

# Sales and Related Occupations

## Cashiers

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### Significant Points

- Cashiers are trained on the job; this occupation provides opportunities for many young people with no previous work experience.
- About one-half of all cashiers work part time.
- Good employment opportunities are expected because of the large number of workers who leave this occupation each year.

### Nature of the Work

Supermarkets, department stores, gasoline service stations, movie theaters, restaurants, and many other businesses employ cashiers to register the sale of their merchandise. Most cashiers total bills, receive money, make change, fill out charge forms, and give receipts.

Although specific job duties vary by employer, cashiers usually are assigned to a register at the beginning of their shifts and given drawers containing “banks” of money. They must count their banks to ensure that they contain the correct amount of money and adequate supplies of change. At the end of their shifts, they once again count the drawers’ contents and compare the totals with sales data. An occasional shortage of small amounts may be overlooked but, in many establishments, repeated shortages are grounds for dismissal.

In addition to counting the contents of their drawers at the end of their shifts, cashiers usually separate and total charge forms, return slips, coupons, and any other noncash items. Cashiers also handle returns and exchanges. They must ensure that returned merchandise is in good condition, and determine where and when it was purchased and what type of payment was used.

After entering charges for all items and subtracting the value of any coupons or special discounts, cashiers total the bill and take payment. Acceptable forms of payment include cash, personal check, charge, and debit cards. Cashiers must know the store’s policies and procedures for each type of payment the store accepts. For checks and charges, they may request additional identification from the customer or call in for an authorization. They must verify the age of customers purchasing alcohol or tobacco. When the sale is complete, cashiers issue a receipt to the customer and return the appropriate change. They may also wrap or bag the purchase.

Cashiers traditionally have totaled customers’ purchases using cash registers—manually entering the price of each product bought. However, most establishments now use more sophisticated equipment, such as scanners and computers. In a store with scanners, a cashier passes a product’s Universal Product Code over the scanning device, which transmits the code number to a computer. The computer identifies the item and its price. In other establishments, cashiers manually enter codes into computers, and descriptions of the items and their prices appear on the screen.

Depending on the type of establishment, cashiers may have other duties as well. In many supermarkets, for example, cashiers weigh produce and bulk food, as well as return unwanted items to the



*Cashiers sell refreshments and snacks at many of our favorite places.*

shelves. In convenience stores, cashiers may be required to know how to use a variety of machines other than cash registers, and how to furnish money orders. Operating ticket-dispensing machines and answering customers’ questions are common duties for cashiers who work at movie theaters and ticket agencies. In casinos, gaming change persons and booth cashiers exchange coins and tokens and may issue payoffs. They may also operate a booth in the slot-machine area and furnish change persons with a money bank at the start of the shift, or count and audit money in drawers.

### Working Conditions

About one-half of all cashiers work part time. Hours of work often vary depending on the needs of the employer. Generally, cashiers are expected to work weekends, evenings, and holidays to accommodate customers’ needs. However, many employers offer flexible schedules. For example, full-time workers who work on weekends may receive time off during the week. Because the holiday season is the busiest time for most retailers, many employers restrict the use of vacation time from Thanksgiving through the beginning of January.

Most cashiers work indoors, usually standing in booths or behind counters. In addition, they often are unable to leave their workstations without supervisory approval because they are responsible for large sums of money. The work of cashiers can be very repetitive, but improvements in workstation design are being made to combat problems caused by repetitive motion. In addition, the work can sometimes be dangerous; their risk from workplace homicides is much higher than that of the total workforce.

### Employment

Cashiers held about 3.4 million jobs in 2000. Although employed in almost every industry, one-third of all jobs were in supermarkets and other food stores. Restaurants, department stores, gasoline service stations, drug stores, and other retail establishments also employed large numbers of these workers. Outside of retail establishments, many cashiers worked in hotels, schools, motion picture theaters, and casinos. Because cashiers are needed in businesses and organizations of all types and sizes, job opportunities are found throughout the country.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Cashier jobs tend to be entry-level positions requiring little or no previous work experience. Although there are no specific educational requirements, employers filling full-time jobs often prefer applicants with high school diplomas.

