

Working "9 to 5"

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Several articles have recently dealt with non-standard work arrangements such as flextime, weekend work, overtime, shift work, and part-time or temporary employment. However, a majority of paid workers still work a fixed daytime schedule, that is, the standard "9 to 5" day.

For the first time, in 1991, Statistics Canada's Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA) collected data on scheduled hours of work. This note examines the hours and characteristics of full-time paid workers with fixed schedules, particularly those who work during the daytime.

Fixed daytime work schedule

For most of us, working "9 to 5" means having a full-time job with a fixed daytime work schedule. For the purposes of this note, the boundaries have been expanded to include people who start their work day between 6 and 10 a.m. and end it between 2 and 6 p.m.

When we talk about a "fixed" work schedule, we are contrasting it with a "flexible" work schedule. The 1991 SWA asked only individuals with fixed schedules to report their hours of work (see [About the SWA](#)).

Hours of work

Of the 10.3 million paid workers covered by the 1991 SWA, 7.3 million (71%) had fixed work schedules and 3 million had flexible schedules (full-time or part-time). Of the 7.3 million fixed schedule workers, 6.5 million were working full time and nearly 840,000, part time. This note looks exclusively at the 6.5 million full-time paid workers with a fixed work schedule ([Diagram](#)).



Diagram **Work schedules of paid workers in 1991 (millions of workers)**

Source: *Survey of Work Arrangements*

Of these 6.5 million workers, 88% had a fixed daytime work schedule ([Table 1](#)). ⁽¹⁾ Many of them (seven out of ten) started work at 8 or 9 a.m. and left work at 4 or 5 p.m. ⁽²⁾ Over 3% of persons with a fixed schedule worked in the evening, approximately 1% worked at night, and 7% fell into none of these three categories since their schedule overlapped two different periods - for example, daytime and evening. These overlappings schedules were assigned to the (unclassified category.) A large portion of this unclassified group is made up of persons who work long hours at a stretch (10 or 12 hours) or whose schedule is shifted forward or backward a few hours (for example, people who work from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.).



Table 1 **Full-time paid workers with fixed work schedules, 1991**

Source: *Survey of Work Arrangements*

Who adopts a fixed daytime schedule?

The characteristics of full-time paid workers who adopt a fixed daytime schedule differ only slightly from those of fixed non-daytime schedules (that is, evening and night workers and those who do not fall into any of these categories).

Thus, day workers are more likely to be female than are other workers (45% compared with 38%) and they are slightly older (56% are at least 35 years old compared with 51% in the other categories combined). More day workers are married or cohabiting (69% compared with 62% for other workers) and they are somewhat better educated (47% have a post-secondary or university diploma, compared with 38% of other workers).

Workers with a fixed daytime schedule have more seniority on average (8.2 years) than workers with a fixed non-daytime schedule (6.9 years) ([Chart](#)). This is not surprising since, often, one of the advantages of having more seniority in a company is being allowed to choose one's schedule. This is the case, for example, for nurses, sales staff, and employees of some manufacturing companies that operate with several shifts.



Chart **Fixed daytime schedules seem linked with seniority.**

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements

Occupation and industry

Nearly 60% of day workers were professionals, managers or clerical workers, while only 40% of non-day workers had such occupations ([Table 2](#)). However, a higher proportion of these non-day workers were employed in service occupations - 21% compared with 6%. (Companies in this sector often must provide services outside traditional daytime hours to meet customer needs.) Processing, machining and fabricating occupations accounted for 15% of both day and non-day workers.



Table 2 **Distribution of full-time paid workers by type of schedule, occupation and industry, 1991**

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements, November 1991

The frequency of fixed daytime schedules was generally high for most occupations, but it was lower for those connected with services and transport equipment operating. The frequency of daytime work was highest in construction, clerical and managerial and professional occupations.

The distribution of paid workers by industry shows fairly similar concentrations for the two groups (those with fixed daytime schedules and those with fixed non-daytime schedules), with the exception of the service industry. This industry encompasses occupations ranging from teachers and health professionals to food services and personal service workers. Persons in the latter two categories often work non-daytime hours and account for 37% of all paid workers in the service sector.

Moreover, the frequency of day schedules is high in all industries. It ranges from 77% in agriculture to 95% in construction and public administration.

Conclusion

Of all full-time workers with fixed schedules, 88% have day schedules. However, if persons with flexible

work schedules and part-time workers are added, the proportion of day workers falls to 55%. Since the SWA is the first survey on work arrangements, we cannot conclude that full-time work on a fixed daytime schedule is declining (see [American data](#)). However, given the growth in the number of part-time jobs and the emergence of new work arrangements, full-time day schedules may be less prevalent in times to come.

