

September 2008

Editor's note: We welcome you to the first issue of Dateline in the new online format. Current and archived issues can be found online at www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/dateline/2000/index.html.

TOP STORY

New Premium Rates kick in for new rate year



All Tennessee employers were recently notified of their premium rate for the new rate year that began on July 1, 2008. Those employers eligible for a calculated rate (one based on their own history of premiums paid and benefits charged) were pleased to learn that, effective July 1st, we moved to premium table 4, with somewhat lower rates than the table previously in effect. Most *new* employers were informed of their standard 2.7% new employer rate, although those new employers in a commercial sector with an industry-wide negative

reserve (benefit charges exceed premium payments) were assigned a somewhat higher rate. Those industries are the construction industry at 5.0%, manufacturing NAICS sectors 31 (5.5%) and 33 (6.0%), and the mining and extraction industry at 6.0%.

MORE NEWS

Please provide monthly employment data on your quarterly Premium Report

In completing their Premium Report each quarter, some employers do not provide all of the information requested. Usually omitted are the three "blocks" in the middle of the report that pertain to monthly employment data (see highlighted area in report facsimile below). They are captioned "1st month," "2nd month," and "3rd month." We strongly encourage you to provide these data on your premium report, in addition to all of the other requested information.

of Labor and Workforce Development by Tennessee employers be as complete and accurate as possible.

Skills and knowledge employers need

Today's workforce professionals want to know the types of skills and knowledge most in demand by employers to better design education and training programs for the state's workers, students, and trainees. The Occupational Information Network (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) uses surveys of employees from job analysis centers to determine skills and knowledge scores for every occupation. These scores were averaged for all employees in the 2006 Tennessee workforce to determine employers' top skills and knowledge needs.

The number of employees in Tennessee by occupation in 2006 was estimated by using data from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), and the Occupational Employment Survey (OES). Average scores of the highest ranked skills and knowledge areas (rankings range from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest) are given in the following table.

Category	Average Score
Skill Scores	
Active Listening	4.1
Reading Comprehension	3.8
Speaking	3.7
Time Management	3.5
Critical Thinking	3.5
Instructing	3.5
Active Learning	3.5
Knowledge Scores	
Customer and Personal Service	3.5
English Language	3.4
Mathematics	3.0
Administration and Management	2.9
Education and Training	2.8
Public Safety and Security	2.7

Source: TN Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, E.S. Division, Labor Market Information. August 2008

Among the highest ranked skills are communication, with active listening, reading comprehension, speaking, and instructing prominent on the list. Also vital are critical thinking and active learning. Time management, both an individual and organizational requirement, is included among the highest-ranking skills.

The highest scoring knowledge requirement for today's growing jobs is customer and personal service. English language and mathematics, which refer to symbolic knowledge in social and numerical settings, also rank highly. Administration and management is similar to time management among the skills scores; education and training show the importance of lifelong learning. Public safety and security, in this age of circumspection, has a high knowledge score.

State handles unemployment insurance with high level of integrity

Unemployment insurance has proven to be an economic stabilizer that levels the peaks and valleys of prosperity and recession.

For an individual to be eligible, he or she must be out of work due to no fault of their own. Claimants will be disqualified if they quit their most recent work voluntarily without good work-related cause, or were discharged for misconduct connected to their work. Claimants are required to certify weekly that they are able, available and looking for work, and must report any employment or refusal of work. Knowingly giving false statements while certifying for benefits will result in a fraud determination and a disqualification of future benefits.

Fraud-detection methods in place

States have been required, since the inception of the program more than 70 years ago, to have procedures in place to prevent and detect payments made in error or by willful misrepresentation. Many of the methods used by other agencies to prevent and detect fraud originated within the unemployment insurance program decades ago.

Our agency has both a low improper-payment rate and one of the highest fraud-detection rates in the nation. We have multiple systems in place to detect unreported earnings, but as long as unscrupulous employers are willing to pay individuals in cash, some amount of fraud will always go undetected.

Tennessee has established penalties in the law to punish claimants who commit fraud. We have a link on our department's Web page to report fraud and have established the Fraud Free Workplace program to educate both employers and employees.



With few exceptions, most employers are honest in dealing with our agency and their employees and have no desire to intentionally prevent individuals from receiving benefits when merited. At the same time, most unemployed individuals who are receiving benefits do not want to be unemployed and are sincere in their desire to gain employment.

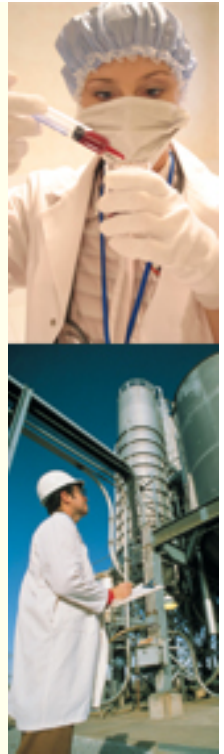
New Tennessee occupational employment and wage data available

The highest paying occupations in Tennessee in 2007 included physician specialists, chief executives, dentists, nuclear engineers and petroleum engineers, according to the latest Department of Labor and Workforce Occupational Employment Survey (OES) done in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The lowest paying occupations included fast food cooks, food preparation and serving workers, waiters and waitresses, child care workers, cashiers, bartenders, hosts and hostesses in restaurants, dining room and cafeteria attendants, and dishwashers. Occupations with the highest employment included retail salespersons, laborers and material movers, cashiers, food preparation and serving workers, heavy truck drivers, office clerks, registered nurses and team assemblers.

OES data can be used to compare wages and employment for different occupations, or to compare wages and employment for occupational groups across industries. For instance,

Tennessee's mean hourly wages ranged from \$37.45 for legal occupations to \$8.35 for food preparation and serving occupations.

These data are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program, which provides employment and wage estimates for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups. OES produces employment and wage data for more than 700 occupations in the state and within various metropolitan and non-metro areas. Information and data are available at <http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/wages/intro.htm>.



Comments or Questions? Contact [Martha Deacon](#)

The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to persons with disabilities.