



Workplace Violence: Part 2—Homicide Trends, Drivers, and Demographics

INTRODUCTION

Workplace violence spans a wide range of behaviors, from threats and verbal abuse to physical assault and homicide. In the first installment of NCCI’s Workplace Violence series, we examined how nonfatal workplace assaults have changed over time, where they occur, and who is most affected. In this second installment, we turn to workplace homicides, drawing on data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (BLS) Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI).

KEY FINDINGS

- Workplace homicides account for:
 - 400 to 500 cases per year on an all-ownership basis¹
 - 350 to 400 cases per year on a private industry basis
 - 8.5% to 9.5% of all workplace fatalities
- The overall level of workplace homicides has remained broadly steady from 2011 through 2024, despite year-to-year volatility
- Gunshot and stabbing incidents make up the largest share of workplace homicides
- Men account for the vast majority of workplace homicide victims

DATA

This report builds upon prior research² published by NCCI, incorporating updated insights and extending the analysis into more recent years. The primary data source is the BLS CFOI, supplemented by NCCI’s proprietary workers compensation data.

¹ CFOI “all ownership” includes fatal occupational injuries to workers across the private industry; federal, state, and local government; and the self-employed. The “private industry” subset excludes all government workers and reflects fatalities occurring solely within private-sector establishments. Differences between these categories affect comparability because government-dominated occupations (e.g., public safety, transit, corrections) appear only in the all-ownerships series.

² The previous papers include:

Tanya Restrepo and Harry Shuford, “Violence in the Workplace,” NCCI Research Brief, January 2012.

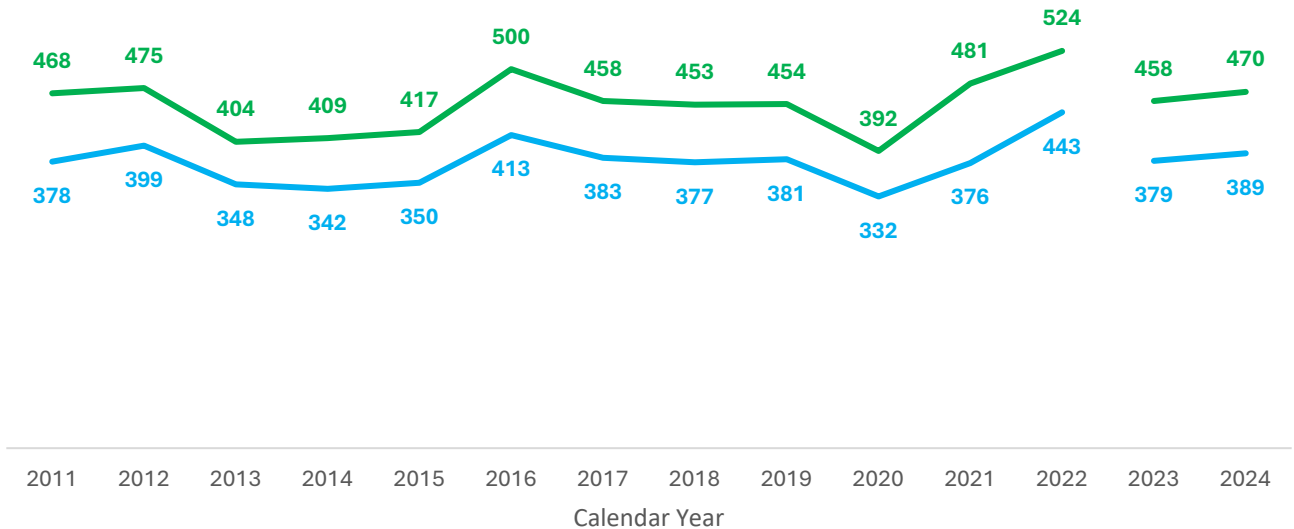
Beginning with the 2023 data year, the BLS updated the Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System used in the CFOI. This revision changes how injury and illness events are defined and coded, resulting in a formal data break for event-level case characteristics. Because the updated definitions differ from those used in earlier CFOI publications, event counts for 2023 and 2024 are not strictly comparable with data from prior years and should be interpreted with caution when examining trends. In this analysis, we use Event 111 (Intentional injury by other person) for 2022 and earlier data, and the corresponding Event 11 (Violent acts by other person) for 2023 and 2024.