About the SWA

The Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA) was sponsored by Statistics Canada and conducted in November 1991 as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. The SWA, which covers only paid workers, provides a considerable amount of information regarding the working conditions of Canadians, such as shift work, flexible work schedules, work at home, temporary employment, paid overtime, and multiple jobholding. A number of articles on this subject have already been published ([Akyeampong](#), [Akyeampong and Siroonian](#), [Cohen](#), [Siroonian](#), [Sunter](#), 1993).

If a respondent reported a fixed work schedule, the following questions were asked:

"At what time does ... **usually** begin work at this job?"

"At what time does ... **usually** end work at this job?"

(Respondents with variable work schedules were not asked to report their hours of work).

American data

The United States has been compiling information on work schedules on an irregular basis since 1973. Since 1985, more detailed information has been collected through a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey which provides estimates regarding the labour force and the national unemployment rate.

The data from the May 1991 survey reveal that nearly 77% of full-time paid workers have a day schedule; among these individuals, slightly fewer than half work between 8 or 9 a.m. and 4 or 5 p.m. Evening

workers make up 6% of the overall group, night workers account for a negligible share, and persons falling into none of these categories account for 17%. [\(3\)](#)



Table **Full-time paid workers in the United States by type of schedule, 1991**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

However, differences between the American and Canadian questionnaires have led to some significant disparities in the two surveys' statistical results. For example, the American survey placed people with flexible work schedules in the most often adopted schedule. In contrast, Statistics Canada's survey assigned such persons to a flexible schedule category and did not collect data on their hours of arrival and departure. This flexible category contains more than three million persons, or approximately 30% of all paid workers.

The impact of economic cycles

Since the SWA is the first survey of its kind in Canada, there are no comparable data for a previous period. However, because the American survey has existed since 1973, some associations can be made between work schedules and economic cycles. For example, a resurgence of the traditional Monday-to-Friday day schedule was noted in recessionary periods, possibly owing to fewer overtime opportunities during these times. Conversely, in expansionary periods, the traditional schedule declines in importance, as part-time work and long work weeks become more prevalent ([Smith](#), 1986).

Notes

Note 1

If one includes workers with flexible or part-time schedules, full-time workers with a fixed daytime schedule account for 55% of all paid workers. However, this figure probably underestimates the proportion of full-time day workers, since a number of people whose work schedules are flexible have flexible day schedules.

Note 2

Throughout this note, references to 8 a.m., for example, as a starting time for the work day should be taken as meaning between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. The same is true for all the start and end times.

Note 3

These unclassified workers are mostly individuals who work long hours (10 or more) during the day or whose schedule is shifted forward or backward - for example, they may work from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

References

- Akyeampong, E. B. "[Flexitime work arrangements.](#)" *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 75-001E) 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 17-22.
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- Siroonian, J. *Work Arrangements*. Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division, Analytic Report no. 6 (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 71-605). Ottawa, 1993.
- Smith, S. J. "The growing diversity of work schedules." *Monthly Labor Review* 109, no. 11 (November 1986): 7-13.
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Author

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Source

Perspectives on Labour and Income, Summer 1994, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 75-001E). This is the sixth of seven articles in the issue.

 **HIGHLIGHTS**

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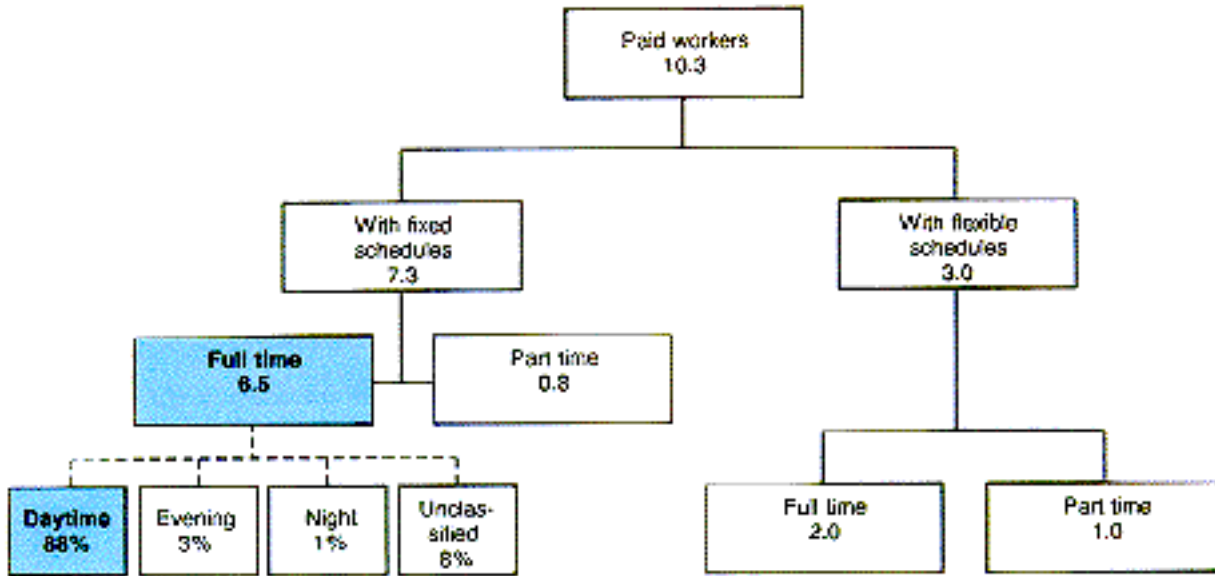
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Work schedules of paid workers in 1991 (millions of workers)



