


# OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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## Metal and Plastic Machine Workers

PRINTER-FRIENDLY

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### Summary



#### [Pay](#)

The median annual wage for metal and plastic machine workers was \$46,800 in May 2024.

#### [Job Outlook](#)

Overall employment of metal and plastic machine workers is projected to decline 6 percent from 2023 to 2033.

Despite declining employment, about 91,800 openings for metal and plastic machine workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. All of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

#### [State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for metal and plastic machine workers.

#### [Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of metal and plastic machine workers with similar occupations.

#### [More Information, Including Links to O\\*NET](#)

Learn more about metal and plastic machine workers by visiting additional resources, including O\*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

What They Do ->

## What Metal and Plastic Machine Workers Do



Metal and plastic machine workers monitor and adjust machines during operation.

Metal and plastic machine workers set up and operate equipment that cuts, shapes, and forms metal and plastic materials or pieces.

### Duties

Metal and plastic machine workers typically do the following:

- Set up and adjust machines according to blueprints
- Monitor machines status to ensure proper functioning
- Insert material into machines, either manually or using material handling equipment
- Operate shaping and forming equipment, such as metal or plastic molding, casting, or coremaking machines
- Operate stock removal metalworking machines, such as lathes or mills
- Adjust machine settings for temperature, cycle times, and speed and feed rates
- Remove finished products and document output in a database
- Measure, test, and inspect finished workpieces according to blueprints
- Observe and adjust or replace dull or damaged cutting tools

Metal and plastic machine workers operate equipment that creates the parts for consumer products. In general, these workers are separated into two groups: those who set up machines for operation and those who operate machines during production. However, many workers perform both tasks.

Although many workers both set up and operate machines, some specialize in being either a machine setter or a machine operator and tender.

**Machine setters**, or setup workers, prepare the machines before production, do test runs, and, if necessary, adjust and make minor repairs to the machinery before and during operation. Computer numerically controlled (CNC) setters upload computer control programs.

After installing the tools into a machine, setup workers often produce the initial batch of goods, inspect the products, and turn over the machine to an operator.

**Machine operators and tenders** monitor the machinery during production.

After a setter prepares a machine for production, an operator observes the machine and the products it makes. Operators may have to load the machine with materials for production or adjust machine speeds during production. They must periodically inspect the parts that a machine produces to ensure everything works properly, repairing equipment as needed. For example, the parts a machine produces may show defects if the cutting tool inside a machine becomes dull or damaged after extended use. When that happens, it is common for an operator to remove the worn tool and replace it with a new one produced by [tool and die makers](#). Operators may fix minor problems themselves but may have an [industrial machinery mechanic](#) fix more serious problems.

Setters, operators, and tenders are usually identified by the type of machine they work with. Job duties generally vary with the size of the manufacturer and the type of machine being operated. Although some workers specialize in one or two types of machines, others are trained to set up or operate a variety of them. Automation often allows machine operators to control multiple machines at the same time.

In addition, production techniques, such as team-oriented “lean” manufacturing, require machine operators to rotate between different machines. Rotating assignments results in more varied work but also requires workers to have a range of skills.

The following are examples of types of metal and plastic machine workers:

**Computer numerically controlled tool operators** operate CNC equipment or robots to perform functions on metal or plastic workpieces.

**Computer numerically controlled tool programmers** develop computer programs to control the machining or processing of metal or plastic parts by automatic machine tools, equipment, or systems.

**Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate machines to saw, cut, shear, notch, bend, or straighten metal or plastic materials.

**Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate drilling machines to drill, bore, mill, or countersink metal or plastic workpieces.

**Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate machines to extrude (pull out) thermoplastic or metal materials in the form of tubes, rods, hoses, wire, bars, or structural shapes.

**Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate machines that shape or form metal or plastic into parts.

**Foundry mold and coremakers** make or form wax or sand cores or molds used in the production of metal castings in foundries.

**Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate grinding and related machine tools that remove excess material from surfaces, sharpen edges or corners, or buff or polish metal or plastic workpieces.

