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Occupational Employment and Wages in Tacoma-Lakewood — May 2015

Workers in the Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$23.23 in May 2015, equal to the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were higher than their respective national averages in 12 of the 22 major occupational groups, including protective service; construction and extraction; and production. Six groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including legal; management; and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including transportation and material moving; construction and extraction; and installation, maintenance, and repair. Conversely, eight groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including production; computer and mathematical; and management. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Tacoma	United States	Tacoma	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$23.23	\$23.23	0
Management	5.0	4.0*	55.30	49.78*	-10
Business and Financial Operations	5.1	4.3*	35.48	32.64*	-8
Computer and Mathematical	2.9	1.6*	41.43	37.80*	-9
Architecture and Engineering	1.8	1.0*	39.89	38.84	-3
Life, Physical, and Social Science	0.8	0.6*	34.24	33.28	-3
Community and Social Services	1.4	2.3*	22.19	21.68	-2
Legal	0.8	0.7	49.74	37.59*	-24
Education, Training, and Library	6.2	6.3	25.48	24.58*	-4
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1.3	1.0*	27.39	22.92*	-16
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	5.8	6.5*	37.40	39.86*	7
Healthcare Support	2.9	2.8	14.19	16.97*	20
Protective Service	2.4	2.5	21.45	26.07*	22
Food Preparation and Serving Related	9.1	10.0*	10.98	12.51*	14
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	3.2	3.1	13.02	15.24*	17
Personal Care and Service	3.1	3.4	12.33	14.55*	18
Sales and Related	10.5	10.5	18.90	18.71	-1
Office and Administrative Support	15.8	15.9	17.47	18.57*	6
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.3	0.2*	12.67	17.87*	41
Construction and Extraction	4.0	5.0*	22.88	26.67*	17
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3.9	4.8*	22.11	24.65*	11

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Tacoma	United States	Tacoma	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Production	6.6	5.0*	17.41	20.75*	19
Transportation and Material Moving	6.9	8.5*	16.90	19.44*	15

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Tacoma is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—transportation and material moving—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Tacoma-Lakewood had 23,660 jobs in transportation and material moving, accounting for 8.5 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.9-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$19.44, significantly above the national wage of \$16.90.

Some of the largest detailed occupations within the transportation and material moving group included laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand (6,090), heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (4,480), and industrial truck and tractor operators (2,210). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators and first-line supervisors of helpers, laborers, and material movers, by hand, with mean hourly wages of \$33.52 and \$28.15, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were parking lot attendants (\$11.64) and cleaners of vehicles and equipment (\$12.09). (Detailed occupational data for transportation and material moving are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the transportation and material moving group. For instance, industrial truck and tractor operators were employed at 2.0 times the national rate in Tacoma, and driver/sales workers, at 2.0 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, light truck or delivery services drivers had a location quotient of 1.1 in Tacoma, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Washington Employment Security Department.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division included 2,458 establishments with a response rate of 76 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Tacoma-Lakewood, Wash. Metropolitan Division** includes Pierce County.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/west. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2015/may/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request . Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Tacoma-Lakewood Metropolitan Division, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations.....	23,660	1.2	\$19.44	\$40,430
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	520	1.5	28.15	58,540
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators.....	600	1.5	33.52	69,730
Commercial Pilots	(5)	(5)	(5)	63,880
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client.....	1,350	1.3	17.47	36,340
Driver/Sales Workers	1,670	2.0	14.29	29,720
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,480	1.3	22.77	47,360
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	1,760	1.1	19.87	41,320
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	200	0.6	14.31	29,770
Parking Lot Attendants	(5)	(5)	11.64	24,210
Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants.....	170	0.8	14.27	29,690
Conveyor Operators and Tenders	50	0.7	19.55	40,670
Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators	40	0.4	25.82	53,700
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators.....	2,210	2.0	21.09	43,880
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	810	1.2	12.09	25,140
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,090	1.2	17.56	36,530
Machine Feeders and Offbearers.....	110	0.5	16.06	33,410
Packers and Packagers, Hand.....	2,020	1.4	13.02	27,080
Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors.....	330	1.5	25.57	53,180
Tank Car, Truck, and Ship Loaders	80	3.4	(5)	(5)

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Tacoma-Lakewood, WA Metropolitan Division, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_45104.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.