

Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (KY FACE) March 2009 Newsletter

The KY FACE program has identified an alarming increase in the number of occupational suicides in the state. In 2007, there were 7 suicides in the workplace, and preliminary data indicate at least that number for 2008. The table below tracks the number of occupational suicides in Kentucky from 1994-2008 (2008 statistics are preliminary). With the exception of a brief spike in 1999, occupational suicides have risen fairly steadily and are now at an all time high. Figure 2 tracks the age of occupational suicide victims at the time of death from 1994 to 2007.

Figure 1. Occupational Suicides (1994-2008)

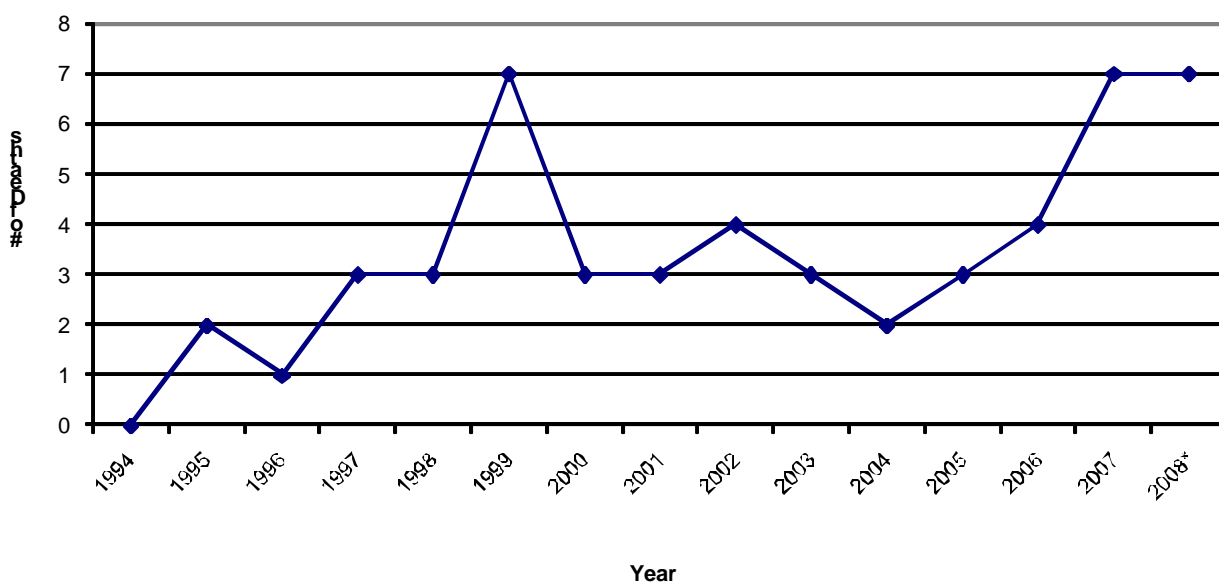
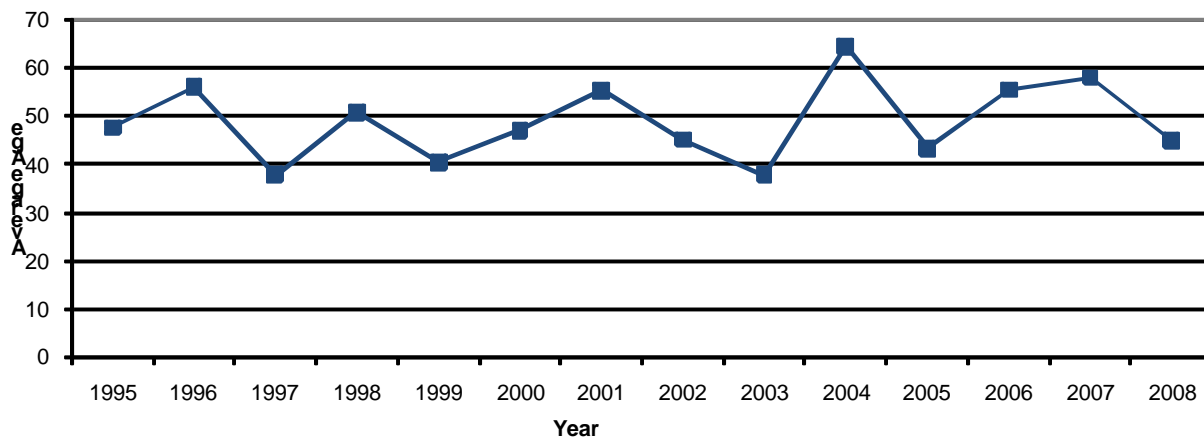