HOMICIDE TRENDS

Trend lines that extend through 2023 should be interpreted with caution, as the BLS updated the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses injury-event classification system beginning with the 2023 data year, creating a structural break that is shown in the figures by an unconnected line.

Figure 1

Workplace Homicides: All Ownerships vs. Private Industry



Note: The break in the series at 2023 reflects the BLS update to the CFOI injury-event classification system.

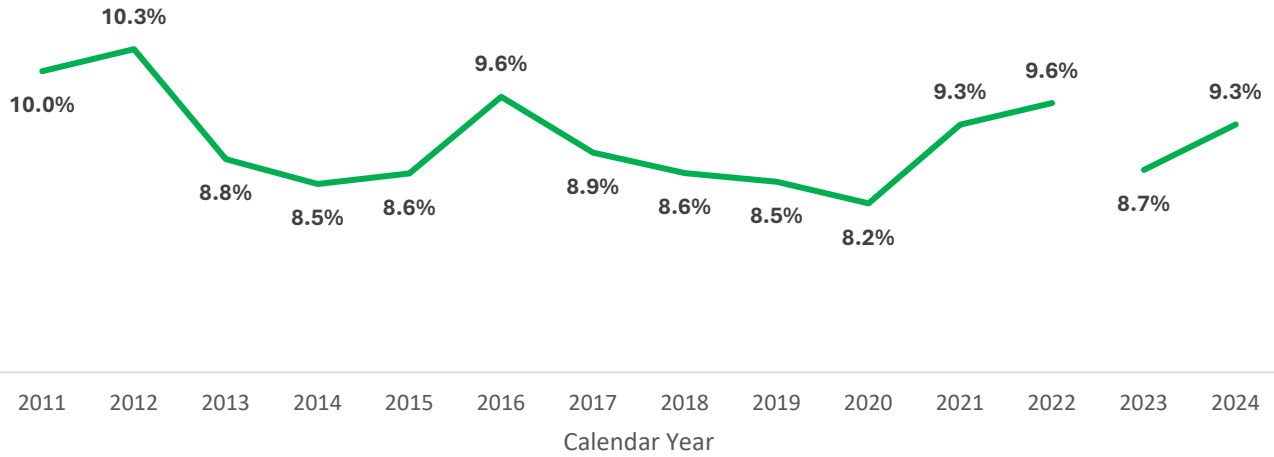
Source: BLS CFOI

Workplace homicides remain a low volume event category, and that scale naturally produces some year-to-year movement in the raw counts, as shown in Figure 1. Looking across the full 2011–2024 period, however, the number of workplace homicides fluctuates within a relatively narrow band, with no sustained upward or downward trend. The one clear departure is 2020, when the count reaches its lowest level, likely reflecting the sharp reduction in the number of workers physically present on-site during the early stages of the pandemic.

Martin Wolf, “Violence in the Workplace—An Updated Analysis,” NCCI Research Brief, Summer 2008.
 Martin Wolf, “Violence in the Workplace—An Updated Analysis,” NCCI Research Brief, September 2006.
 Martin Wolf, “An Analysis of Violence in the Workplace,” *The Journal of Workers Compensation*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Spring 2003, pp. 79–90.
 Martin Wolf, Dan Corro, and Chun Shyong, “Workplace Violence and Its Implications for Workers Compensation: Frequency, Cost and Other Claim Characteristics,” NCCI, November 1999.