**Heat-treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate heating equipment, such as heat-treating furnaces, flame-hardening machines, induction machines, soaking pits, or vacuum equipment, to temper, harden, anneal, or heat treat metal or plastic objects.

**Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate lathe and turning machines to turn, bore, thread, or form metal or plastic materials, such as bars, rods, and castings.

**Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders** operate or tend furnaces, such as gas, oil, coal, electric-arc or electric-induction, and oxygen furnaces. These furnaces may be used to melt and refine metal before casting.

**Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate milling or planing machines to shape, groove, or profile metal or plastic workpieces.

**Model makers** set up and operate machines, such as milling and engraving machines, to make working models of metal or plastic objects. They may also use 3D printing technology.

**Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate metal or plastic molding, casting, or coremaking machines to mold or cast metal or thermoplastic parts or products.

**Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate two or more types of cutting or forming machine tool or robot.

**Patternmakers** lay out, machine, fit, and assemble castings and parts to metal or plastic foundry patterns and core molds.

**Plating machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate plating machines and perform chemical checks for coating metal or plastic products with zinc, copper, nickel, or some other metal to protect or decorate surfaces.

**Pourers and casters** operate computer- or hand-controlled machines to pour and regulate the flow of molten metal into molds to produce castings or ingots.

**Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders** set up or operate machines to roll steel or plastic or to flatten, temper, or reduce the thickness of materials.

**Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders** (including workers who operate laser cutters or laser-beam machines) set up or operate welding, soldering, or brazing machines or robots that weld, braze, solder, or heat treat metal products, components, or assemblies.

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[Work Environment ->](#)

## Work Environment



Metal and plastic machine workers usually wear protective equipment, such as safety glasses.

Metal and plastic machine workers held about 1.0 million jobs in 2023. Employment in the detailed occupations that make up metal and plastic machine workers was distributed as follows:

Computer numerically controlled tool operators	189,900
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	181,300
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	158,800
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	130,000
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	76,300
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	64,100
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	35,600
Plating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	32,400
Computer numerically controlled tool programmers	28,300
Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	25,000
Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders	21,400



Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	19,700
Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	15,200
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	14,100
Foundry mold and coremakers	11,800
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	9,300
Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	5,800
Pourers and casters, metal	5,600
Model makers, metal and plastic	2,900
Patternmakers, metal and plastic	2,200

The largest employers of metal and plastic machine workers were as follows:

Fabricated metal product manufacturing	25%
Plastics and rubber products manufacturing	16
Transportation equipment manufacturing	13
Primary metal manufacturing	12
Machinery manufacturing	11

Injuries and Illnesses

These workers often operate powerful, high-speed machines that can be dangerous and must observe safety rules. Operators usually wear protective equipment, such as safety glasses, earplugs, and steel-toed boots, to guard against flying particles of metal or plastic, machine noise, and heavy objects, respectively.

Other required safety equipment varies by work setting and machine. For example, respirators are common for those in the plastics industry who work near materials that emit dangerous fumes or dust.

Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations.

Work Schedules

Most metal and plastic machine workers are employed full time. Some work more than 40 hours per week. Because many manufacturers run their machinery for extended periods, evening and weekend work is also common.

<- What They Do

How to Become One ->

How to Become a Metal or Plastic Machine Worker



Metal and plastic machine workers must be able to stand for long periods and perform repetitive work.

Metal and plastic workers typically need a high school diploma to enter the occupation and receive 1 year of on-the-job training. Computer numerically controlled (CNC) tool programmers typically need postsecondary education.

Education

Although metal and plastic machine workers typically need a high school diploma, CNC tool programmers usually need coursework beyond high school. Some community colleges and other schools offer courses and certificate programs in operating metal and plastics machines including CNC programming.

For metal and plastic machine workers, high school classes in computer programming, math, and vocational technology may be useful.

Training

Machine operator trainees usually begin by watching and helping experienced workers on the job. Under supervision, they may supply materials, start and stop the machines, or remove finished products. Then, they advance to operators’ more difficult tasks, such as adjusting feeds and speeds, replacing tools, and measuring finished products for conformance. Eventually, some operators develop the skills and experience to set up machines.

