Hotels and Other Accommodations

**SIGNIFICANT POINTS**

- Service occupations, by far the largest occupational group, account for 66 percent of the industry’s employment.
- Hotels employ many young workers and others in part-time and seasonal jobs.
- Average earnings are lower than in most other industries.

**Nature of the Industry**

Hotels and other accommodations are as diverse as the many families and business travelers they accommodate. The industry includes all types of lodging, from upscale hotels to RV parks. Motels, resorts, casino hotels, bed-and-breakfast inns, and boarding houses also are included. In fact, nearly 61,000 establishments provided overnight accommodations to suit many different needs and budgets in 2002.

Establishments vary greatly in size and in the services they provide. Hotels and motels make up the majority of establishments and tend to provide more services than do other lodging places. There are five basic types of hotels—commercial, resort, residential, extended-stay, and casino. Most hotels and motels are commercial properties that cater mainly to business people, tourists, and other travelers who need accommodations for a brief stay. Commercial hotels and motels usually are located in cities or suburban areas and operate year round. Larger properties offer a variety of services for their guests, including coffee shops, restaurants, and cocktail lounges with live entertainment. Some even provide gift shops, newsstands, barber and beauty shops, laundry and valet services, theater and airline counters.

Larger hotels and motels often have banquet rooms, exhibit halls, and spacious ballrooms to accommodate conventions, business meetings, wedding receptions, and other social gatherings. Conventions and business meetings are major sources of revenue for these hotels and motels. Some commercial hotels are known as conference hotels—fully self-contained entities specifically designed for meetings. They provide physical and recreational facilities for meetings, in addition to state-of-the-art audiovisual and technical equipment.

Resort hotels and motels offer luxurious surroundings with a variety of recreational facilities such as swimming pools, golf courses, tennis courts, gamerooms, and health spas, as well as planned social activities and entertainment. Resorts are located primarily in vacation destinations near mountains, the seashore, or other attractions. As a result, the business of many resorts fluctuates with the season. Some resort hotels and motels provide additional convention and conference facilities to encourage customers to combine business with pleasure. During their off season, these establishments solicit conventions, sales meetings, and incentive tours to fill their otherwise empty rooms.

Residential hotels provide living quarters for permanent and semipermanent residents. They combine the comfort of apartment living with the convenience of hotel services. Many have dining rooms and restaurants that also are open to the general public.

Extended-stay hotels combine features of a resort and a residential hotel. Typically, guests use these hotels for a minimum of 5 consecutive nights. These facilities usually provide rooms with fully equipped kitchens, entertainment systems, ironing boards and irons, office spaces with computer and telephone lines, access to fitness centers, and other amenities.

Casino hotels provide lodging in hotel facilities with a casino on the premises. The casino provides table wagering games and may include other gambling activities, such as slot machines and sports betting. Casino hotels generally offer a full range of services and amenities and may also contain conference and convention facilities.

In addition to hotels and motels, bed-and-breakfast inns, recreational vehicle (RV) parks, campgrounds, and boarding houses provide lodging for overnight guests. Bed-and-breakfast inns provide short-term lodging in private homes or small buildings converted for this purpose and are characterized by highly personalized service and inclusion of a full breakfast in the room rate. Their appeal is quaintness, with unusual service and decor.

RV parks and recreational camps cater to people who enjoy recreational camping at moderate prices. Some parks and campgrounds provide service stations, general stores, shower and toilet facilities, and coin-operated laundries. While some are designed for overnight travelers only, others are for vacationers who stay longer. Some camps provide accommodations, such as cabins and fixed campsites, and other amenities, such as food services, recreational facilities and equipment, and organized recreational activities. Examples of these overnight camps include, children’s camps, family vacation camps, hunting and fishing camps, and outdoor adventure retreats that offer trail riding, white-water rafting, hiking, and similar activities.

Other short-term lodging facilities in this industry include guesthouses, or small cottages located on the same property as a main residence, and youth hostels—dormitory-style hotels with few frills, occupied mainly by students traveling on low budgets. Also included are rooming and boarding houses, such as fraternity houses, sorority houses, off-campus dormitories, and workers’ camps. These establishments provide temporary or longer term accommodations that may serve as a principal residence for the period of occupancy. These establishments also may provide services such as housekeeping, meals, and laundry services.
In recent years, hotels, motels, camps, and recreational and RV parks affiliated with national chains have been growing rapidly. To the traveler, familiar chain establishments represent dependability and quality at predictable rates. National corporations own many chains, although several others are independently owned but affiliated with a chain through a franchise agreement.

