

Work arrangements of Canadians - an overview

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Until recently, data on work arrangements were collected only sporadically by various private and public agencies. As a result, limited information existed on the weekly, daily and hourly work routines of Canadians: the incidence of shift work, flexitime, on-call work, working from home, and moonlighting. The need for comprehensive information at the national level prompted Statistics Canada to conduct the Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA).

The SWA, a supplement to the November 1991 Labour Force Survey, gathered data on the above issues. Other information collected included rates of pay, union membership, paid overtime, and temporary employment. Combined with data on the personal and family characteristics of workers, the SWA database offers a wealth of detail on these issues, as well as on the broader topic of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Only paid workers (those working for a wage or salary) were interviewed for the SWA. The self-employed were excluded because they have wider control over their work schedules than do paid workers. The exclusion of the self-employed has the effect of understating the overall prevalence of some work arrangements, such as moonlighting and home-based work.

Although the SWA collected data on second jobs, this note focuses on the main job of paid workers aged 15 to 64 who were employed in November 1991.

Work schedules

Of the 10.3 million paid workers in Canada, almost all (98%) stated that they usually worked four weeks per month. In addition, 60% had Monday to Friday schedules. On the other hand, 15% had some other regular schedule and 24% had schedules that varied the days worked from week to week ([Table 1](#)).



Table 1 Usual work schedules of paid workers, November 1991.

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements

Note: Estimates may not sum to the total due to rounding and non-response.

Most workers had a regular daytime schedule (70%). The next most common daily schedules were irregular (10%) and rotating shifts (9%). On-call work was reported by a little over a quarter of a million workers (3%). This group was equally split between men and women, but consisted mostly of part-time workers ([Sunter](#), 1993).

Working on weekends was not uncommon. About one million workers usually worked on Saturdays, and about half a million, on Sundays.

About 6% of workers performed some or all of their regularly scheduled hours of work at home. Most of these workers held jobs with the following occupations: managerial and professional, clerical, sales, and service. For the majority (52%) of them, this work-at-home arrangement was a requirement of the job.

Paid overtime during the week before the survey was reported by 8% of workers. Two out of three of these overtimers were male ([Cohen](#), 1993).

Overall, 5% of workers had a temporary job, that is, one lasting six months or less. Part-time workers (10%) were more likely than full-time workers (4%) to have temporary jobs.

About one-sixth of workers reported a flexitime arrangement that permitted, within limits, varying start and end times for their work day ([Akyeampong](#), 1993).

Other findings

Just over one-third (35%) of workers were union members or held jobs that were covered by a union contract or collective agreement. Construction trades workers recorded the highest rate of unionization (53%) whereas only 9% of sales workers were unionized.

Over 360,000 individuals had second jobs for which they received a wage or salary. For one-third of these workers, the main reason for moonlighting was to meet regular household expenses.

For more information about the survey, contact Ernest B. Akyeampong (613) 951-4624, Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

Data in many forms...

In addition to the ones in this issue, other articles on work arrangements are planned.

A statistical compendium, *Work Arrangements* (Catalogue 71-535 no.6), will be available in the fall. This publication will contain detailed statistical tables from the SWA. For further information, or to order *Work Arrangements*, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Reference Centre or Marketing Division, Sales and Service, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6.

A public-use microdata file of SWA survey results, costing \$500.00, is also available. To order this file, contact Mike Sivyer at (613) 951-4598, fax: (613) 951-0562.

References

- Akyeampong, E.B. "[Flexitime work arrangements.](#)" *Perspectives on labour and income* (Statistics Canada Catalogue 75-001E) 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 17-22.
- Cohen, G.L. "[Paid overtime.](#)" *Perspectives on labour and income* (Statistics Canada Catalogue 75-001E) 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 11-16.
- Sunter, D. "[Working shift.](#)" *Perspectives on labour and income* (Statistics Canada Catalogue 75-001E) 5, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 16-23.

Author

Both Ernest Akyeampong and Jason Siroonian are with the Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division of Statistics Canada.

Source

Perspectives on Labour and Income, Autumn 1993, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 75-001E). This is the first of six articles in the issue.

 **HIGHLIGHTS**

 **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

 **SUBJECT INDEX**

 **AUTHOR INDEX**

 **FRANÇAIS**

 **HELP**

 **HOME**



Table 1

Usual work schedules of paid workers, November 1991

	'000	%
Paid workers, aged 15 to 64	10,332	100
Weeks per month usually worked		
1-3 weeks	155	2
4 weeks	10,151	98
Days per week usually worked		
1-4 days	1,446	14
5 days	7,279	70
6-7 days	438	4
It varies	1,160	11
Weekly schedule		
Monday to Friday	6,240	60
Other schedules	1,545	15
It varies	2,515	24
Daily schedule		
Regular daytime	7,250	70
Shift schedules	3,082	30
Evenings	508	5
Nights	142	1
Rotating shifts	940	9
Split shifts	84	1
On call	262	3
Irregular schedules	1,064	10
Other	82	1

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements

Note: Estimates may not sum to the total due to rounding and non-response.