

Both construction and manufacturing are very sensitive to changes in economic conditions, so the number of job openings in these industries may fluctuate from year to year.

Earnings

Median hourly earnings of material moving workers in 2000 were as follows:

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| Gas compressor and gas pumping station operators | \$20.32 |
| Pump operators, except wellhead pumpers | 17.16 |
| First-line supervisors/managers of helpers, laborers, and material movers, hand | 16.73 |
| Wellhead pumpers | 16.35 |
| Crane and tower operators | 15.89 |
| Excavating and loading machine and dragline operators | 14.94 |
| Hoist and winch operators | 14.40 |
| Tank, car, truck, and ship loaders | 13.78 |
| Refuse and recyclable materials collectors | 11.83 |
| Industrial truck and tractor operators | 11.74 |
| Conveyer operators and tenders | 10.70 |
| Machine feeders and offbearers | 9.69 |
| Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand | 9.04 |
| Cleaners of vehicles and equipment | 7.55 |
| Hand packers and packagers | 7.53 |

Pay rates vary according to experience and job responsibilities. Pay usually is higher in metropolitan areas. Seasonal work may reduce earnings.

Related Occupations

Other workers who operate mechanical equipment include busdrivers; construction equipment operators; machine setters, operators, and tenders—metal and plastic; rail transportation workers; and truckdrivers and driver/sales workers. Other entry-level workers who perform mostly physical work are agricultural workers; building cleaning workers; construction laborers; forest, conservation, and logging workers; and grounds maintenance workers.

Sources of Additional Information

For information about job opportunities and training programs, contact local State employment service offices, building or construction contractors, manufacturers, and wholesale and retail establishments.

Information on safety and training requirements is available from:

- ▶ U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 200 Constitution Ave. NW., Washington, D.C. 20210. Internet: <http://www.osha.gov>

Information on industrial truck and tractor operators is available from:

- ▶ Industrial Truck Association, 1750 K St. NW., Suite 460, Washington, DC 20006.
- ▶ Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association, 2750 Prosperity Ave., Suite 620, Fairfax, VA 22301.

Motor Vehicle Operators

Busdrivers

(O*NET 53-3021.00, 53-3022.00)

Significant Points

- Opportunities should be good, particularly for school busdriver jobs.
- A commercial driver's license is required to operate on interstate bus routes.
- Busdrivers must possess strong customer service skills, including communication skills and the ability to manage large groups of people with varying needs.

Nature of the Work

Millions of Americans every day leave the driving to busdrivers. Busdrivers are essential in providing passengers with an alternative to their automobiles or other forms of transportation. Intercity busdrivers transport people between regions of a State or of the country; local transit busdrivers, within a metropolitan area or county; motorcoach drivers, on charter excursions and tours; and school busdrivers, to and from schools and related events.

Drivers pick up and drop off passengers at bus stops, stations, or, in the case of students, at regularly scheduled neighborhood locations based on strict time schedules. Drivers must operate vehicles safely, especially when traffic is heavier than normal. However, they cannot let light traffic put them ahead of schedule so that they miss passengers.

Local transit and intercity busdrivers report to their assigned terminal or garage, where they stock up on tickets or transfers and prepare trip report forms. In some firms, maintenance departments

are responsible for keeping vehicles in good condition. In others, drivers may check their vehicle's tires, brakes, windshield wipers, lights, oil, fuel, and water supply, before beginning their routes. Drivers usually verify that the bus has safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency reflectors in case of an emergency.

During the course of their shift, local transit and intercity busdrivers collect fares; answer questions about schedules, routes, and transfer points; and sometimes announce stops. Intercity busdrivers may make only a single one-way trip to a distant city or a round trip each day. They may stop at towns just a few miles apart or only at large cities hundreds of miles apart. Local transit busdrivers may make several trips each day over the same city and suburban streets, stopping as frequently as every few blocks.

Local transit busdrivers submit daily trip reports with a record of trips, significant schedule delays, and mechanical problems. Intercity drivers who drive across State or national boundaries must comply with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations. These include completing vehicle inspection reports and recording distances traveled and the periods they spend driving, performing other duties, and off duty.

