



Occupational pay in the manufacture of men's and boys' suits and coats

Straight-time earnings of production and related workers in men's and boys' suit and coat manufacturing averaged \$6.29 an hour in June 1984, according to a recent survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹ (See table 1.) Virtually all of the 46,716 production workers covered by the survey had earnings between \$3.35, the Federal minimum, and \$10 an hour; the middle 50 percent earned from \$4.87 to \$7.45. Earnings levels varied by such factors as occupation, geographic location, method of wage payment, sex, type and size of establishment, union status, and size of community.

The \$6.29 average for all workers in June 1984 was 28 percent higher than the \$4.93 average recorded in the Bureau's April 1979 survey of the suit and coat industry.² This increase, averaging 4.8 percent annually, compares with an annual increase of 6.8 percent in the wage and salary component of the Bureau's Employment Cost Index for non-durable goods manufacturing industries over the same period.

Much of the increase in average hourly pay since the April 1979 survey stems from general wage adjustments granted under collective bargaining agreements between the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the Clothing Manufacturers Association of America. The current agreement, which expires May 31, 1985, provides for wage increases totaling \$1.05 an hour over its 3-year term. Establishments with labor-management contracts covering a majority of the production work force employed nearly four-fifths of the workers in the scope of the survey.

Employees in regular establishments, representing 83 percent of the total work force, averaged \$6.29 an hour—the same as the average for all workers. Regular (or "inside") establishments own the materials and perform all or nearly all of the manufacturing operations required for suit and coat fabrication, including marking, cutting, sewing, and inspecting. Employees in contract establishments—14 percent of the workers—averaged \$6.10 an hour, while those in cutting establishments—about 3 percent of the work force—averaged \$7.61. Contract establishments perform manufacturing operations on materials owned by others. Cutting establishments own the material and cut the cloth, but deliver it to contract establishments for the remaining processes.

Thirty-two occupations were selected to represent the wage structure, worker skills, and manufacturing operations in the industry; they covered slightly less than four-fifths of the industry's production work force. Nationwide, pay levels were usually highest among cutting room occupations. For example, cloth cutters and markers had the highest average pay (\$9.40), followed by cloth cutters (\$9.02) and lining cutters (\$8.77). Janitors (\$5.09) and work distributors (\$5.45) recorded the lowest averages.

Sewing-machine operators, representing about one-half of all production workers in the survey, averaged \$6.17 an hour on coat fabrication and \$5.81 on trouser fabrication. Their earnings, however, varied by the specific task performed. In coat fabrication, average pay ranged from \$5.93 for workers who tack facing to front of garment with a blind stitch machine (facing tacking) to \$6.84 for those who join collars and lapels to canvas by numerous rows of blind stitching (pad collar and lapels). In trouser fabrication, sewing-machine operators averaged from \$5.72 for serging to prevent ravelling to \$6.54 for attaching zippers.

Virtually all production workers were in establishments providing paid holidays and vacations. Typical provisions were for 10 paid holidays annually and 3 weeks of vacation pay after 1 year of service and 4 weeks after 20 years.

Virtually all workers were covered by life, hospitalization, surgical, and medical insurance. Sickness and accident insurance was available to four-fifths of the workers; major medical, to just over one-third; and accidental death and dismemberment plans, to three-tenths. Long-term disability and dental insurance plans each applied to less than one-tenth of the work force. Employers typically paid the total cost of these health and insurance plans.

Retirement pension plans (in addition to Federal Social Security) covered slightly more than nine-tenths of the industry. Most of these workers had plans financed wholly by their employer. Retirement severance plans, however, were rarely provided.

For about seven-tenths of the workers, employers provided health, welfare, and retirement benefits through the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union employer administered funds. Nearly two-fifths of the industry's production workers were in plants where employers provided vacation benefits through such funds.

A comprehensive report on the survey, *Industry Wage Survey: Men's and Boys' Suits and Coats, June 1984*,

Table 1. Average hourly earnings¹ of production workers by selected characteristics and in selected occupations, men's and boys' suit and coat manufacturing, June 1984