Figure 2

Share of Workplace Fatalities Attributed to Homicide: All Ownerships



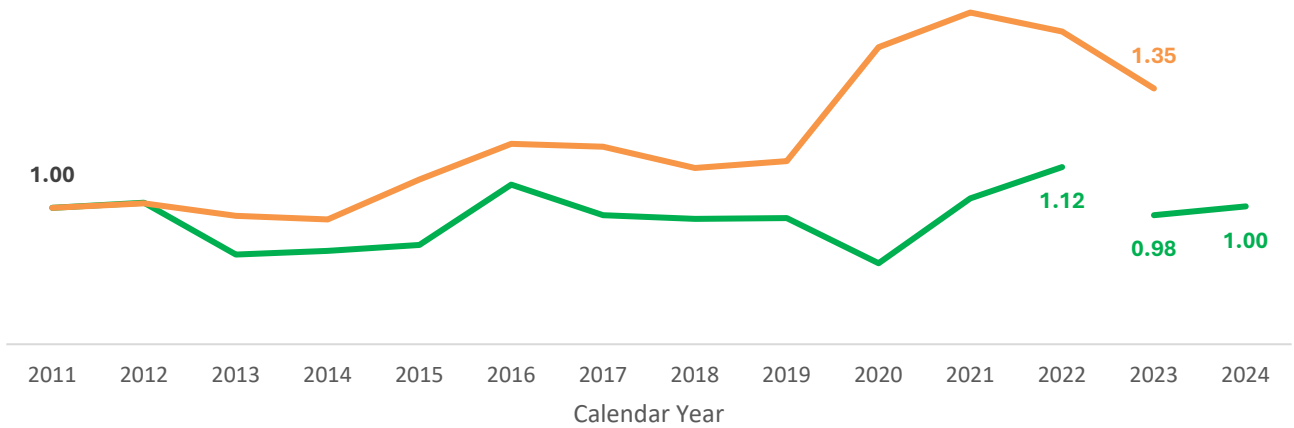
Note: The break in the series at 2023 reflects the BLS update to the CFOI injury-event classification system.

Source: BLS CFOI

A similar pattern appears in the share of workplace fatalities attributed to homicide, as shown in Figure 2. Despite annual variations, the homicide share generally holds between roughly 8.5% and 9.5% across most of the period, again with 2020 standing out as the low point. As with the counts in Figure 1, the long-run pattern shows no sustained directional movement in the share of fatalities involving homicide.

Figure 3

Workplace Homicide (All Ownerships) and National Homicide
Cumulative Changes



Note: The break in the series at 2023 reflects the BLS update to the CFOI injury-event classification system.

Sources: BLS CFOI; Our World in Data (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime homicide statistics, United States)

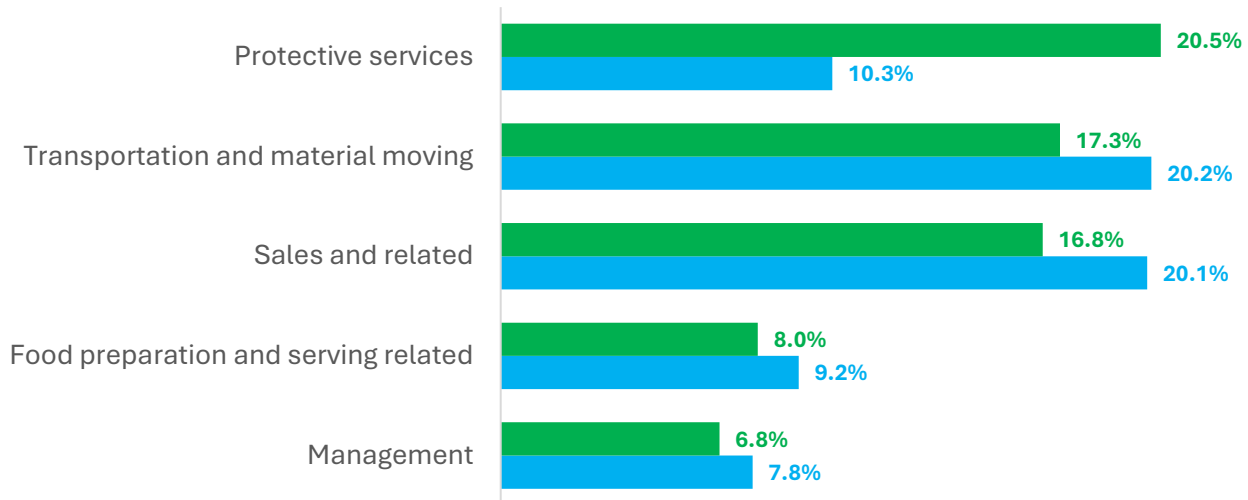
When national and workplace homicides are each indexed to 1.00 in the base year and tracked over time, as shown in Figure 3, the two series pull apart in a notable way. National homicides move upward overall across the period and end roughly 35% above their starting point; however, the path includes noticeable year-to-year variations rather than a steady climb. Workplace homicides, in contrast, fluctuate but show no underlying growth and return to their initial level by 2024. The gap between the two series widens beginning in 2020, as national homicides rise while workplace homicides fall, likely reflecting reduced on-site work during the early COVID period. Taken together, workplace homicides show volatility without a long-term increase, while national homicides end the period meaningfully higher and with a wider divergence starting in 2020.