The complexity of the equipment usually determines the time required to become an operator. Some operators and tenders are trained on basic machine operations and functions in a few months. Others, such as CNC tool operators, may need training for up to 1 year.

Because of the prevalence of computerized machines in manufacturing, training on computer-aided design (CAD), computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), and CNC equipment may be helpful.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Certification can show competence and can be helpful for advancement. The [National Institute for Metalworking Skills](#) (NIMS) offers certification in numerous metalworking specializations.

Advancement

With skill and experience, workers may advance to positions that offer higher pay and more responsibility. It is common for machine operators to move into setup or machinery maintenance positions. Setup workers may become [industrial machinery mechanics and maintenance workers](#), [machinists](#), or [tool and die makers](#).

Experienced workers with good communication and analytical skills may advance to supervisory positions.

Important Qualities

**Computer skills.** Metal and plastic machine workers must be able to use programmable devices, computers, and robots on the factory floor.

**Mechanical skills.** These workers must be comfortable with machines and have a good understanding of how all the parts work.

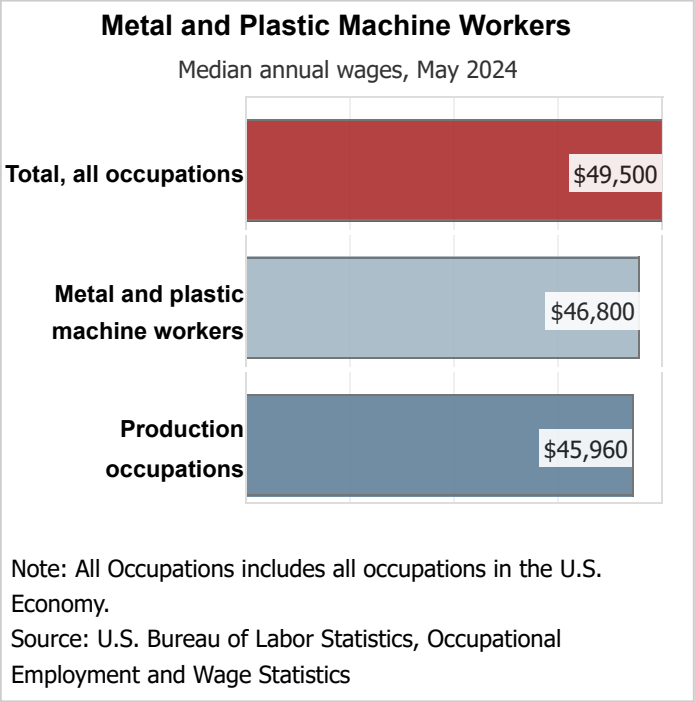
**Physical stamina.** Metal and plastic machine workers must be able to stand for long periods and do repetitive tasks.

**Physical strength.** Metal and plastic machine workers must be able to secure and tighten heavy fixtures into place.

[<- Work Environment](#)

[Pay ->](#)

Pay



The median annual wage for metal and plastic machine workers was \$46,800 in May 2024. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$34,980, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$66,630.

Median annual wages for metal and plastic machine workers in May 2024 were as follows:

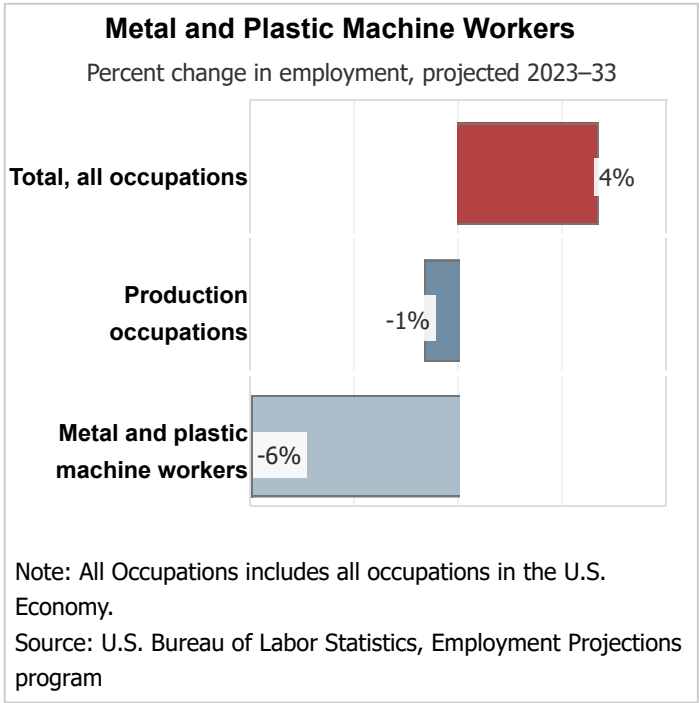
Computer numerically controlled tool programmers	\$65,670
Model makers, metal and plastic	62,700
Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders	55,770
Patternmakers, metal and plastic	54,540
Computer numerically controlled tool operators	49,970
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	49,240
Pourers and casters, metal	48,940
Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	48,630
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	48,620
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	48,310
Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	47,450
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	47,060
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	46,980
Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	46,630
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	46,060
Foundry mold and coremakers	45,700
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	45,590
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	45,190
Plating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	41,600
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	41,230

In May 2024, the median annual wages for metal and plastic machine workers in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Machinery manufacturing	\$49,580
Transportation equipment manufacturing	49,050
Primary metal manufacturing	48,550
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	47,170
Plastics and rubber products manufacturing	42,180

Most metal and plastic machine workers are employed full time. Some work more than 40 hours per week. Because many manufacturers run their machinery for extended periods, evening and weekend work also is common.

## Job Outlook



Overall employment of metal and plastic machine workers is projected to decline 6 percent from 2023 to 2033.

Despite declining employment, about 91,800 openings for metal and plastic machine workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. All of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

### Employment

Projected employment of metal and plastic machine workers varies by occupation (see table).

One of the most important factors influencing employment of these workers is the use of laborsaving machinery. Many firms are continuing to expand the use of technologies, such as computer numerically controlled (CNC) tools and robots, to improve quality and lower production costs. The use of CNC equipment requires CNC tool programmers instead of machine setters, operators, and tenders. Therefore, demand for most manual tool operators and tenders is likely to be reduced, while demand for CNC tool programmers is expected to be strong.

Additionally, the use of software to create digital and 3D-print prototypes may reduce the need for some of these workers, including patternmakers and model makers.

Employment of metal and plastic machine workers also is affected by the demand for the parts they produce. Both plastic and metal manufacturing industries face foreign competition that limits the orders for parts produced in this country. Changes in the cost of operations in the United States and abroad may encourage some manufacturers to bring back production that was previously sent offshore. However, new facilities in the United States will likely incorporate more automation technologies, requiring less labor overall.

### Employment projections data for metal and plastic machine workers, 2023–33

Metal and plastic machine workers
<b>SOC Code:</b> —
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 1,029,800
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 965,700
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Percent):</b> -6
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):</b> -64,100
<b>Employment By Industry:</b> —

Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic
<b>SOC Code:</b> 51-4021
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 64,100
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 65,300