Nearly all cashiers are trained on the job. In small businesses, an experienced worker often trains beginners. The first day usually is spent observing the operation and becoming familiar with the store's equipment, policies, and procedures. After this, trainees are assigned to a register—frequently under the supervision of a more-experienced worker. In larger businesses, before being placed at cash registers, trainees spend several days in classes. Topics typically covered include a description of the industry and the company, store policies and procedures, equipment operation, and security.

Training for experienced workers is not common, except when new equipment is introduced or when procedures change. In these cases, the employer or a representative of the equipment manufacturer trains workers on the job.

Persons who want to become cashiers should be able to do repetitive work accurately. They also need basic mathematics skills and good manual dexterity. Because cashiers deal constantly with the public, they should be neat in appearance and able to deal tactfully and pleasantly with customers. In addition, some businesses prefer to hire persons who can operate specialized equipment or who have business experience, such as typing, selling, or handling money.

Advancement opportunities for cashiers vary. For those working part time, promotion may be to a full-time position. Others advance to head cashier or cash-office clerk. In addition, this job offers a good opportunity to learn about an employer's business and can serve as a steppingstone to a more responsible position.

### Job Outlook

As in the past, opportunities for full- and part-time cashier jobs should continue to be good, because of employment growth and the need to replace the large number of workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

Cashier employment is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2010 because of expanding demand for goods and services by a growing population. The rising popularity of electronic commerce, which does not require a cashier to complete a transaction or accept payment, may reduce the employment growth of cashiers. However, electronic commerce will have a limited impact on this large occupation. Traditionally, workers under the age of 25 have filled many of the openings in this occupation—in 2000, more than half of all cashiers were 24 years of age or younger. Some establishments have begun hiring elderly and disabled persons as well to fill some of their job openings.

### Earnings

The starting wage for many cashiers is the Federal minimum wage, which was \$5.15 an hour in 2001. In some States, State law sets the minimum wage higher, and establishments must pay at least that amount. Wages tend to be higher in areas where there is intense competition for workers.

Median hourly earnings of cashiers, except gaming in 2000 were \$6.95. The middle 50 percent earned between \$6.14 and \$8.27 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$5.61, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$10.39 an hour. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of cashiers in 2000 were as follows:

Department stores .....	\$7.15
Grocery stores .....	6.99
Gasoline service stations .....	6.87
Drug stores and proprietary stores .....	6.63
Eating and drinking places .....	6.56

Benefits for full-time cashiers tend to be better than those for cashiers working part time. In addition to typical benefits, those working in retail establishments often receive discounts on purchases, and cashiers in restaurants may receive free or low-cost meals. Some employers also offer employee stock-option plans and education-reimbursement plans.

### Related Occupations

Cashiers accept payment for the purchase of goods and services. Other workers with similar duties include tellers, counter and rental clerks, food and beverage serving and related workers, gaming cage workers, postal service workers, and retail salespersons, all of whom are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.

### Sources of Additional Information

General information on retailing is available from:

► National Retail Federation, 325 7th St. NW., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20004. Internet: <http://www.nrf.com>

For information about employment opportunities as a cashier, contact:

► National Association of Convenience Stores, 1605 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2792. Internet: <http://www.cstorecentral.com>

► United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Education Office, 1775 K St. NW., Washington, DC 20006-1502.

## Counter and Rental Clerks

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### Significant Points

- Jobs primarily are entry-level and require little or no experience and minimal formal education.
- Average employment growth is expected as businesses strive to improve customer service.
- Part-time employment opportunities should be plentiful.

### Nature of the Work

Whether renting videotapes, moving trucks, or air compressors, dropping off clothes to be dry-cleaned or appliances to be serviced, we rely on counter and rental clerks to handle these transactions efficiently. Although specific duties vary by establishment, counter and rental clerks answer questions involving product availability, cost, and rental provisions. Counter and rental clerks also take orders, calculate fees, receive payments, and accept returns. (Cashiers and retail salespersons, occupations with similar duties, are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Regardless of where they work, counter and rental clerks must be knowledgeable about the company's services, policies, and procedures. Depending on the type of establishment, counter and rental clerks use their special knowledge to give advice on a wide variety of products and services, which may range from hydraulic tools to shoe repair. For example, in the car rental industry, they inform customers about the features of different types of automobiles, as well as daily and weekly rental costs. They also ensure that customers meet age and other requirements for rental cars, and indicate