

An **accident at work** in the framework of the administrative data collection on European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW) is a discrete occurrence during the course of work which leads to physical or mental harm. The phrase 'in the course of work' means whilst engaged in an occupational activity or during the time spent at work. This includes cases of road traffic accidents in the course of work but excludes accidents during the journey between home and the workplace.

The definition of accident at work in the module 'Accidents at work and other work-related health problems' of the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) is in principle the same as in ESAW with the exception that accidents with mental harm are excluded because they are difficult to distinguish from relevant 'work-related health problems'.

The following types of accidents are covered or not, respectively, by the above definition.

- Cases included:
  - Cases of acute poisoning;
    - Wilful acts of other persons;
    - Accidents that occurred *on the premises of an employer other than that which employs the victim* ; this might include accidents during attendance at meetings or in the course of providing services on the premises of another employer visited for that purpose, during the course of the victim's work;
    - Accidents that occur during meetings or other visits to locations outside the premises of the employer in which the employee is normally based; accidents during regular breaks, including lunch, in places organised by the employer; accidents during the delivery of goods to customers' premises (company, public administration or private individual) or while carrying out other services such as repairs, maintenance, errands, etc. on clients' premises; more permanent secondments to another employer, or during activities at home which are in the course of work; accidents caused by other work activities not related to the victim's work activities, etc;
    - accidents in public places or public means of transport during a journey in the course of work;
    - Road traffic accidents in the course of work (public roads, car parks or private roads within the premises of the enterprise). Road accidents may involve persons whose occupational activity is exerted mainly on public roads, e.g., lorry or coach drivers, as well as occupational activities which frequently or occasionally imply journeys on public roads. Such occupational activities include, e.g., repairs, commercial activities or other service activities carried out on the premises of a customer. This category includes car accidents involving employees who occasionally drive from their office to an external meeting in the course of their work, or to places where the employer organised activities during regular breaks, including lunch;
    - Accidents on board any means of transport used in the course of work (underground railway, tram, train, boat, aircraft, etc.);
    - Other accidents (slips, falls, assaults, etc.) in a public place (pavement, staircases, etc.) or in the arrival and departure areas (station, port, airport, etc.) for any mean of transport during a journey in the course of work.
- Cases excluded:

- **Commuting accidents:** accidents that occur during the normal journey to or from home and place of work, i.e. road accidents that occur during the journey between the worker's principal or secondary residence and the workplace, or while picking up children from school; accidents between home and a location attended for work-related training or between the workplace and a restaurant at which an employee habitually has lunch are excluded unless the restaurant is on company (5) premises;
- **Deliberate self-inflicted injuries;**
- **Accidents from strictly natural causes:** accidents caused solely by a medical condition, e.g. cardiac or cerebral incidents, or any other sudden-onset medical condition that occurred during work, without any obvious link to the occupational activity of the victim; nevertheless, such cases should be excluded only if other work-related causal elements are ruled out. For example, if a bricklayer felt faint (medical cause) and fell from scaffolding (work-related causal element), the accidental injury must be included in the ESAW methodology. Though the fall might not have occurred had he not felt faint, the injury he incurred was aggravated by the fact that he fell from scaffolding high above ground level in the course of his normal work;
- **Accidents, purely private:** accidents in which the victims are not at their workplace, carrying out activities which are not work-related, for example, visiting a shop, a town hall, bank, station, hospital, post office, port, airport, etc.;
- **Accidents to members of the public, even if such an accident is due to a work activity within a company;** this includes the family members of an employee or employer if they are on the premises of the company and become victims of an accident, i.e. children in, for example, the nursery in the company; Such accidents should not be counted as accidents at work although responsible employers would ensure that such incidents would normally be factored into insurance cover.

## Further information

- [Accidents at work \(ESAW, 2008 onwards\)](#) (ESMS metadata file — hsw\_acc\_work\_esms)
- [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 349/2011](#) of 11 April 2011 implementing Regulation 1338/2008 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, as regards statistics on accidents at work
- [European Statistics on Accidents at Work \(ESAW\) — Summary methodology](#) — 2013 edition

## Related concepts

- [Fatal accident at work](#)
- [Non-fatal accident at work](#)

## Statistical data

- [Accidents at work statistics](#)