Motorcoach drivers transport passengers on charter trips and sightseeing tours. Drivers routinely interact with customers and tour guides to make the trip as comfortable and informative as possible. They are directly responsible for keeping to strict schedules, adhering to the guidelines of the tours' itinerary, and the overall success of the trip. These drivers act as customer service representative, tour guide, program director, and safety guide. Trips frequently last more than one day. The driver may be away for more than a week if assigned to an extended tour. As with all drivers who drive across State or national boundaries, motorcoach drivers must comply with Department of Transportation regulations.



Regular local transit busdrivers usually have a 5-day workweek, which may include weekends.

School busdrivers usually drive the same routes each day, stopping to pick up pupils in the morning and return them to their homes in the afternoon. Some school busdrivers also transport students and teachers on field trips or to sporting events. In addition to driving, some school busdrivers work part time in the school system as janitors, mechanics, or classroom assistants when not driving buses.

Busdrivers must be alert to prevent accidents, especially in heavy traffic or in bad weather, and to avoid sudden stops or swerves that jar passengers. School busdrivers must exercise particular caution when children are getting on or off the bus. They must maintain order on their bus and enforce school safety standards by allowing only students to board. In addition, they must know and enforce rules regarding student conduct used throughout the school system.

School busdrivers do not always have to report to an assigned terminal or garage. In some cases, school busdrivers often have the choice of taking their bus home, or parking it in a more convenient area. School busdrivers do not collect fares. Instead, they prepare weekly reports on the number of students, trips or runs, work hours, miles, and the amount of fuel consumption. Their supervisors set time schedules and routes for the day or week.

Working Conditions

Driving a bus through heavy traffic while dealing with passengers is more stressful and fatiguing than physically strenuous. Many drivers enjoy the opportunity to work without direct supervision, with full responsibility for their bus and passengers. To improve working conditions and retain drivers, many bus lines provide ergonomically designed seats and controls for drivers.

Intercity busdrivers may work nights, weekends, and holidays and often spend nights away from home, where they stay in hotels at company expense. Senior drivers with regular routes have regular weekly work schedules, but others do not have regular schedules and must be prepared to report for work on short notice. They report for work only when called for a charter assignment or to drive extra buses on a regular route. Intercity bus travel and charter work tends to be seasonal. From May through August, drivers may work the maximum number of hours per week that regulations allow. During winter, junior drivers may work infrequently, except for busy holiday travel periods, and may be furloughed for periods.

School busdrivers work only when school is in session. Many work 20 hours a week or less, driving one or two routes in the morning and afternoon. Drivers taking field or athletic trips or who also have midday kindergarten routes may work more hours a week. As

more students with a variety of physical and behavioral disabilities assimilate into mainstream schools, school busdrivers must learn how to accommodate their special needs.

Regular local transit busdrivers usually have a 5-day workweek; Saturdays and Sundays are considered regular workdays. Some drivers work evenings and after midnight. To accommodate commuters, many work “split shifts,” for example, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., with time off in between.

Tour and charter busdrivers may work any day and all hours of the day, including weekends and holidays. Their hours are dictated by the charter trips booked and the schedule and prearranged itinerary of tours. However, like all busdrivers, their weekly hours must be consistent with the Department of Transportation’s rules and regulations concerning hours of service. For example, a driver may drive for 10 hours, and work up to 15 hours—including driving and non-driving duties—before having 8 hours off-duty. A driver may not drive after having worked for 70 hours in the past 8 days. Most drivers are required to document their time in a logbook.

Employment

Busdrivers held about 666,000 jobs in 2000. More than a third worked part time. About two-thirds of all drivers worked for school systems or companies providing school bus services under contract. Most of the remainder worked for private and local government transit systems; some also worked for intercity and charter bus lines.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Busdriver qualifications and standards are established by State and Federal regulations. All drivers must comply with Federal regulations and any State regulations that exceed Federal requirements. Federal regulations require drivers who operate vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers to hold a commercial driver’s license (CDL) from the State in which they live.