Increases in competition and in the sophistication of travelers have induced the chains to provide lodging to serve a variety of customer budgets and accommodation preferences. In general, these lodging places may be grouped into properties that offer luxury, all-suite, moderately priced, and economy accommodations. The numbers of limited-service or economy chain properties—economy lodging without lobbies, restaurants, lounges, and meeting rooms—have been growing. These properties are not as costly to build and operate. They appeal to budget-conscious family vacations and travelers who are willing to sacrifice amenities for lower room prices.

While economy chains have become more prevalent, the movement in the hotel and lodging industry is towards more extended-stay properties. In addition to fully equipped kitchenettes and laundry services, the extended-stay market offers guest amenities such as in-room access to the Internet and grocery shopping. This segment of the hotels and other accommodations industry has eliminated traditional hotel lobbies and 24-hour personnel, and housekeeping is usually done only about once a week. This helps to keep costs to a minimum.

All-suite facilities, especially popular with business travelers, offer a living room and a bedroom. These accommodations are aimed at travelers who require lodging for extended stays, families traveling with children, and business people needing to conduct small meetings without the expense of renting an additional room.

Increased competition among establishments in this industry has spurred many independently owned and operated hotels and other lodging places to join national or international reservation systems, which allow travelers to make multiple reservations for lodging, airlines, and car rentals with one telephone call. Nearly all hotel chains operate online reservation systems through the Internet.

**Working Conditions**

Work in hotels and other accommodations can be hectic, particularly for those providing check-in and checkout services. Hotel desk clerks must quickly, accurately, and cordially process large numbers of sometimes impatient and irate guests. Hotel managers often experience pressure and stress when coordinating a wide range of events such as conventions, business meetings, and social gatherings. Further, large groups of tourists can present unusual problems requiring extra work and long hours.

Because hotels are open around the clock, employees frequently work varying shifts. Employees who work the late shift generally receive additional compensation. Although managers who live in the hotel usually have regular work schedules, they may be called at any time in the event of an emergency. Those who are self-employed tend to work long hours and often live at the establishment.

Food preparation and food service workers in hotels must withstand the strain of working during busy periods and being on their feet for many hours. Kitchen workers lift heavy pots and kettles and work near hot ovens and grills. Job hazards include slips and falls, cuts, and burns, but injuries are seldom serious. Food service workers often carry heavy trays of food, dishes, and glassware. Many of these workers work part time, including evenings, weekends, and holidays.

In 2002, work-related injuries and illnesses averaged 6.6 for every 100 full-time workers in hotels and other accommodations, compared with 5.3 for workers throughout private industry. Work hazards include burns from hot equipment, sprained muscles and wrenched backs from heavy lifting, and falls on wet floors.

**Employment**

Hotels and other accommodations provided 1.8 million wage and salary jobs in 2002. In addition, there were about 37,000 self-employed workers in the industry, who were found in bed-and-breakfast inns, camps, and small motels.

Employment is concentrated in densely populated cities and resort areas. Compared with establishments in other industries, hotels, motels, and other lodging places tend to be small. More than 75 percent employed fewer than 20 people; about 42 percent employ fewer than 5 workers (chart). As a result, lodging establishments offer opportunities for those who are interested in owning and running their own business. Although establishments tend to be small, the majority of jobs are in large hotels and motels with more than 100 employees.

Many of the industry’s workers are young because hotels and other lodging places provide first jobs to many new entrants to the labor force. In 2002, about 21 percent of the workers were younger than age 25, compared with about 14 percent across all industries (table 1).
occupations usually learn their skills on the job. Postsecondary education is not required for most entry-level positions; however, college training may be helpful for advancement in some of these occupations. For many administrative support and service occupations, personality traits and special abilities may be more important than formal schooling. Traits most important for success in the hotel and motel industry are good communication skills; the ability to get along with people in stressful situations; a neat, clean appearance; and a pleasant manner.

Service occupations, by far the largest occupational group, account for 66 percent of the industry’s employment. Most service jobs are in housekeeping and building service occupations—including maids, housekeepers, janitors, linen-room attendants, and laundry workers—and in food preparation and service jobs—including chefs and cooks, waiters and waitresses, bartenders, food counter workers, and various kitchen workers.

