

MOHSS

Montana Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance

Sept - Oct 2026

Safety in Transportation and Warehousing

Nearly every product consumed in Montana requires movement from producer to consumer. The roads, railways, and skies of Montana are vital commercial paths, with tens of billions of dollars of freight traveling through the state every year.¹ A key part of ensuring the freight reaches its destination is ensuring the safety of vehicles and their operators. This edition of the MOHSS topics newsletter will provide insights on occupational hazards that impact workers in transportation and warehousing, providing guidance on maintaining the safest workplace possible.



Overview of the Industry

In 2025, about 15,000 people worked in the transportation and warehousing industry in Montana.² The industry grew about 8% over the prior decade. The most common sub-industry, truck transportation, accounted for about 30% of all employment, followed closely by courier services at 25%. Other notable sub-industry groups included the U.S. Postal Service (which represented nearly all federal employment in transportation and warehousing), passenger transit, and transportation support services, with the air transport, pipeline transport, and warehousing sub-industry groups representing small portions of the industry workforce.

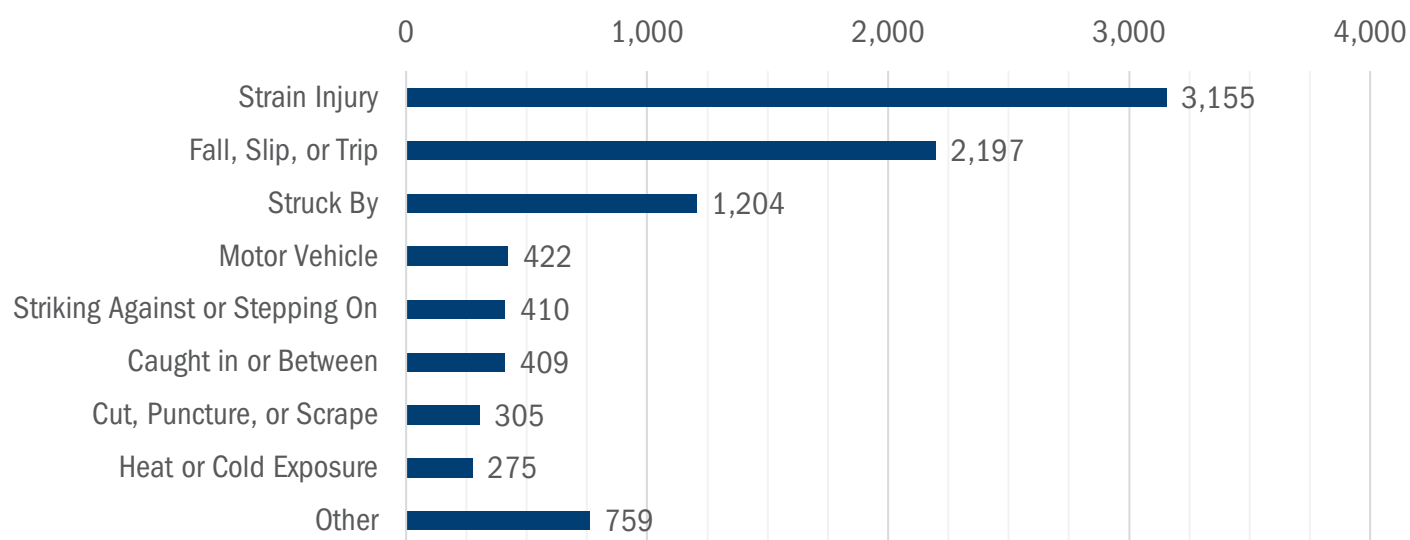
Industry-Specific Sources of Injury

From 2016 to 2025, workers in transportation and warehousing filed about 10,000 workers' compensation claims for workplace injuries.³ Strain injuries were the most common (31% of all reported injuries), followed by fall injuries (22%). While these causes of injury were also most common across the entire Montana workforce, workers in transportation and warehousing reported some injuries at much different rates than the whole workforce. Specifically, workers in transportation and warehousing experienced comparatively fewer injuries from cuts (including punctures and scraps) or exposure to extreme temperatures compared to the rest of the workforce, and experienced workplace injuries from motor vehicle accidents at about twice the average rate. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also indicates workers in transportation and warehousing experience fatal occupational injuries more frequently than many other industries, with 27 reported fatalities in the most recent 5 years of reports.⁴



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Injuries in Transportation and Warehousing by Injury Cause, 2016 - 2025



Staying Safe While Hauling Freight

Reducing the prevalence and severity of injuries for workers in transportation and warehousing is essential to ensuring the success of this industry. To achieve this, workers and employers are encouraged to focus on the following occupational hazards:

- **Driving-related hazards:** Motor vehicle operation is the common cause of fatal occupational injury, and workers in transportation and warehousing drive more than workers in most other injuries, increasing the associated risks from adverse conditions, fatigue, distraction, and other factors. To reduce the risk of accident, workers and employers should train proper driving techniques, emphasize the importance of non-distracted driving, encourage appropriate breaks in driving, and avoid driving during hazardous conditions.
- **Fall hazards:** While fall hazards exist in nearly all workplaces, workers in transportation are more likely to be exposed to unique sources of danger as they enter and exit work vehicles. Workers and employers are encouraged to remove ice, water, or other substances from vehicles and to install proper frame steps on vehicles to ensure workers can safely climb into and out of vehicles.
- **Unsafe lifting and material moving:** Lifting heavy objects is a common workplace task, but improper lifting can lead to musculoskeletal injuries. Providing workers with equipment to assist in material moving, such as dollies, carts, or motorized lifts, can reduce acute and cumulative strain. Employers are also encouraged to provide workers with guidance on proper lifting and stretching techniques.

In addition to these emphasis areas, workers and employers are encouraged to refresh themselves on the occupational hazards identified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). By developing awareness and implementing safeguards, Montanans can improve the health outcomes of this vital industry.

¹ From [the State Freight Plan, Montana Department of Transportation](#)

² From the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

³ From the Workers' Compensation Administrative Network, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

⁴ From [the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Montana Department of Labor & Industry](#)