

Work related deaths have almost halved in 20 years

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Deaths in England and Wales from injuries and diseases caused by work have almost halved in 20 years, indicates research published online in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

But there are still some jobs, such as being a publican, a coal miner, or a pilot in which the chances of a work related death remain relatively high.

The researchers analysed information on occupation and cause of death from the death certificates of some 2.7 million men aged 20-74 who died between 1979 and 2000.

The calculated annual excess of deaths attributable to occupation fell from 733 during 1979-90 to 471 during 1991-2000.

The main contributors to these excess deaths were lung disease in coal miners, mesothelioma from exposure to asbestos, and road traffic accidents in lorry drivers.

Although deaths from most hazards declined, there was no reduction in excess mortality from asbestos or from cancer of the nose and sinuses among woodworkers.

Between 1991 and 2000, the 'riskiest' jobs were publicans and bar workers—from cirrhosis and other diseases caused by alcohol; coal miners—from [chronic bronchitis](#) and emphysema, pneumoconiosis and injuries; and pilots—from air transport accidents.

In each of these occupations more than 4% of all deaths between the ages of 20 and 74 were attributable to work.

The overall substantial fall in work related deaths is likely to reflect a combination of safer working conditions and lower rates of employment in more hazardous jobs, conclude the authors.

"However, several hazards remain problematic, and are a priority for further preventive action. These include diseases caused by asbestos, sino-nasal cancer in woodworkers, and [motor vehicle accidents](#) in lorry drivers," they add.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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