Source: Survey of Work Arrangements

Table 1

Full-time paid workers with fixed work schedules, 1991

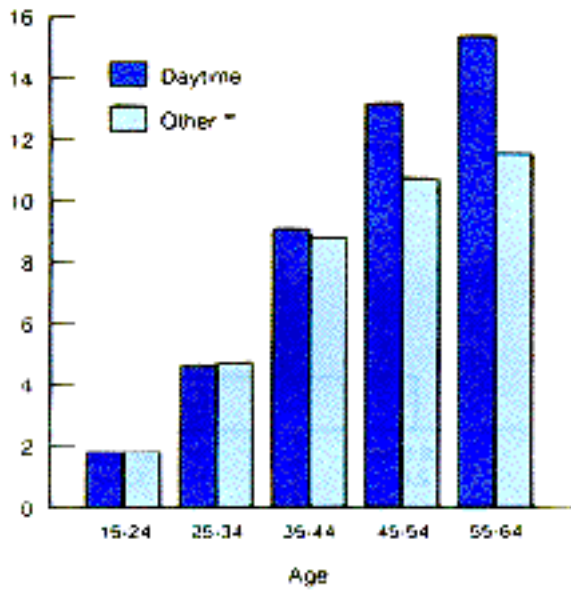
Type of schedule	'000	%
Total	6,458	100
Daytime (6-10 a.m. to 2-6 p.m.)	5,674	88
Non-daytime		
Evening (2-6 p.m. to 10 p.m.-2 a.m.)	226	3
Night (10 p.m.-12 a.m. to 6-8 a.m.)	76	1
Unclassified*	482	7

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements

** Includes workers with schedules overlapping two categories, for example, daytime and evening.*

Fixed daytime schedules seem linked with seniority.

Average years of job tenure *



Source: Survey of Work Arrangements, 1991

* With the same employer.

** Includes evening, night and unclassified schedules.

Table 2

Distribution of full-time paid workers by type of schedule, occupation and industry, 1991

	Fixed daytime schedule			Fixed non-daytime schedule*		
	Number	Distribution	Frequency	Number	Distribution	Frequency
	'000	%		'000	%	
All occupations	5,674	100	88	784	100	12
Managerial and professional	2,153	38	90	229	29	10
Clerical	1,185	21	93	88	11	7
Sales	316	6	87	46	6	13
Service	367	6	69	166	21	31
Primary	95	2	82	20	3	18
Processing, machining and fabricating	856	15	88	115	15	12
Construction	384	7	96	17	2	4
Transport equipment operating	134	2	70	58	7	30
Material handling and other crafts	184	3	80	45	6	20
All industries	5,674	100	88	784	100	12
Agriculture	45	1	77	13	2	23
Other primary	122	2	87	18	2	13
Manufacturing	1,162	20	87	168	21	13
Construction	319	6	95	16	2	5
Transportation, communication and other utilities	456	8	81	105	13	19
Trade	830	15	90	87	11	10
Finance, insurance and real estate	430	8	94	26	3	6
Services	1,705	30	84	319	41	16
Public administration	607	11	95	31	4	5

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements, November 1991

** Evening, night and unclassified schedules.*

Full-time paid workers in the United States by type of schedule, 1991

Type of schedule	'000	%
Total	77,837	100
Daytime (6-10 a.m. to 2-6 p.m.)	59,825	77
Non-daytime		
Evening (2-6 p.m. to 10 p.m.-2 a.m.)	4,548	6
Night (10 p.m.-12 a.m. to 6-8 a.m.)	64	-
Unclassified*	13,400	17

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

** Includes workers with schedules overlapping two categories, for example, daytime and evening.*