



USA: Captive Big Cat Statistics – Human Fatalities

REXANO, 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 Big Cat in the USA Based on 1990 – 2009 Data

Number of captive big cat related human fatalities in the USA: 1990 - 2009*	20
Average Human Deaths per Year	1.05
One - Year Odds**	1 in 293,809,523
Lifetime Odds**	1 in 3,815,708

*Based on news and exotic animal industry reports

**Based on the current US population estimate of 308,500,000

Table 2: Captive Big Cat Related Human Fatalities in the USA by State: 1990 - 2009

STATE /YEAR	CA	CO	DC	FL	IL	KS	MI	MN	NC	NV	OK	PA	TX	USA
2008											1			1
2007	1	1												2
2006								1						1
2005						1								1
2004					1									1
2003					1				1		1			3
2001				1						1			1	3
1999													1	1
1998				2										2
1997											1	1		2
1995			1				1							2
1994				1										1
TOTAL 1990-9/2008	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	20



Table 3: Captive Big Cat Related Human Fatalities in the USA by the Species* of the Exotic & Wild Cat: 1990 – 2009

YEAR/ STATE	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2001	1999	1998	1997	1995	1994
CA		AZA Zoo Tiger										
CO		AZA Zoo Jaguar										
DC											AZA Zoo Lions	
FL							USDA Tiger		USDA Tiger 2people			AZA Zoo Tiger
IL					USDA Lion	USDA Tiger						
KS				USDA Tiger								
MI											Pet Lion	
MN			USDA Tiger									
NC						Pet Tiger						
NV							USDA Tiger					
OK	USDA Liger					USDA Tiger				USDA Leopa rd		
PA										USDA Circus Tiger		
TX							USDA Tiger	USDA Tiger				

* The only species and wild hybrid responsible for captive big cat related human fatalities in the USA are: tiger (14), lion (3), jaguar (1), leopard (1) and liger (1)



**Table 4: US Captive Big Cat Related Human Fatalities
1990 – 2009**

YEAR/ STATE	RELATIONSHIP TO CAT	COMMENTS
2008 - OK	Handler killed by liger, USDA	Occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public
2007 - CA	Visitor killed by a tiger out of her cage, but still on the AZA SF Zoo property, 2 visitors injured, USDA	Still under investigation, lawsuits were filed by families and victims
2007 - CO	AZA zoo keeper killed by a jaguar, USDA	Occupational hazard. It was not clear why she was in the jaguar's cage which is against the zoo's rules
2006 - MN	USDA licensed professional owner/trainer killed by her tiger	Occupational hazard. MN has regulations on exotics; no risk to uninvolved public
2005 - KS	17 year old visitor visiting the USDA facility to have her picture taken with an adult tiger, which is against existing USDA rules	Parents should be held responsible. Parents sued, exhibitor lost his USDA license and KS enacted tough regulations compared by many to a ban. No risk to uninvolved public
2004 - IL	Man killed by his lion, USDA	Occupational/hobby hazard, no risk to the public
2003 - IL	Man killed by his tigers at his own federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard-no public risk. Illinois already regulates private possession of "dangerous animals"
2003 - NC	10 year boy old killed by his uncle's pet tiger	Parents should be held responsible. Death by a tiger shouldn't be treated any differently than accidental death involving other activities. No risk to the public
2003 - OK	Tiger killed the handler, USDA	Occupational hazard - no risk to uninvolved public
2001 - FL	Tiger killed a worker doing a tiger cage repair at a professional federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard. FL already has regulations on exotic animals-no risk to uninvolved public not on property. Exhibitor lost his USDA license
2001 - NV	Tiger killed handler, federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard, no public risk, facility is not in business anymore
2001 - TX	3-year old boy killed by his family's tiger at their USDA licensed facility	Parents should be also held responsible. Being killed by a tiger shouldn't be treated any differently than death by accidents involving other activities. No risk to uninvolved public
1999 - TX	9-year old killed by her stepfather's tiger at his USDA licensed facility	Parents should be also held responsible. Being killed by a tiger shouldn't be treated any differently than death by accidents involving other activities. No risk to uninvolved public
1998 - FL	Tiger killed his female owner at federally licensed USDA facility	Occupational hazard. Florida has exotic animals' regulations. No risk to the general public
1998 - FL	Same tiger that killed his female owner in November 1998 killed his male handler/trainer, USDA	Occupational hazard. FL already has regulations on exotic animals-no risk to the uninvolved public not on the property
1997 - OK	Woman killed by leopard, visiting her son, facility's employee, USDA	Occupational/hobby hazard, she was on the property at her own risk, voluntarily
1997 - PA	Circus tiger killed trainer, USDA	Occupational hazard
1995- D.C.	AZA zoo visitor killed by lions, USDA	Woman climbed into the cage; death ruled suicide
1995 - MI	Woman killed by friend's pet lion after entering the cage	Hobby hazard, she entered the cage voluntarily, at her own risk. Michigan has exotic animal ban now
1994 - FL	AZA zoo keeper killed by tiger, USDA	Occupational hazard, no risk to uninvolved public



**Table 5: US Captive Big Cat Related Human Fatalities by Species*
Breakdown: 1990 – 2009**

SPECIES	TIGER	LION	JAGUAR	LEOPARD	LIGER	TOTAL
HUMAN DEATHS	14	3	1	1	1	20
PERCENT OF TOTAL	70 %	15 %	5 %	5 %	5 %	100 %

**The larger number of tiger than lion related fatalities doesn't mean the tiger is more dangerous than lion. More people keep and interact with captive tigers than captive lions in the USA.*

**Table 6: US Captive Big Cat Related Human Fatalities by Type of Facility*
1990 – 2009**

TYPE OF FACILITY	USDA ONLY	USDA & AZA	NON USDA PET	TOTAL
NUMBER OF FATALITIES	14	4	2	20
PERCENTAGE	70 %	20 %	10 %	100 %

**The 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.*

CONCLUSION:

None of these deaths were the result of the exotic cats being unsupervised off the private owners' or zoo's property. Instead, all victims were voluntarily on the property where the animal was kept, be it owner(s), handlers, employees, friends or visitors wanting to see the animals. The only person killed in public was a circus trainer in Pennsylvania in 1997 while he was doing his job and the tiger was caged.

Since 1990, there is no record of a member of the general public in the USA dying as a result of a captive big cat at large, meaning, unsupervised and OFF the property where the animals were kept. Big cat out of the cage, but still on owners'/zoo property, is not considered AT LARGE for our statistical analysis.

Captive keeping of big cats might be a slight voluntarily accepted hobby/occupational hazard, but it is NOT a public safety issue.

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