



Production, planning, and expediting clerks compile reports on the progress of work and on production problems.

or shipment schedules. The schedules are reviewed and distributed after being considered by supervisors who determine work progress and completion dates. Production, planning, and expediting clerks compile reports on progress of work and production problems. They also may schedule workers, estimate costs, schedule shipment of parts, keep inventory of materials, inspect and assemble materials, and write special orders for services and merchandise. In addition, they may route and deliver parts to ensure that production quotas are met and that merchandise is delivered on the date promised.

Production and planning clerks compile records and reports on various aspects of production, such as materials and parts used, products produced, machine and instrument readings, and frequency of defects. They prepare and distribute work tickets or other production guides to workers. They coordinate, schedule, monitor, and chart production and its progress, either manually or using electronic equipment. Production and planning clerks also gather information from customer orders or other specifications to prepare a detailed production sheet that serves as a guide in assembly or manufacture of the product.

Expediting clerks contact vendors and shippers to ensure that merchandise, supplies, and equipment are forwarded on the specified shipping dates. They communicate with transportation companies to prevent delays in transit, and they may arrange for distribution of materials upon arrival. They may even visit work areas of vendors and shippers to check the status of orders. Expediting clerks locate and distribute materials to specified production areas. They may inspect products for quality and quantity to ensure adherence to specifications. They also keep a chronological list of due dates and may move work not meeting the production schedule to the front.

Employment

In 2000, production, planning, and expediting clerks held 332,000 jobs. Jobs in manufacturing made up 44 percent and jobs in wholesale trade and groceries and related products comprised about 6 percent. About 8 percent worked in the personnel supply services industry.

Job Outlook

Employment of production, planning, and expediting clerks is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2010. As increasing pressure is put on companies to get things produced and delivered more quickly and efficiently, the need

for production, planning, and expediting clerks will grow. The work of production, planning, and expediting clerks is less likely to be automated than is that of many other administrative support occupations. In addition to openings due to employment growth, many additional job openings will arise from the need to replace production, planning, and expediting clerks who leave the labor force or transfer to other occupations.

Related Occupations

Other workers who coordinate the flow of information to assist the production process include cargo and freight agents; shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks; stock clerks and order fillers; and weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities may be obtained from local employers and local offices of the State employment service.

(See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks

(O*NET 43-5071.00)

Nature of the Work

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks keep records of all goods shipped and received. Their duties depend on the size of the establishment and the level of automation used. Larger companies typically are better able to finance the purchase of computers and other equipment to handle some or all of a clerk's responsibilities. In smaller companies, a clerk maintains records, prepares shipments, and accepts deliveries. In both environments, shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks may lift cartons of various sizes.

Shipping clerks keep records of all outgoing shipments. They prepare shipping documents and mailing labels, and make sure orders have been filled correctly. Also, they record items taken from inventory and note when orders were filled. Sometimes they fill the order themselves, obtaining merchandise from the stockroom, noting when inventories run low, and wrapping or packing the goods in shipping containers. They also address and label packages, look up and compute freight or postal rates, and record the weight and cost of each shipment. Shipping clerks also may prepare invoices and furnish information about shipments to other parts of the company, such as the accounting department. Once a shipment is checked and ready to go, shipping clerks may move the goods from the plant—sometimes by forklift truck—to the shipping dock and direct its loading.

Receiving clerks perform tasks similar to those of shipping clerks. They determine whether orders have been filled correctly by verifying incoming shipments against the original order and the accompanying bill of lading or invoice. They make a record of the shipment and the condition of its contents. In many firms, receiving clerks use hand-held scanners to record barcodes on incoming products or enter the information into a computer. These data then can be transferred to the appropriate departments. The shipment is checked for any discrepancies in quantity, price, and discounts. Receiving clerks may route or move shipments to the proper department, warehouse section, or stockroom. They also may arrange for adjustments with shippers whenever merchandise is lost or damaged. Receiving clerks in small businesses also may perform duties similar to those of stock



Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks maintain records and prepare shipments.

clerks. In larger establishments, receiving clerks may control all receiving-platform operations, such as truck scheduling, recording of shipments, and handling of damaged goods.

Traffic clerks maintain records on the destination, weight, and charges on all incoming and outgoing freight. They verify rate charges by comparing the classification of materials with rate charts. In many companies, this work may be automated. Information either is scanned or is hand-entered into a computer for use by accounting or other departments within the company. Also, they keep a file of claims for overcharges and for damage to goods in transit.

Employment

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks held about 890,000 jobs in 2000. Nearly 4 out of 5 were employed in manufacturing or by wholesale and retail establishments. Although jobs for shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks are found throughout the country, most clerks work in urban areas, where shipping depots in factories and wholesale establishments usually are located. (For information on shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks working for the U.S. Postal Service, see the statement on Postal Service workers elsewhere in the *Handbook*).

Job Outlook

Employment of shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through 2010. Employment growth will continue to be affected by automation, as all but the smallest firms move to reduce labor costs by using computers to store and retrieve shipping and receiving records.

Methods of material handling have changed significantly in recent years. Large warehouses are increasingly automated, using equipment such as computerized conveyor systems, robots, computer-directed trucks, and automatic data storage and retrieval systems. Automation, coupled with the growing use of hand-held scanners and personal computers in shipping and receiving departments, has increased the productivity of these workers.

Despite technology, job openings will continue to arise due to increasing economic and trade activity, and because certain tasks cannot be automated. For example, someone needs to check shipments before they go out and when they arrive to ensure that everything is in order. In addition to those arising from job growth, openings will occur because of the need to replace shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks who leave the occupation. Because

this is an entry-level occupation, many vacancies are created by normal career progression.

Related Occupations

Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks record, check, and often store materials that a company receives. They also process and pack goods for shipment. Other workers who perform similar duties are stock clerks and order fillers; production, planning, and expediting clerks; and cargo and freight agents.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about job opportunities may be obtained from local employers and local offices of the State employment service.

(See introduction to the section on material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing occupations for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Stock Clerks and Order Fillers

(O*NET 43-5081.01, 43-5081.02, 43-5081.03, 43-5081.04)

Nature of the Work

Stock clerks and order fillers receive, unpack, check, store, and track merchandise or materials. They keep records of items entering or leaving the stockroom and inspect damaged or spoiled goods. They sort, organize, and mark items with identifying codes, such as prices or stock or inventory control codes, so that inventories can be located quickly and easily. They also may be required to lift cartons of various sizes. In larger establishments, where they may be responsible for only one task, they may be called *stock-control clerk*, *merchandise distributor*, or *property custodian*. In smaller firms, they also may perform tasks usually handled by shipping and receiving clerks. (A separate statement on shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks appears elsewhere in this section of the *Handbook*.)

In many firms, stock clerks and order fillers use hand-held scanners connected to computers to keep inventories up to date. In retail stores, stock clerks bring merchandise to the sales floor and stock shelves and racks. In stockrooms and warehouses, stock clerks store materials in bins, on floors, or on shelves. Instead of putting the merchandise on the sales floor or on shelves, order fillers take customer orders and either hold the merchandise until the customer can pick it up or send it to them.



The growing use of computers and automated equipment is expected to slow growth in demand for stock clerks and order fillers.