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## USA: Captive Elephant Statistics – Human Fatalities 1990-2013

**SYNOPSIS:** In the last 24 years since 1990, 16 people died in the USA (0.66 human per year) by captive elephants.

REXANO, [www.REXANO.org](http://www.REXANO.org), only used fatality numbers since all deaths are (supposed to be) reported and there is only one degree of death. The average life expectancy of 77 years was used to calculate the lifetime odds.

**Table 1: General Public’s Yearly Average and Lifetime Odds of Being Killed by a Captive Elephant in the USA Based on 1990 – 2013 data**

<b>Number of captive elephant related human fatalities in the USA: 1990 – 2013*</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Average Human Deaths per Year</b>	<b>0.66</b>
<b>One - Year Odds**</b>	<b>1 in 480,757,575</b>
<b>Lifetime Odds**</b>	<b>1 in 6,243,604</b>

\*Based on news and exotic animal industry reports

\*\*Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's December 2012 US population estimate of 317,300,000

**Table 2: Captive Elephant Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State: 1990 - 2013**

STATE /YEAR	CA	FL	HI	IN	MO	NY	PA	TN	TX	USA
<b>2013</b>					<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>
<b>2011</b>								<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>2010</b>							<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>2006</b>								<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>2005</b>				<b>1</b>						<b>1</b>
<b>2002</b>							<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>2000</b>		<b>1</b>								<b>1</b>
<b>1997</b>									<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1994</b>			<b>1</b>							<b>1</b>
<b>1993</b>		<b>2</b>				<b>1</b>				<b>3</b>
<b>1992</b>									<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1991</b>	<b>2</b>									<b>2</b>
<b>1990</b>		<b>1</b>								<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>



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**Table 3: US Captive Elephant Related Human Fatalities 1990 – 2013**

<b>YEAR/ STATE</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP TO ELEPHANT</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>2013 - MO</b>	An elephant killed a male zookeeper at the Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield in Missouri, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2011 - TN</b>	Knoxville Zoo worker dies after African elephant pushes her into stall, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2010 - PA</b>	Circus worker was accidentally killed when the elephant got spooked by an electric wire, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2006 - TN</b>	A female Asian elephant killed its female handler at a Tennessee elephant sanctuary, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2005 - IN</b>	Elephants being loaded onto a truck trampled a circus animal trainer to death after the man fell down inside the trailer, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2002 - PA</b>	An elephant at the Pittsburgh Zoo killed one of her handlers when she pinned him to the ground during a routine walk, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>2000 - FL</b>	Circus African elephant knocked her female handler to the ground and stomped her to death on their family property, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1997 - TX</b>	An animal trainer was crushed to death by an elephant at a privately owned zoo after entering the animal's pen to move it to another area, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1994 - HI</b>	A rampaging circus elephant killed a trainer, before she was shot down in the street, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard
<b>1993 - FL</b>	An elephant that had just been unchained swatted a handler to the ground with its trunk and then fatally kicked her in the head in a Lowry Park Zoo holding pen, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1993 - FL</b>	Elephant circus trainer was killed by the elephant he was working with at the circus farm. The animal knocked him down and stepped on him, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1993 - NY</b>	A man was crushed to death after he walked into a group of elephants at a traveling circus. The man climbed a four-foot-high plastic fence at about 1:40 A.M. and walked into the elephant area on the grounds when one of the elephants pinned him against a trailer, USDA	We can not legislate for or against stupidity or possible suicidal tendencies. The man was voluntarily trespassing in the the elephant barn 2 hours after midnight
<b>1992 - TX</b>	A San Antonio Zoo keeper died after an elephant lifted him with its trunk and slammed him down, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1991 - CA</b>	A keeper was killed when she apparently got caught in a territorial fight between two Asian elephants at the Wild Animal Park near San Diego, and died of massive head injuries, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1991 - CA</b>	A veteran animal keeper was attacked and killed by an elephant in Knowland Park Zoo in Oakland, AZA, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
<b>1990 - FL</b>	The circus handler was killed when an Asian elephant stumbled and stepped on his chest, USDA	Voluntarily accepted occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public



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**Table 4: US Captive Elephant Related Human Fatalities by Type of Facility\*  
1990 – 2013**

TYPE OF FACILITY	USDA Exhibitor	USDA & AZA	USDA Sanctuary	NON USDA 'PET'	TOTAL
<b>NUMBER OF FATALITIES</b>	8	7	1	0	16
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	50%	43.75 %	6.25%	0 %	100 %

*\*The slightly larger number of fatalities at USDA (US Department of Agriculture) only licensed facilities as opposed to USDA & AZA facilities doesn't necessarily mean the AZA facility is safer. Majority of facilities are not accredited by Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), which explains larger number of fatalities occurring at non AZA facilities. Due to the nice weather and other reasons, many circuses have their base in Florida, which explains larger number of elephant related fatalities in that state.*

**CONCLUSION:**

**The death by US captive elephant is extremely rare. In the last 24 years since 1990, 16 people died in the USA (0.66 per year) by captive elephants.**

**That translates to one-year odds of 1 in 480,757,575, and lifetime odds 1 in 6,243,604.**

**All victims were voluntarily on the property where the animal was kept, be it owner(s), handlers, employees, friends, visitors or spectators wanting to see the animals.**

**Since 1990, there is no record of a member of the general public in the USA dying as a result of a captive elephant running at large, meaning, unsupervised and OFF the property where the animals were kept. Elephant out of the cage, but still on owners'/zoo/circus property arena, is not considered AT LARGE for our statistical analysis. Captive keeping of elephants might be a voluntarily accepted hobby/occupational hazard, but it is NOT a general public safety issue fatality wise.**