In summary, workplace homicides show a steady long-term pattern, with both counts and shares remaining within a relatively narrow band across most of the period and only limited year-to-year variations. A notable exception is 2020, when both measures reach their lowest point, likely due to reduced on-site work during the early pandemic. While national homicides rise over the same years, workplace homicides do not follow that trajectory, with workplace homicides showing no overall growth from 2011 to 2024.

HOMICIDE DRIVERS

Figure 4

Homicide Shares by Occupation: **All Ownerships** vs. **Private Industry**
(2023–24)



Source: BLS CFOI

Figure 4 shows the largest contributors to workplace homicides by occupation. Workers in these occupations may face greater violence exposure because their jobs combine frequent public interactions, cash handling, and, in some cases, enforcement duties³. Sales, food service, and transportation roles involve direct contact with customers and the general public, often in settings where robbery risk, working alone, or late-night operations can increase vulnerability. Protective-service occupations face a different set of concentrated risks tied to policing, corrections, and security work, where confrontation is inherent to the role. These structural features help explain why the same occupational groups consistently account for the largest share of workplace homicides.

The comparison between all-ownership and private industry homicide shares shows how the composition of the workforce, not just the underlying risk, shapes the occupational profile of workplace homicides. Protective-service occupations account for one-fifth of all workplace homicides when government workers are included, reflecting the concentration of high-risk roles such as policing, corrections, and transit security in federal, state, and local governments. Once the view is restricted to private industry, that share is cut roughly in half. Protective-service workers in the public sector make up the majority of all protective-service employment⁴, but when public-sector workers are removed from the CFOI data, protective-service homicides fall by only about half. This happens because private industry protective workers, primarily security guards, experience a disproportionately high share of workplace homicides relative to their employment share.

The other major categories—transportation, sales, food service, and management—move in the opposite direction. Their shares rise in the private industry view because these roles are overwhelmingly private-sector jobs and represent the bulk of homicide exposure within that segment of the labor market. Transportation and sales each exceed 20% of private industry homicides, becoming the dominant categories once government workers are

³ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), “[Workplace Violence](#),” US Department of Labor.

⁴ BLS, “[Over 60 percent of protective service jobs were in the public sector in May 2021](#),” *The Economics Daily*, May 16, 2022.

excluded. The result is two accurate but somewhat different pictures: one that captures the full occupational landscape of workplace homicides, and one that reflects the narrower composition of the private sector.

Table 1

Class Code	Description	Accident Years 2020–22 Homicides⁵
7720	POLICE OFFICERS & DRIVERS	15
8006	STORE—GROCERY—RETAIL	14
9083	RESTAURANT: FAST FOOD	13
9052	HOTEL—ALL OTHER EMPLOYEES & SALESPERSONS, DRIVERS	9
8810	CLERICAL OFFICE EMPLOYEES NOC	7
9082	RESTAURANT NOC	7
8017	STORE—RETAIL NOC	6
9084	BAR, DISCOTHEQUE, LOUNGE, NIGHTCLUB OR TAVERN	6
7380	DRIVERS, CHAUFFEURS, MESSENGERS, AND THEIR HELPERS NOC— COMMERCIAL	5
9012	BUILDING OR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT—PROPERTY MANAGERS AND LEASING AGENTS & CLERICAL, SALESPERSONS	4

Source: NCCI’s *Statistical Plan* data

The class code distribution shown in Table 1 reflects the same environments that drive workplace homicide risk in the broader occupational data⁶: settings with routine public interaction, cash exposure, or enforcement duties. Because class codes represent business environments rather than occupations, and because the size of each class varies, these counts reflect both exposure conditions and the underlying scale of the insured workforce. Police and security work (Class Code 7720) appears at the top, consistent with the elevated risks associated with protective-service roles.

