

Strength and specific vocational preparation up to 1 month

The Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) publishes job-related information on physical demands; environmental conditions; education, training, and experience; as well as cognitive and mental requirements. The job requirements reflect those necessary for workers to perform critical tasks in support of the critical job functions, and not the capabilities of individual workers.

Specific vocational preparation (SVP) captures the minimum amount of preparation time needed to develop the aptitude needed for basic performance of the job and is published as part of the education, training, and experience requirements. Preparation time is divided into nine levels, ranging from as little as 4 hours to more than 10 years.¹ This factsheet focuses on the first two SVP levels:

- SVP level 1 – Short demonstration only (up to 4 hours)
- SVP level 2 – Beyond a short demonstration and up through 1 month

The ORS publishes five strength levels (sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy), which are part of the published physical demands, and are calculated from the weight and duration associated with lifting, carrying, and in some cases, standing.²

In the summer of 2024, the ORS program published estimates for civilian workers combining SVP and strength from the final second wave data (Table 1).³ In 2023, 34.1 percent of civilian workers required no more than 1 month to obtain the vocational preparation needed for a job. Breaking this down further, 3.6 percent of civilian workers required an SVP level 1 or 2 and had sedentary strength requirements.

Table 1. Percentage of civilian workers with SVP 1 or 2 by strength level required, 2023

Strength levels	Estimate	Standard error
All strength levels, SVP 1-2	34.1	[1]
Strength required is sedentary	3.6	[1]
Strength required is light work	13.5	[1]
Strength required is medium work	13.4	[1]
Strength required is heavy work	3.3	[1]
Strength required is very heavy work	<0.5	[2]

Footnotes:

[1] Standard error is less than 0.5.

[2] The standard error is not available for this estimate.

Source: Unpublished data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

These estimates are not available by detailed occupation, however, the published [ORS complete dataset](#) can help in understanding where these jobs exist in the economy. To do this, this factsheet highlights occupations requiring SVP 1 or 2 and each strength level. The results can be recreated by using a pivot table to view multiple occupational requirements, see the [pivot table guide](#) for instructions.

SVP 1-2 and sedentary strength

Work is considered sedentary in occupations where most of the day is spent sitting and workers are lifting or carrying items of little weight for at most up to 2/3 of the workday. Table 2 displays occupations requiring SVP 1 or 2 and sedentary strength. In 2023, 58.9 percent of receptionists and information clerks required either an SVP 1 or 2 and 74.3 percent required sedentary strength. Based on these estimates, we can calculate that at least 33.2 percent of receptionists and information clerks required an SVP 1 or 2 and sedentary strength. This was calculated by:

1. Finding the percentage of workers not requiring sedentary strength
 - a. 100 percent – 74.3 percent = 25.7 percent
2. Assuming all of the non-sedentary workers required an SVP 1 or 2 and removing them
 - a. 58.9 percent – 25.7 percent = 33.2 percent
3. It's possible that more receptionists and information clerks required SVP 1 or 2 and sedentary strength, but at a minimum 33.2 percent met these requirements.

Table 2. Percentage of workers with SVP 1 or 2 and sedentary strength, 2023

Occupation	SVP 1	SVP 2	Sedentary strength	Overlap between SVP 1-2 and sedentary strength [1]
Receptionists and information clerks	2.8	56.1	74.3	33.2
Insurance sales agents	<0.5	30.1	96.4	26.5
Word processors and typists	<10	26.3	>99.5	25.8
Medical secretaries and administrative assistants	0.8	35.0	88.7	24.5
Bill and account collectors	<0.5	25.7	97.6	23.3
Data entry keyers	<0.5	32.2	87.2	19.4

[1] A value of 99.5 was used in place of >99.5, all other range values were excluded.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

SVP 1-2 and light strength

Occupations requiring light strength do not lift or carry more than 25 pounds but may spend the majority of their day standing. In 2023, 13.5 percent of civilian workers required an SVP 1 or 2 and light strength to perform the critical tasks of their job. Some occupations where workers required both SVP 1 or 2 and light strength requirements are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of workers with SVP 1 or 2 and light strength, 2023