Figure 2. Average Age of Suicide Victims (1994-2008)



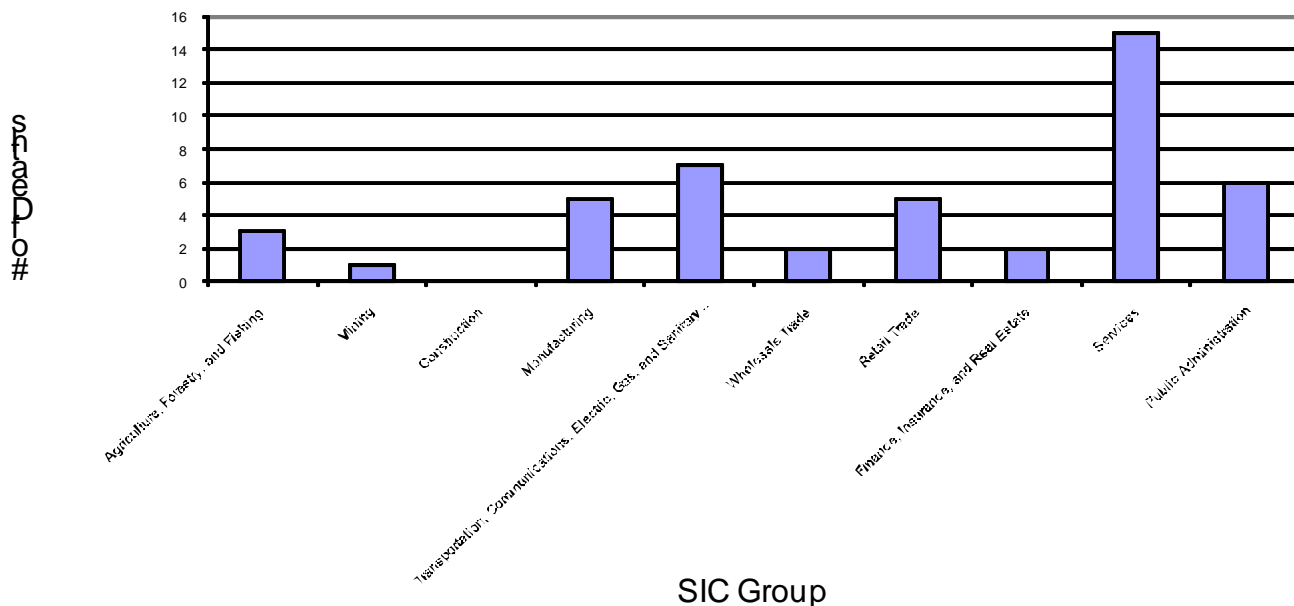
FACE the FACTS

The KY FACE Project is an occupational fatality surveillance project of the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC). Its primary purposes are to gather data on work-related fatalities and to develop prevention strategies, which are disseminated to employers, workers, agencies with interests in public health, and others who may be in a position to effect change.



Figure 3 shows the number of occupational suicides from 1994 to 2007 by Standard Industry Code (SIC). The service industry has had the most suicides (n=15), followed by the Transportation, Communications, Electric, Gas, and Sanitary Services industry (n=7). The Construction industry is the only industry that has not had an occupational suicide in Kentucky since 1994.

Figure 3. Suicides by SIC Group: 1994-2007



Employers should be aware that employees who may be suicidal pose a substantial risk, not only to themselves, but to other employees. In 2008, one suicidal employee in Kentucky shot six other employees, killing five, before dying by suicide. Prevention relies in recognizing the signs of acute risk for suicide and obtaining help for the suicidal employee.

Signs of acute risk include:

- *Threatening to hurt or kill himself/herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill himself/herself; and/or,
- *Looking for ways to kill himself/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means; and/or,
- *Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.

Risk information obtained from the American Association of Suicidology (<http://www.suicidology.org>)

If you know or suspect someone might be suicidal, immediately call the
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Anyone with an occupational injury prevention agenda may find this information of value. The use of FACE-gathered data is encouraged when the purpose is an attempt to decrease work-related deaths or to find ways of communicating prevention strategies to Kentucky's workforce.

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