Sales-related codes (Code 8006 and Code 8017) align with the well-documented risks in retail settings, where robbery exposure, customer interaction, and late-night operations are common. Food-service codes (Code 9082 and Code 9083) similarly reflect environments where employees work in public-facing roles with cash handling and

⁵ These are fatalities with cause-of-loss categories classified as Struck by Fellow Worker or Patient, In the Act of Crime, or Gunshot.

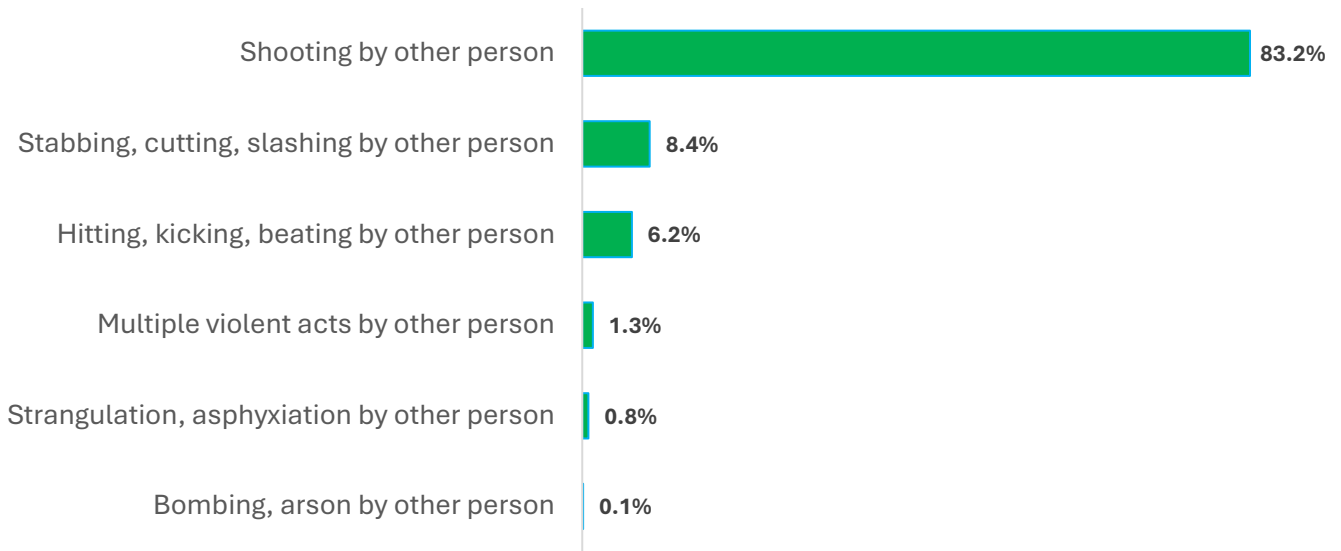
⁶ NCCI data contains very little information on government employment because most federal, state, and local public-sector employers do not purchase standard workers compensation policies. They instead self-insure or operate through separate government risk pools. As a result, NCCI injury and homicide patterns more closely resemble BLS private industry data rather than BLS all-ownership data.

extended hours. Hotel and property management codes (Code 9052 and Code 9012) capture settings where frontline staff and managers are often present during disputes or robberies.

Even Code 8810 appears in the distribution, not because clerical work is inherently high-risk, but because Code 8810 is one of the largest class codes in the workers compensation system. Given its scale, a small number of homicide cases will inevitably fall within it. Taken together, the class code patterns reinforce the same story seen in the occupational data: workplace homicides cluster in operational settings where public contact, cash handling, or enforcement responsibilities are built into the job.

Figure 5

Workplace Homicide Share by Means: All Ownerships (2023–24)



Source: BLS CFOI

While hitting, kicking, or beating by another person is the most common means of nonfatal workplace assaults⁷, the fatality profile shown in Figure 5 is fundamentally different. Shooting by another person accounts for more than four-fifths of all workplace homicides in 2023–24, far surpassing every other method. This dominance reflects the substantially higher lethality of firearms relative to other forms of interpersonal violence. Stabbing, cutting, or slashing is the next most common fatal method, followed by hitting, kicking, or beating, a pattern that likely reflects the high frequency of these assaults in nonfatal data rather than their ability to produce fatal outcomes.