Workers in cleaning and housekeeping occupations ensure that the lodging facility is clean and in good condition for the comfort and safety of guests. Maids and housekeepers clean toilets, halls, guestrooms, and bathrooms. They make sure that guests not only have clean rooms, but all the necessary furnishings and supplies. They change sheets and towels, vacuum carpets, dust furniture, empty wastebaskets, and mop bathroom floors. In large hotels, the housekeeping staff may include assistant housekeepers, floor supervisors, housekeepers, and executive housekeepers. Janitors help with the cleaning of the facility and perform minor maintenance work. They may fix leaky faucets, do some painting and carpentry, see that heating and air-conditioning equipment works properly, empty trash, mow lawns, and exterminate pests.

Workers in the various food service occupations deal with customers in the dining room or at a service counter. Waiters and waitresses take customers’ orders, serve meals, and prepare checks. In restaurants, they may describe chef’s specials and suggest appropriate wines. In small establishments, they often set tables, escort guests to their seats, accept payments, and clear tables. They also may deliver room service orders to guests. In large restaurants, some of these tasks are assigned to other workers.

Hosts and hostesses welcome guests, show them to their tables, and give them menus. Bartenders fill beverage orders for guests not only have clean rooms, but all the necessary furnishings and supplies. They change sheets and towels, vacuum carpets, dust furniture, empty wastebaskets, and mop bathroom floors. In large hotels, the housekeeping staff may include assistant housekeepers, floor supervisors, housekeepers, and executive housekeepers. Janitors help with the cleaning of the facility and perform minor maintenance work. They may fix leaky faucets, do some painting and carpentry, see that heating and air-conditioning equipment works properly, empty trash, mow lawns, and exterminate pests.

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that waiters and waitresses take from the customers at tables and seated at the bar. *Dining room and cafeteria attendants* and *bartender helpers* assist waiters, waitresses, and bartenders by clearing, cleaning, and setting up tables, and by keeping the serving areas stocked with linens, tableware, and other supplies. *Counter attendants* take orders and serve food at fast-food counters and in coffee shops. They also may operate the cash register.

Workers in the various *food preparation* occupations prepare food in the kitchen. Beginners may advance to more skilled food preparation jobs with experience or specialized culinary training. *Food preparation workers* shred lettuce for salads, cut up food for cooking, and perform simple cooking under the direction of the chef or head cook. *Chefs and cooks* generally prepare a wide selection of dishes, often cooking individual servings to order. Large hotels employ cooks who specialize in the preparation of many different kinds of food. They may have titles such as salad chef, roast chef, sauce chef, or dessert chef. Chef positions generally are attained after years of experience and, sometimes, formal training, including apprenticeships. Large establishments also have *chief stewards* and *assistant stewards* who plan menus, purchase food, and supervise various kitchen personnel.

Many full-service hotels employ a uniformed staff to assist arriving and departing guests. *Baggage porters and bellhops* carry bags and escort guests to their rooms. *Concierges* arrange special or personal services for guests. They may take messages, arrange for babysitting, make hotel reservations in other cities, arrange for or give advice on entertainment, and monitor requests for housekeeping and maintenance. *Doorkeepers* help guests into and out of their cars or taxis, summon taxis, and carry baggage into the hotel lobby.

Hotels also employ the largest percentage of *gaming services* workers because much of gaming takes place in casino hotels. Some gaming services positions are associated with oversight and direction—supervision, surveillance, and investigation—while others involve working with the games or patrons themselves, by tending the slot machines, handling money, writing and running tickets, dealing cards, and performing related duties.

*Office and administrative support* positions accounted for 17 percent of the jobs in hotels and other accommodations in 2002. Hotel desk clerks, secretaries, bookkeeping and accounting clerks, and telephone operators ensure that the front office operates smoothly. The majority of these workers are *hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks*. They process reservations and guests’ registration and checkout, monitor arrivals and departures, handle complaints, and receive and forward mail. The duties of hotel desk clerks depend on the size of the facility. In small lodging places, one clerk or a manager may do everything. In large hotels, the duties are divided among several types of clerks. Although hotel desk clerks sometimes are hired from the outside, openings usually are filled by promoting other hotel employees such as bellhops and porters, credit clerks, and other administrative support workers.

Hotels and other lodging places employ many different types of *managers* to direct and coordinate the activities of the front office, kitchen, dining room, and other departments, such as housekeeping, accounting, personnel, purchasing, publicity, sales, and maintenance. Managers make decisions on room rates, establish credit policy, and have ultimate responsibility for resolving problems. In small establishments, the manager also may perform much of the front-office clerical work. In the smallest establishments, the owners—sometimes a family team—do all the work necessary to operate the business.