Occupation	SVP 1	SVP 2	Light strength	Overlap between SVP 1-2 and light strength [1]
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge, and coffee shop	1.6	92.4	89.9	83.9
Ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers	8.3	89.0	77.2	74.5
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	0.8	90.6	70.5	61.9
Amusement and recreation attendants	3.7	90.2	67.7	61.6
Waiters and waitresses	0.7	76.2	78.3	55.2
Fast food and counter workers	4.1	89.9	60.2	54.2
Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks	<0.5	69.3	82.5	51.8
Food servers, nonrestaurant	0.6	79.9	69.5	50.0

[1] Range values were excluded.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey



SVP 1-2 and medium strength

Workers in occupations that required medium strength may lift or carry up to 50 pounds when performing the critical tasks of their job. In 2023, 13.4 percent of civilian workers required an SVP 1 or 2 and medium strength. Table 4 provides some occupations with these requirements.

Table 4. Percentage of workers with SVP 1 or 2 and medium strength, 2023

Occupation	SVP 1	SVP 2	Medium strength	Overlap between SVP 1-2 and medium strength [1]
Helpers--production workers	5.7	88.4	76.5	70.6
Animal caretakers	<0.5	74.7	88.4	63.1
Packers and packagers, hand	14.2	77.6	71.2	63.0
Machine feeders and offbearers	13.0	72.1	69.5	54.6
Cooks, fast food	2.6	86.9	64.3	53.8
Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers	<5	62.0	86.1	48.1
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers	7.3	81.3	57.4	46.0

[1] Range values were excluded.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

SVP 1-2 and heavy strength

Workers in occupations that required heavy strength may lift or carry up to 100 pounds when performing the critical tasks of their job. In 2023, 3.3 percent of civilian workers required an SVP 1 or 2 and heavy strength. See Table 5 for some occupations with these requirements.

Table 5. Percentage of workers with SVP 1 or 2 and heavy strength, 2023

Occupation	SVP 1	SVP 2	Heavy strength	Overlap between SVP 1-2 and heavy strength [1]
Light truck drivers	7.8	69.3	64.2	41.3
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	14.8	69.9	33.9	18.6
Tire repairers and changers	<10	66.7	44.6	11.3

[1] Range values were excluded.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

SVP 1-2 and very heavy strength

In 2023, less than 0.5 percent of civilian workers required an SVP 1 or 2 and very heavy strength. Very heavy strength involves lifting or carrying a minimum of 25 pounds, but these workers may be required to lift or carry items over 100 pounds. For example, if an ambulance driver is required to lift or carry a person weighing over 100 pounds, this would be considered very heavy strength. See table 6.

Table 6. Percentage of workers with SVP 1 or 2 and very heavy strength, 2023

Occupation	SVP 1	SVP 2	Very heavy strength	Overlap between SVP 1-2 and very heavy strength
Ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians	-	83.7	79.7	63.4

Note: Dashes indicate that estimate was not publishable.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey



Additional resources:

- [Latest news release](#)
- [Archived ORS news releases](#)
- [Handbook of Methods](#)
- [Collection manuals](#)
- [Factsheets](#)

Articles:

- [All The Economics Daily \(TED\) articles on ORS](#)
- [Minds at work: what's required according to the Occupational Requirements Survey \(PDF\)](#)
- [A look at teachers' job requirements, employer costs, and benefits \(PDF\)](#)
- [Occupational Requirements Survey: Third wave testing report \(PDF\)](#)
- [Occupational Requirements Survey: results from a job observation pilot test](#)
- [The Occupational Requirements Survey: estimates from preproduction testing](#)

For additional information on occupational requirements see the [ORS homepage](#) or download the [ORS complete dataset](#) to explore the latest estimates.

¹See the [ORS Handbook of Methods](#) for all SVP levels and how they are calculated.

²For more information on how strength estimates are calculated, see the [Strength factsheet](#).

³ During the summer of 2024, the ORS program released two other datasets produced from final second wave data. See the [August 2024 special release factsheet](#) and Special Release Datasets on the [ORS data page](#).