⁷ Matt Schutz, Valeria Lara, and Mike Lambesis, “Workplace Violence: Part 1—Assault Trends, Drivers, and Demographics,” NCCI Research Brief, March 2026.

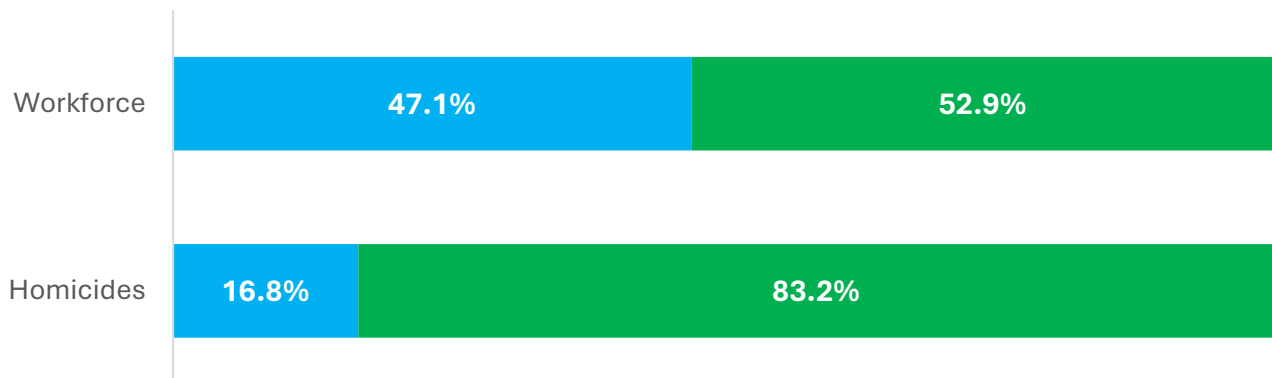
These patterns align with the assailant relationships observed in the same period: most workplace homicides are committed by criminal assailants⁸ with no prior work relationship to the victim. Other relationships, such as coworkers, customers or clients, relatives or domestic partners, and acquaintances, appear in smaller numbers. Taken together, the means and relationship data underscore that workplace homicides are predominantly criminal events involving firearms, rather than escalations of routine workplace interactions.

Overall, the evidence points to a consistent set of drivers: workplace homicide risk clusters in jobs with routine public contact, cash handling, time spent working alone, or enforcement duties, which is why sales, food service, transportation, and protective-service roles dominate both the occupational and class code patterns. Fatality methods further set workplace homicides apart from nonfatal assaults: shootings account for more than four-fifths of all cases in 2023–24, far exceeding other forms of homicidal violence and contrasting sharply with the most common nonfatal assault methods, such as hitting, kicking, or beating. Assailant relationship data shows a similar concentration, with most incidents involving criminal assailants and smaller but steady contributions from relatives or domestic partners, coworkers, customers, and acquaintances.

HOMICIDE DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 6

Workforce Composition (2024) vs. Homicide Victim Share (All Ownerships): **Women** and **Men** (2023–24)