To qualify for a commercial driver’s license, applicants must pass a written test on rules and regulations and then demonstrate they can operate a bus safely. A national data bank permanently records all driving violations incurred by persons who hold commercial licenses. A State may not issue a commercial driver’s license to a driver who already has a license suspended or revoked in another State. A driver with a CDL must accompany trainees until they get their own CDL. Information on how to apply for a commercial driver’s license may be obtained from State motor vehicle administrations.

While many States allow those who are 18 years and older to drive buses within State borders, the Department of Transportation establishes minimum qualifications for busdrivers engaged in interstate commerce. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations require drivers to be at least 21 years old and pass a physical examination once every 2 years. The main physical requirements include good hearing, 20/40 vision with or without glasses or corrective lenses, and a 70-degree field of vision in each eye. Drivers must not be colorblind. They must be able to hear a forced whisper in one ear at not less than 5 feet, with or without a hearing aide. Drivers must have normal use of arms and legs and normal blood pressure. They may not use any controlled substances, unless prescribed by a licensed physician. Persons with epilepsy or diabetes controlled by insulin are not permitted to be interstate busdrivers. Federal regulations also require employers to test their drivers for alcohol and drug use as a condition of employment, and require periodic random tests while on duty. In addition, a driver must not have been convicted of a felony involving the use of a motor vehicle; a crime involving drugs; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol; or hit-and-run driving which resulted in injury or death. All drivers must be able to read and speak English well enough to

read road signs, prepare reports, and communicate with law enforcement officers and the public. In addition, drivers must take a written examination on the Motor Carrier Safety Regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Many employers prefer high school graduates and require a written test of ability to follow complex bus schedules. Many intercity and public transit bus companies prefer applicants who are at least 24 years of age; some require several years of bus or truck driving experience. In some States, school busdrivers must pass a background investigation to uncover any criminal record or history of mental problems.

Because busdrivers deal with passengers, they must be courteous. They need an even temperament and emotional stability because driving in heavy, fast-moving, or stop-and-go traffic and dealing with passengers can be stressful. Drivers must have strong customer service skills, including communication skills and the ability to coordinate and manage large groups of people.

Most intercity bus companies and local transit systems give driver trainees 2 to 8 weeks of classroom and "behind-the-wheel" instruction. In the classroom, trainees learn Department of Transportation and company work rules, safety regulations, State and municipal driving regulations, and safe driving practices. They also learn to read schedules, determine fares, keep records, and deal courteously with passengers.

School busdrivers are also required to obtain a commercial driver's license from the State in which they live. Many persons who enter school busdriving have never driven any vehicle larger than an automobile. They receive between 1 and 4 weeks of driving instruction plus classroom training on State and local laws, regulations, and policies of operating school buses; safe driving practices; driver-pupil relations; first aid; special needs of disabled and emotionally troubled students; and emergency evacuation procedures. School busdrivers also must be aware of school systems rules for discipline and conduct for busdrivers and the students they transport.

During training, busdrivers practice driving on set courses. They practice turns and zigzag maneuvers, backing up, and driving in narrow lanes. Then they drive in light traffic and, eventually, on congested highways and city streets. They also make trial runs, without passengers, to improve their driving skills and learn the routes. Local transit trainees memorize and drive each of the runs operating out of their assigned garage. New drivers begin with a "break-in" period. They make regularly scheduled trips with passengers, accompanied by an experienced driver who gives helpful tips, answers questions, and evaluates the new driver's performance.

New intercity and local transit drivers are usually placed on an "extra" list to drive charter runs, extra buses on regular runs, and special runs (for example, during morning and evening rush hours and to sports events). They also substitute for regular drivers who are ill or on vacation. New drivers remain on the extra list, and may work only part time, perhaps for several years, until they have enough seniority to receive a regular run.

Senior drivers may bid for runs they prefer, such as those with more work hours, lighter traffic, weekends off, or, in the case of intercity busdrivers, higher earnings or fewer workdays per week.

