

Is working in Italy safe?



■ The laws regulating work

Accidents in workplaces, often resulting in the death of workers, have unfortunately been quite frequent in Italy in the past decades, even if work in Italy is governed by Legislative Decree 81/2008, which states that employers must assess all risks, increase prevention measures, provide adequate training for workers, and constantly monitor the employees' working conditions.

■ The statistics of work accidents

Despite the regulations, official statistics from INAIL, the organisation in charge of ensuring safety in workplaces, indicate that the number of deadly accidents in workplaces in Italy is higher than the EU average. The highest risk of serious accidents seems to be more concentrated in sectors like construction, transports, and logistics: construction workers frequently operate on roofs, **cranes**, and high ladders, where the risk of falling is high, or incomplete structures, which may collapse unexpectedly; transport and logistics workers are exposed to road accidents and to the risk of being hurt by moving vehicles.

The category of workers who, according to the statistics, are more exposed to the risk of accidents in the workplace is that of foreign workers. Foreign workers are often employed in dangerous and demanding jobs that native

workers generally avoid; moreover, they are generally assigned to the most physically hard, repetitive and intensive tasks, which expose them to greater risk of injury.

■ Some big accidents that shook public opinion

In recent years, some major accidents in workplaces really made an impact on public opinion, once more highlighting the importance of safety procedures, especially in dangerous jobs, and the fact that a lot has still to be done in terms of workplace safety.

- In 2023, five workers responsible for railway maintenance were hit and killed by a passing train while working at night at the railway station of Brandizzo, a town near Turin, on the Turin-Milan line. This accident revealed serious failures in the safety procedures, particularly in the correct communication about the interruption of train traffic.
- In 2024, a **concrete beam** and part of the roof at a construction site of a supermarket collapsed, causing the death of five workers and serious injury to three others. This accident highlighted critical issues in the construction sector and raised questions about the chain of **subcontracts**, as the victims were workers from different contracting companies.
- In 2025, parts of a medieval tower in Rome collapsed in two different moments during restoration works. One worker was injured, together with some of the firemen who had arrived there to rescue him; another worker died after having been trapped under the **rubble** for many hours.

beam: *trave*
concrete: *cemento*
crane: *gru*

rubble: *macerie*
subcontract: *subappalto*

1  **Read the text to find the information requested.**

- 1. The law regulating safety in the workplace.
- 2. The Italian organisation dealing with safety in the workplace.
- 3. The sectors with a higher risk of accidents.
- 4. The type of accidents that may occur to workers in the transport section.
- 5. The category of workers most exposed to injuries.
- 6. The workplace where the accident in 2023 took place.
- 7. The number of workers involved in the accident at the supermarket construction site.
- 8. What caused injuries and the death of workers in Rome in 2025.

2  **Find the words in the text that correspond to the definitions.**

- 1. The activity of organising the transport of goods to customers.
- 2. To fall down suddenly.
- 3. Physical harm caused by an accident or an attack.
- 4. A piece of equipment consisting of a series of steps, used for climbing up or down something.
- 5. A material used in construction made from broken stone, sand, and water.
- 6. The area on which something is placed.
- 7. A contract for a company or person to do work for another company.
- 8. Waste or fragments of stone resulting from the demolition of buildings.

3  **Search the Internet for information about the accidents mentioned above. Was anyone prosecuted for them? Share information with the class.**