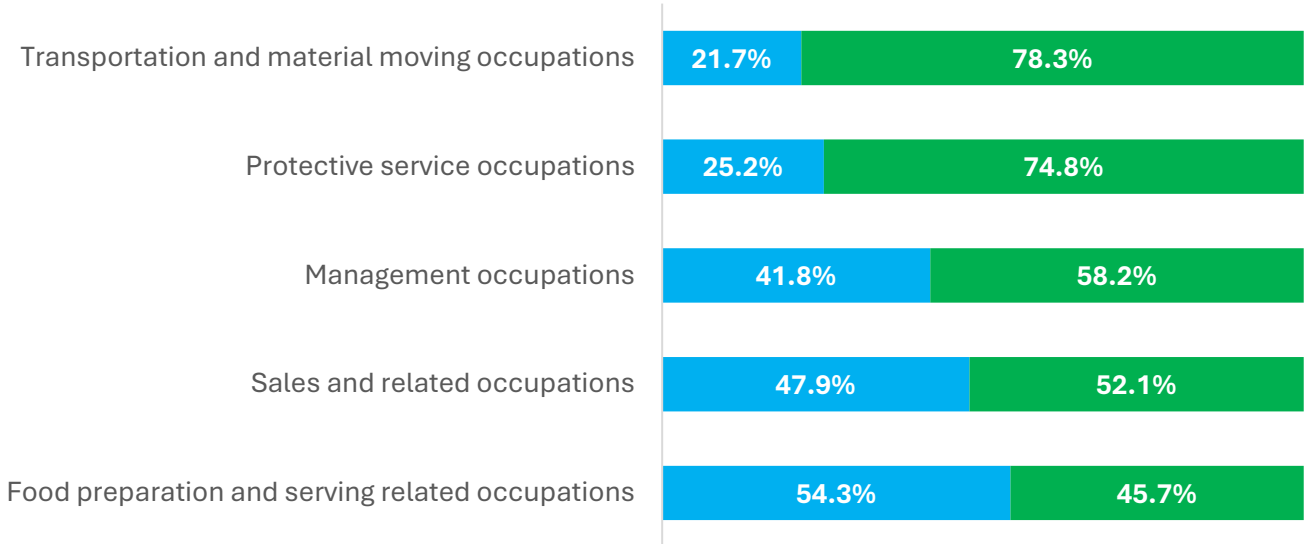
Sources: BLS CFOI; BLS Current Population Survey (CPS)

Figure 6 shows that the workforce is roughly evenly split between women and men, with a slight tilt toward men. In contrast, workplace homicides are concentrated among men, with roughly 83% of all homicide victims being men.

⁸ Assailant-relationship data is partially censored in CFOI tables due to the suppression of small cell counts, but the uncensored categories consistently show that criminal assailants are the largest group. In the most recent data (2023–24), criminal assailants account for 224 and 228 cases, respectively, substantially higher than any other reported category (e.g., coworker/work associate at 92 in 2023 and customer/client at 58 in 2024).

Figure 7

Gender Share of Workforce: **Women** and **Men** (2024)

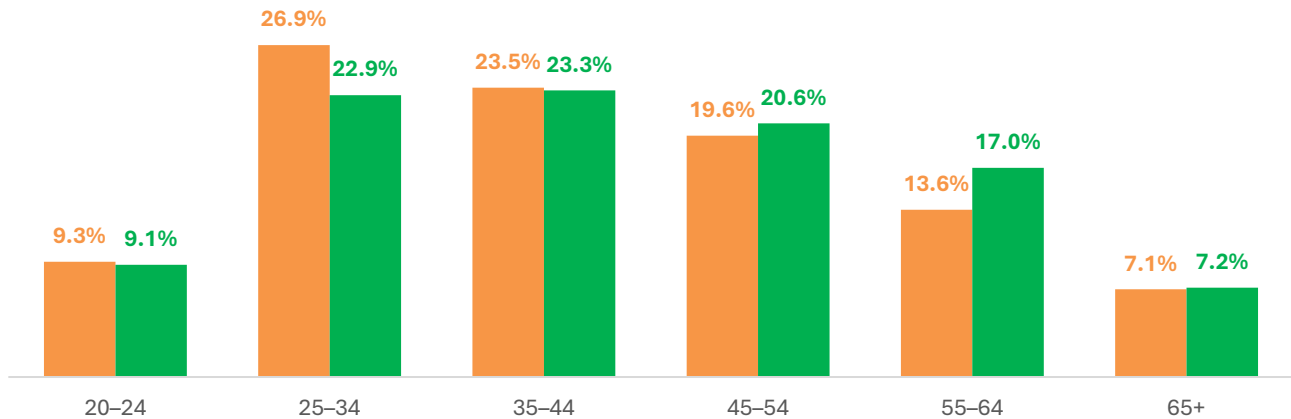


Source: BLS CPS

Workplace homicide patterns largely reflect the gender makeup of the occupations where these incidents are most likely to occur, as shown in Figure 7. Protective-service and transportation roles—two groups with some of the highest exposure to robbery, enforcement duties, late-night, or public-facing work—are more than three-quarters men, and this concentration helps explain why men account for most workplace homicide victims. Other major occupational groups are more mixed: sales is close to gender-balanced overall, and food preparation and serving roles have a slight majority of women. Taken together, these patterns indicate that the overall occupational distribution of men and women is a meaningful driver of the gender imbalance in workplace homicide victims.