Opportunities for promotion are generally limited. However, experienced drivers may become supervisors or dispatchers, assigning buses to drivers, checking whether drivers are on schedule, re-routing buses to avoid blocked streets or other problems, and dispatching extra vehicles and service crews to scenes of accidents and breakdowns. In transit agencies with rail systems, drivers may become train operators or station attendants. A few drivers become managers. Promotion in publicly owned bus systems is often by competitive civil service examination. Some motorcoach drivers purchase their own equipment and go in to business for themselves.

Job Outlook

Persons seeking jobs as busdrivers should encounter good opportunities. Many employers have recently had difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill vacancies left by departing employees. Opportunities should be best for individuals with good driving records who are willing to start on a part-time or irregular schedule, as well as for those seeking jobs as school busdrivers in rapidly growing suburban areas. Those seeking higher paying intercity and public transit busdriver positions may encounter competition.

Employment of busdrivers is expected to increase about as fast as average for all occupations through the year 2010, primarily to meet the transportation needs of a growing school-age population and local environmental concerns. Thousands of additional job openings are expected to occur each year because of the need to replace workers who take jobs in other occupations, retire, or leave the occupation for other reasons.

School busdriving jobs should be easiest to acquire because most are part time positions with high turnover and minimal training requirements. The number of school busdrivers is expected to increase as a result of growth in elementary and secondary school enrollments. In addition, as more of the Nation's population is concentrated in suburban areas—where students generally ride school buses—and less in the central cities—where transportation is not provided for most pupils—more school busdrivers will be needed.

Employment of local transit and intercity drivers will grow as bus ridership increases due to population growth. There may be competition for positions with more regular hours and steady driving routes.

Competition from other modes of transportation—airplane, train, or automobile—will temper growth in the intercity bus industry. Most growth in intercity bus lines will occur in group charters to locations not served by other modes of transportation. Like automobiles, buses have a far greater number of possible travel destinations than airplanes or trains. Due to greater cost savings and convenience over automobiles, buses usually are the most economical option for tour groups heading to out-of-the-way destinations.

Full-time busdrivers are rarely laid off during recessions. However, employers might reduce hours of part-time local transit and intercity busdrivers if bus ridership decreases, because fewer extra buses would be needed. Seasonal layoffs are common. Many intercity busdrivers with little seniority, for example, are furloughed during the winter when regular schedule and charter business falls off; school busdrivers seldom work during the summer or school holidays.

Earnings

Median hourly earnings of transit and intercity busdrivers were \$12.36 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$9.47 and \$16.78 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$7.64, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$20.03 an hour. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of transit and intercity busdrivers in 2000 were as follows:

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| Local government | \$14.68 |
| Intercity and rural bus transportation | 14.60 |
| Local and suburban transportation | 11.48 |
| School buses | 10.67 |
| Bus charter service | 10.27 |

Median hourly earnings of school busdrivers were \$10.05 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$7.28 and \$12.74 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$5.99, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$15.48 an hour. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of school busdrivers in 2000 were as follows:

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|---|---------|
| School buses | \$10.50 |
| Elementary and secondary schools | 9.97 |
| Local and suburban transportation | 9.49 |
| Child daycare services | 8.12 |
| Individual and family services | 7.84 |

The benefits busdrivers receive from their employers vary greatly. Most intercity and local transit busdrivers receive paid health and life insurance, sick leave, and free bus rides on any of the regular routes of their line or system. Drivers who work full time also get as much as 4 weeks of vacation annually. Most local transit busdrivers are also covered by dental insurance and pension plans. School busdrivers receive sick leave, and many are covered by health and life insurance and pension plans. Because they generally do not work when school is not in session, they do not get vacation leave. In a number of States, local transit and school busdrivers employed by local governments are covered by a statewide public employee pension system. Increasingly, school systems extend benefits to drivers who supplement their driving by working in the school system during off hours.

Most intercity and many local transit busdrivers are members of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Local transit busdrivers in New York and several other large cities belong to the Transport Workers Union of America. Some drivers belong to the United Transportation Union and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Related Occupations

Other workers who drive vehicles on highways and city streets are ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians; taxi drivers and chauffeurs; and truckdrivers and driver/sales workers.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on employment opportunities, contact local transit systems, intercity bus lines, school systems, or the local offices of the State employment service.