*Lodging managers or general and operations managers* in large hotels often have several assistant managers, each responsible for a phase of operations. For example, *food service managers* oversee restaurants, lounges, and catering operations. Large hotels and conference centers also employ *public relations and sales managers* to promote their image and to attract business. Large hotels have many different sales managers, including convention managers, merchandise managers, foreign sales managers, and tour and agency managers. Sales managers often travel around the country selling their meeting, banquet, and convention facilities.

Workers at vacation and recreational camps may include camp counselors who lead and instruct children and teenagers in outdoor-oriented forms of recreation, such as swimming, hiking, horseback riding, and camping. In addition, counselors at vacation and resident camps also provide guidance and supervise daily living and general socialization. Other types of campgrounds may employ trail guides for activities such as hiking, hunting, and fishing.

Hotels and other lodging places employ a variety of workers found in many other industries. Among these are cashiers, accountants, personnel workers, entertainers, recreation workers, and maintenance workers, such as stationary engineers, plumbers, and painters. Still others include guards and security officers, barbers, cosmetologists, valets, gardeners, and parking attendants.

**Training and Advancement**

Although the skills and experience needed by workers in this industry depend on the specific occupation, most entry-level jobs require little or no previous training. Basic tasks usually can be learned in a short time. Almost all workers in the hotel and other accommodations industry undergo on-the-job training, which usually is provided under the supervision of an experienced employee or manager. Some large chain operations have formal training sessions for new employees, and others have video training programs.

Hotel operations are becoming increasingly complex, however, with a greater emphasis being placed on specialized training. Therefore, the demand is increasing for people with special skills obtained in colleges, junior colleges, technical institutes, vocational schools, and high schools. Vocational courses and apprenticeship programs in food preparation, catering, and hotel and restaurant management, offered through restaurant associations and trade unions, provide training opportunities. Programs range in length from a few months to several years. About 200 community and junior colleges offer 2-year degree programs in hotel and restaurant management. The U.S. Armed Forces also offer experience and training in food service.

Traditionally, many hotels filled first-level manager positions by promoting administrative support and service workers—par-
ticularly those with good communication skills, a solid educational background, tact, loyalty, and a capacity to endure hard work and long hours. People with these qualities still advance to manager jobs but, more recently, lodging chains have primarily been hiring persons with 4-year college degrees in the liberal arts or other fields and starting them in trainee or junior management positions. Bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in hotel and restaurant management provide the strongest background for a career as a hotel manager, with nearly 150 colleges and universities offering such programs. Graduates of these programs are enthusiastically sought by employers in this industry. New graduates often go through on-the-job training programs before being given much responsibility. Eventually, they may advance to a top management position in a large chain operation.

Upper management positions, such as general manager, lodging manager, food service manager, or sales manager, generally require considerable formal training and job experience. Some department managers, such as comptrollers, purchasing managers, executive housekeepers, and executive chefs, generally require some specialized training and extensive on-the-job experience. To advance to positions with more responsibilities, managers frequently change employers or relocate to a chain property in another area.

For office and administrative support and service workers, advancement opportunities in the hotel industry vary widely. Some workers, such as housekeepers and janitors, generally have few opportunities for advancement. In large properties, however, some janitors may advance to supervisory positions. Hotel desk clerks, hospitality workers, and chefs sometimes advance to managerial positions. Promotional opportunities from the front office often are greater than those from any other department, because one has an excellent opportunity to learn the establishment’s overall operation from this vantage point. Front-office jobs are excellent entry-level jobs and can serve as a steppingstone to jobs in hospitality, public relations, advertising, sales, and management.

Advancement opportunities for chefs and cooks are better than those for most other service occupations. Cooks often advance to chef or to supervisory and management positions, such as executive chef, restaurant manager, or food service manager. Some transfer to jobs in clubs, go into business for themselves, or become instructors of culinary arts.

Earnings
Earnings in hotels and other accommodations generally are much lower than the average for all industries. In 2002, average earnings for all nonsupervisory workers in this industry were $10.01 an hour, or $297 a week, compared with $14.95 an hour, or $506 a week, for workers throughout private industry. Many workers in this industry earn the Federal minimum wage of $5.15 an hour. Some States have laws that establish a higher minimum wage. Federal laws, however, allow employers to pay below the minimum wage when an employee is expected to receive tips.

Food and beverage service workers, as well as hosts and hostesses, maids and housekeeping cleaners, concierges, and baggage porters and bellhops, derive their earnings from a combination of hourly earnings and customer tips. Waiters and waitresses often derive the majority of their earnings from tips, which vary greatly depending on menu prices and the volume of customers served. Many employers also provide free meals and furnish uniforms. Food service personnel may receive extra pay for working at banquets and on other special occasions. In general, workers with the greatest skills, such as restaurant cooks, have the highest earnings, and workers who receive tips have the lowest. Earnings in the largest occupations in hotels and other lodging places appear in table 3.

