety at work issues. ESAW includes data on occupational accidents that result in at least four calendar days of absence from work, including fatal accidents. The phrase 'during the course of work' means while engaged in an occupational activity or during the time spent at work. This generally includes cases of road traffic accidents in the course of work but excludes accidents during the journey between home and the workplace.

An accident at work is defined in ESAW methodology as a discrete occurrence during the course of work which leads to physical or mental harm. Fatal accidents at work are those that lead to the death of the victim within one year of the accident taking place. Non-fatal accidents at work are defined as those that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (they are sometimes also called 'serious accidents at work'). Non-fatal accidents at work often involve considerable harm for the workers concerned and their families and they have the potential to force people, for example, to live with a permanent disability, to leave the labour market, or to change job. Indeed, they may result in a considerable number of working days being lost within the EU's economy.

The statistics presented for accidents at work refer to declarations made to either public (social security administrations) or private insurance schemes, or to other relevant national authorities (for example, those controlling labour or workplace inspections). Indicators on accidents at work may be presented as absolute values, as percentage distributions, as incidence rates in relation to every 100 000 persons employed (the denominator being provided by the authorities in the EU Member States that are responsible for ESAW data collection or by the EU's [labour force survey \(LFS\)](#)) or as standardised incidence rates.

For more information on ESAW data please refer to the main article on [accidents at work](#) .

Context

A safe, healthy working environment is a crucial factor in an individual's quality of life and is also a collective interest. EU Member State governments recognise the social and economic benefits of better health and safety at work. Reliable, comparable, up-to-date statistical information is vital for setting policy objectives and adopting suitable policy measures and preventing actions.

For more information on health and safety at work policy, please refer to the main article on [accidents at work](#) .

Other articles

- [Accidents and injuries statistics](#)
- [Accidents at work statistics](#)
- [Accidents at work — statistics on causes and circumstances](#)
- [Health in the European Union — facts and figures](#) — online publication
- [Health statistics introduced](#)

Database

- [Health](#) , see:

Health and safety at work (hsw)

Accidents at work (ESAW, 2008 onwards) (hsw_acc_work)

Details by NACE Rev. 2 activity (2008 onwards) (hsw_n2)

Non-fatal accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity and sex (hsw_n2_01)

Fatal Accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity (hsw_n2_02)

Non-fatal accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity and age (hsw_n2_03)

Accidents at work by days lost and NACE Rev. 2 activity (hsw_n2_04)

Accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity and size of enterprise (hsw_n2_05)

Accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity and part of body injured (hsw_n2_06)

Accidents at work by NACE Rev. 2 activity and type of injury (hsw_n2_07)

Dedicated section

- [Health](#)

Methodology

ESMS metadata files

- [Accidents at work \(ESAW, 2008 onwards\)](#) (ESMS metadata file — hsw_acc_work_esms)
- [Accidents at work and other work-related health problems \(source LFS\)](#) (ESMS metadata file — hsw_apex_esms)

Publication

- [European statistics on accidents at work \(ESAW\) — Summary methodology — 2013 edition](#)

External links

- [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work](#)
- [European Commission — Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion — Health and safety at work](#)
- [European Commission — Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion — Health and safety at work — EU strategic framework \(2021-2027\)](#)
- [European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions \(EUROFOUND\) — Health and well-being at work](#)
- [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) — Safety and health at work](#)