General information on busdriving is available from:

► American Bus Association, 1100 New York Ave. NW., Suite 1050, Washington, DC 20005. Internet: <http://www.buses.org>

General information on school bus driving is available from:

► National School Transportation Association, 625 Slaters Lane, Suite 205, Alexandria, VA 22314.

► School Bus Fleet, 21061 S. Western Ave., Torrance, CA 90501.

General information on local transit busdriving is available from:

► American Public Transportation Association, 1666 K St. NW., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006. Internet: <http://www.apta.com>

General information on motorcoach driving is available from:

► United Motorcoach Association, 113 S. West St., 4th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314. Telephone (tollfree): 800-424-8262.

Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs

(O*NET 53-3041.00)

Significant Points

- Taxi drivers and chauffeurs can work all schedules, including full-time, part-time, night, evening, and weekend work.
- Job opportunities will be good because replacement needs are high—many people work in these jobs for short periods.
- Many taxi drivers and chauffeurs like the independent, unsupervised work of driving their automobile.

Nature of the Work

Anyone who has been in a large city knows the importance of taxi and limousine service. *Taxi drivers*, also known as *cab drivers*, help passengers get to and from their homes, workplaces, and recreational pursuits such as dining, entertainment, and shopping. They also help out-of-town business people and tourists get around in new surroundings.

At the start of their driving shift, taxi drivers usually report to a taxicab service or garage where they are assigned a vehicle, most frequently a large, conventional automobile modified for commercial passenger transport. They record their name, work date, and cab identification number on a trip sheet. Drivers check the cab's fuel and oil levels, and make sure the lights, brakes, and windshield wipers are in good working order. Drivers adjust rear and side mirrors and their seat for comfort. Any equipment or part not in good working order is reported to the dispatcher or company mechanic.

Taxi drivers pick up passengers in one of three ways: cruising the streets to pick up random passengers; prearranged pickups; and pickups from taxi stands established in highly trafficked areas. In urban areas, the majority of passengers hail or "wave down" drivers cruising the streets. Customers may also prearrange a pickup by calling a cab company and giving a location, approximate pick up time, and destination. The cab company dispatcher then relays the information to a driver by two-way radio, cellular telephone, or on-board computer. Outside of urban areas, the majority of trips are dispatched in this manner. Drivers also pick up passengers waiting at cabstands or in taxi lines at airports, train stations, hotels, and other places where people frequently seek taxis.

Some drivers transport individuals with special needs, such as those with disabilities and the elderly. These drivers, also known as *paratransit drivers*, operate specially equipped vehicles designed to accommodate a variety of needs in nonemergency situations. Although special certification is not necessary, some additional training on the equipment and passenger needs may be required.

Drivers should be familiar with streets in the areas they serve so they can use the most efficient route to destinations. They should know the locations of frequently requested destinations, such as airports, bus and railroad terminals, convention centers, hotels, and other points of interest. In case of emergency, the driver should also know the location of fire and police stations and hospitals.

Upon reaching the destination, drivers determine the fare and announce it to the rider. Fares often consist of many parts. In many cabs, a taximeter measures the fare based on the length of the trip and the amount of time the trip took. Drivers turn the taximeter on when passengers enter the cab and turn it off when they reach the final destination. The fare also may include a surcharge for additional passengers, a fee for handling luggage, or a drop charge—an additional flat fee added for use of the cab. In some cases, fares are determined by a system of zones through which the taxi passes during a trip. Each jurisdiction determines the rate and structure of the fare system covering licensed taxis. Passengers generally add a tip or gratuity to the fare. The amount of the gratuity depends on the passengers' satisfaction with the quality and efficiency of the ride and courtesy of the driver. Drivers issue receipts upon request from the passenger. They enter onto the trip sheet all information regarding the trip, including the place and time of pick-up and drop-off and the total fee. These logs help check the driver's activity and efficiency. Drivers also must fill out accident reports when necessary.

Chauffeurs operate limousines, vans, and private cars for limousine companies, private businesses, government agencies, and wealthy individuals. This service differs from taxi service in that all trips are prearranged. Many chauffeurs transport customers in