Figure 8

Workers Ages 20 and Over: **Share of Workforce (2024)** vs. **Share of Homicides (All Ownerships) (2023–24)**



Sources: BLS CFOI; BLS CPS, age composition of the labor force

Figure 8 compares the age composition of the labor force (orange bars) with the age distribution of workplace homicide victims (green bars) for workers ages 20 and over⁹. The comparison shows modest differences across age groups but no consistent or directional pattern. Workers ages 25 to 34 appear somewhat underrepresented among homicide victims relative to their share of the workforce, while workers ages 55 to 64 account for a slightly larger share of homicides than their labor force presence would suggest. Beyond these small deviations, the distribution of workplace homicides largely tracks the overall age structure of the workforce, and there is no clearly discernible age-related pattern in homicide risk.

Workplace homicides show a highly uneven gender pattern but only modest age variations. Men account for the overwhelming majority of victims, reflecting the occupational mix in the jobs where homicide risk is highest—public-facing retail roles, transportation, and protective-service occupations. By contrast, the age distribution of homicide victims largely mirrors the age composition of the labor force for workers ages 20 and over. Workers ages 25 to 34 appear slightly underrepresented, and workers ages 55 to 64 appear slightly overrepresented, but these deviations are small and do not form a consistent age-related pattern. Overall, homicide risk aligns closely with where men work and the job environments that elevate exposure, rather than with age. In contrast, nonfatal workplace assaults show both a strong gender imbalance toward women and a clear age gradient, with younger workers facing disproportionately higher risk.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD/RISK MITIGATION

Workplace violence can be an occupational hazard, particularly in sectors such as health care, retail, protective services, and education. Federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NIOSH, and OSHA have developed evidence-based strategies to help employers mitigate this risk. The following summarizes some of the prevention approaches recommended by these agencies:

⁹ Workforce composition and homicide shares are calculated relative to workers ages 20 and over. BLS CFOI tables do not report age-specific homicide counts for workers under 20 due to small cell sizes and confidentiality suppression, so the under-20 group is excluded from both the workforce and homicide distributions.

- **Develop a comprehensive prevention program**
Create a formal, written policy that defines workplace violence, outlines reporting procedures, and establishes a zero-tolerance stance. Programs should include management commitment and employee involvement¹⁰.
- **Conduct worksite risk assessments**
Identify and evaluate risk factors such as working with the public, handling money, working alone, or operating in high-crime areas. Use incident logs, employee feedback, and walkthroughs to assess vulnerabilities¹¹.
- **Implement environmental and engineering controls**
Use physical modifications like improved lighting, surveillance systems, secured access points, and protective barriers to reduce exposure to violent incidents¹².
- **Apply administrative controls**
Adjust staffing levels, limit cash on hand, modify shift schedules, and establish clear procedures for incident response and follow-up¹³.
- **Provide training and education**
Train employees to recognize warning signs, use de-escalation techniques, and respond appropriately to violent incidents. Training should be tailored to job roles and risk levels⁸.
- **Monitor, evaluate, and improve**
Track incidents, review program effectiveness regularly, and update policies based on feedback and evolving risks⁸.

CONCLUSION

Workplace homicides have remained essentially flat over time, with only a temporary dip in 2020, and the stability of that trend stands in sharp contrast to both rising national homicide levels and the steady growth in nonfatal workplace assaults. The cases that do occur are concentrated in a narrow set of job environments—public-facing roles, cash-handling settings, lone-worker situations, and enforcement duties—which is why sales, food service, transportation, and protective-service occupations account for most workplace homicides. The demographic pattern follows the work: men make up the overwhelming majority of victims because they are disproportionately employed in the roles where lethal violence is most likely, while age differences are modest and largely mirror the broader labor force.

UP NEXT

The third and final installment of the Workplace Violence series will examine workplace assaults in greater detail.

¹⁰ [“Violence and Work,”](#) NIOSH, December 2, 2024.

¹¹ [“Prevention Resources for Action,”](#) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 21, 2025.

¹² [Violence: Occupational Hazards in Hospitals,](#) NIOSH, Publication No. 2002-101, April 2002.

¹³ [Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers,](#) OSHA, 2016.