Characteristic	United States ²	New England	Middle Atlantic	Border States	Southeast	Southwest	Great Lakes
All production workers ³	\$6.29	\$6.72	\$6.87	\$6.59	\$5.41	\$4.97	\$6.65
Men	7.23	7.29	—	7.49	5.74	—	7.73
Women	6.03	6.51	6.67	6.26	5.37	4.86	6.44
Size of community							
Metropolitan areas ⁴	6.56	6.72	7.10	6.61	6.30	4.97	6.73
Nonmetropolitan areas	5.62	—	—	6.49	5.08	—	—
Size of establishment							
5 to 249 workers	6.00	—	7.05	6.26	—	—	4.52
250 workers or more	6.39	6.68	6.77	6.73	5.47	—	7.00
Type of establishment⁵							
Regular	6.29	6.69	6.74	6.71	5.41	—	6.73
Cutting	7.61	—	—	7.57	—	—	—
Contract	6.10	—	—	6.21	—	—	—
Major product							
Men's suits	6.45	6.58	6.97	6.78	5.63	—	—
Men's separate tailored jackets	6.56	—	6.66	6.57	5.52	—	—
Uniforms (nonathletic)	5.30	—	—	5.77	—	—	4.52
Labor-management contract coverage⁶							
Majority covered	6.64	6.72	6.96	6.60	—	—	6.89
None or a minority covered	5.03	—	—	5.74	5.11	3.93	—
Selected occupations							
Cutting:							
Cloth cutters	9.02	9.71	8.17	10.67	6.55	5.52	—
Lining cutters	8.77	8.35	7.94	9.87	6.64	—	8.71
Cutters and markers	9.40	—	9.62	10.28	—	6.57	—
Markers	7.32	—	7.45	9.73	6.31	—	—
Spreaders	6.56	7.36	—	7.17	5.38	3.96	5.87
Coat fabrication:							
Hand basters	6.71	—	—	6.80	—	—	—
Hand finishers	6.54	—	6.87	6.35	—	—	—
Fitters	7.32	6.37	7.72	7.36	6.36	—	—
Inspectors, final	5.62	6.46	6.15	5.75	4.92	4.42	6.03
Pressers, finish, machine	7.07	9.31	6.32	7.65	6.06	5.40	7.58
Sewing-machine operators	6.17	6.77	6.71	6.53	5.35	4.73	6.70
Thread pullers and basting trimmers	5.84	6.04	5.89	5.90	5.43	—	—
Underpressers	6.60	7.05	6.77	6.76	5.69	—	7.57
Trouser fabrication:							
Inspectors, final	5.60	6.25	—	5.42	4.62	—	6.19
Pressers, finish	6.63	6.86	10.19	6.87	4.85	—	7.40
Sewing-machine operators	5.81	6.85	6.98	6.41	4.85	4.53	5.75
Underpressers	6.28	7.23	—	7.07	4.97	—	5.72
Miscellaneous:							
Adjusters	8.14	9.64	7.60	8.63	7.14	7.06	9.43
Janitors	5.09	5.01	6.14	5.21	4.58	4.35	—
Packers	6.39	—	6.48	7.27	5.22	4.87	6.54
Stock clerks, garments	5.65	—	—	5.80	4.53	—	—
Stock clerks, piece goods	6.11	—	7.60	6.01	5.12	—	—
Work distributors	5.45	5.69	6.46	5.85	4.88	3.95	—

¹Excludes premium pay for overtime for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts.

²Includes data for regions in addition to those shown separately. The regions are defined as follows: New England—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Middle Atlantic—New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; Border States—Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia; Southeast—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee; Southwest—Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; and Great Lakes—Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Alaska and Hawaii were not included in the study.

³Includes data for workers not classified by sex and by major products in addition to those shown separately.

⁴Metropolitan Statistical Areas, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget through June 1983.

⁵Regular establishments own the materials and perform all or nearly all of the required manufacturing operations; cutting establishments own the material and cut the cloth, but deliver it to contract establishments for the remaining processes; and contract establishments perform manufacturing operations on materials owned by others.

⁶Data relate to establishments where a majority, or a minority, or none of the production workers are covered by labor-management agreements.

NOTE: Dashes indicate no data or data that do not meet publication criteria.

Bulletin 2230 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1985) is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The report provides additional information on occupational earnings and employee benefits. □

—FOOTNOTES—

¹The survey covered establishments employing five workers or more which were primarily engaged in manufacturing men's, youth's, and boys'

suits, coats, and overcoats (part of sic 2311, as defined in the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual* prepared by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget). Included in the study were establishments manufacturing tailored suits, separate coats or jackets, overcoats and topcoats, uniforms, and suit vests. Jobbers who perform only entrepreneurial functions—such as buying material, arranging for all manufacturing to be done by others, and selling the finished product—were excluded from the survey, as were separate auxiliary units such as central offices.

Wage data reported in this article exclude premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts.

²For an account of the 1979 study, see *Industry Wage Survey: Men's and Boys' Suits and Coats, April 1979*, Bulletin 2073 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1980).