Salaries of lodging managers are dependent upon the size and sales volume of the establishment and their specific duties and responsibilities. Managers may earn bonuses ranging up to 20 percent of their basic salary. In addition, they and their families may be furnished with lodging, meals, parking, laundry, and other services. Some hotels offer profit-sharing plans, tuition reimbursement, and other benefits to their employees.

About 8 percent of the workers in hotels and other accommodations are union members or are covered by union contracts, compared with 15 percent of workers in all industries combined.

Table 3. Median hourly earnings of the largest occupations in hotels and other accommodations, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Accommodations</th>
<th>All industries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and repair workers, general</td>
<td>$10.48</td>
<td>$14.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks, restaurant</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>9.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitors and cleaners, except maids</td>
<td>8.61</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartenders</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>7.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwashers</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>7.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maids and housekeeping cleaners</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining room and cafeteria attendants</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and bartender helpers</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food servers, nonrestaurant</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outlook
Wage and salary employment in hotels and other accommodations is expected to increase by 17 percent over the 2002-12 period, compared with 16 percent growth projected for all industries combined. Recently, business and leisure travelers have cut back on travel due to the weak economy and security concerns. However, over the long-run, travel should pick up as the economy improves and people feel more comfortable about traveling again. In addition, as more States legalize some form of gambling, the hotel industry will increasingly invest in gaming, further fueling job growth.

Job opportunities should be concentrated in the largest hotel occupations, such as building cleaning workers and hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks. Many of these openings will arise in full-service hotels and resorts and spas, simply because they employ the most workers. Because all-suite properties and extended-stay and budget hotels and motels do not have restaurants, dining rooms, lounges, or kitchens, these limited-service establishments offer a narrower range of employment opportunities.

Employment outlook varies by occupation. Employment of hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks is expected to grow faster.
than some other occupations in the industry as some of these workers assume responsibilities previously reserved for managers. However, the spread of computer technology will cause employment of other clerical workers—bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks and secretaries, for example—to grow more slowly than employment in the industry as a whole. Employment of waiters and waitresses also will grow more slowly—reflecting the growing number of hotels and other accommodations that do not offer full-service restaurants. Similarly, employment of lodging managers will not grow as fast due to the growth of economy-class establishments with fewer departments to manage. However, the trend toward chain-affiliated hotels and motels should provide managers with opportunities for advancement into general manager positions and corporate administrative jobs. Opportunities should be more limited for self-employed managers or owners of small lodging places. Job opportunities at outdoor recreation and RV parks should grow as RVs and driving vacations gain popularity in the United States. Also, gaming services and gaming manager occupations should grow as more casino hotels are built.

Job turnover is relatively high in certain occupations employed in this industry. To attract and retain workers, the hotel and other accommodations industry is placing more emphasis on hiring and training. Nevertheless, many young people and others who are looking only for seasonal or part-time work, and not a career, take food service and clerical jobs that require little or no previous training. Therefore, job opportunities in this industry are plentiful for first-time jobseekers and people with limited skills.

**Sources of Additional Information**

For information on hospitality careers, write to:


- American Hotel and Lodging Association, 1201 New York Ave. NW, #600, Washington, DC 20005-3931.

  General information on food and beverage service jobs is available from:

- National Restaurant Association, 1200 17th St. NW., Washington, DC 20036-3097.
  Internet: [http://www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org)

  Information on housekeeper and housekeeping management may be obtained from:

- International Executive Housekeepers Association, 1001 Eastwind Dr., Suite 301, Westerville, OH 43081. Phone: (800) 200-6342. Internet: [http://www.ieha.org](http://www.ieha.org)

  For information on the American Culinary Federation’s apprenticeship and certification programs for cooks, write to:

- American Culinary Federation, 10 San Bartola Dr., St. Augustine, FL 32086. Internet: [http://www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org)

  Detailed information on the following occupations employed in hotels and other accommodations may be found in the 2004-05 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

  - Building cleaning workers
  - Chefs, cooks, and other food preparation workers
  - Food and beverage serving and related workers
  - Food service managers
  - Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks
  - Gaming cage workers
  - Gaming services occupations
  - Lodging managers
  - Recreation and fitness workers
  - Security guards and gaming surveillance officers