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
2

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
1,300

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4022

**Employment, 2023:**  
9,300

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
7,900

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-16

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-1,500

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4023

**Employment, 2023:**  
25,000

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
23,100

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-8

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-1,900

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4031

**Employment, 2023:**  
181,300

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
161,000

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-11

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-20,300

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4032

**Employment, 2023:**  
5,800

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
4,700

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-19

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-1,100

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4033

**Employment, 2023:**  
76,300

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
68,100

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-11

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-8,200

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4034

**Employment, 2023:**  
19,700

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
17,500

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-11

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-2,300

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic

**SOC Code:**  
51-4035

**Employment, 2023:**  
14,100

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
12,300

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-13

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-1,800

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders

**SOC Code:**  
51-4051

**Employment, 2023:**  
21,400

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
20,400

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-5

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-1,000



**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

**Pourers and casters, metal**

**SOC Code:**  
51-4052

**Employment, 2023:**  
5,600

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
5,200

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-7

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-400

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

**Model makers, metal and plastic**

**SOC Code:**  
51-4061

**Employment, 2023:**  
2,900

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
2,400

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-18

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-500

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

**Patternmakers, metal and plastic**

**SOC Code:**  
51-4062

**Employment, 2023:**  
2,200

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
1,700

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-22

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-500

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

**Foundry mold and coremakers**

**SOC Code:**  
51-4071

**Employment, 2023:**  
11,800

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
8,900

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-25

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-2,900

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic
<b>SOC Code:</b> 51-4072
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 158,800
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 154,900
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Percent):</b> -2
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):</b> -3,900
<b>Employment By Industry:</b> <a href="#">Get data</a>

Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic
<b>SOC Code:</b> 51-4081
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 130,000
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 132,300
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Percent):</b> 2
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):</b> 2,300
<b>Employment By Industry:</b> <a href="#">Get data</a>

Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders
<b>SOC Code:</b> 51-4122
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 35,600
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 32,500
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Percent):</b> -9
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):</b> -3,200
<b>Employment By Industry:</b> <a href="#">Get data</a>

Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic
<b>SOC Code:</b> 51-4191
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 15,200
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 13,800
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Percent):</b> -9
<b>Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):</b> -1,400
<b>Employment By Industry:</b> <a href="#">Get data</a>

Plating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic
<b>SOC Code:</b>
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

51-4193

**Employment, 2023:**  
32,400

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
28,800

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-11

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-3,600

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Computer numerically controlled tool operators

**SOC Code:**  
51-9161

**Employment, 2023:**  
189,900

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
172,400

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
-9

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
-17,500

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

Computer numerically controlled tool programmers

**SOC Code:**  
51-9162

**Employment, 2023:**  
28,300

**Projected Employment, 2033:**  
32,500

**Change, 2023–33 (Percent):**  
15

**Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):**  
4,200

**Employment By Industry:**  
[Get data](#)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

[<- Pay](#)

[State & Area Data ->](#)

State & Area Data

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

The [Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#) (OEWS) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The link below goes to OEWS data maps for employment and wages by state and area. Use the dropdown boxes to select an occupation.

[Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics \(OEWS\) Profiles](#)

Projections Central

Occupational employment projections are developed for all states by Labor Market Information (LMI) or individual state Employment Projections offices. All state projections data are available at [www.projectionscentral.org](#). Information on this site allows projected employment growth for an occupation to be compared among states or to be compared within one state. In addition, states may produce projections for areas; there are links to each state’s websites where these data may be retrieved.

CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop includes hundreds of [occupational profiles](#) with data available by state and metro area. There are links in the left-hand side menu to compare occupational employment by state and occupational wages by local area or metro area. There is also a [salary info tool](#) to search for wages by zip code.

[<- Job Outlook](#)

[Similar Occupations ->](#)

# Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of metal and plastic machine workers.

<div><a href="#">Assemblers and Fabricators</a></div> <div><b>Job Duties:</b> Assemblers and fabricators build finished products and the parts that go into them.</div> <div><b>Entry-Level Education:</b> High school diploma or equivalent</div> <div><b>2024 Median Pay:</b> \$43,570</div>
<div><a href="#">Computer Programmers</a></div> <div><b>Job Duties:</b> Computer programmers write, modify, and test code and scripts that allow computer software and applications to function properly.</div> <div><b>Entry-Level Education:</b> Bachelor's degree</div> <div><b>2024 Median Pay:</b> \$98,670</div>
<div><a href="#">Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Machinery Maintenance Workers, and Millwrights</a></div> <div><b>Job Duties:</b> Industrial machinery mechanics, machinery maintenance workers, and millwrights install, maintain, and repair factory equipment and other industrial machinery.</div> <div><b>Entry-Level Education:</b> High school diploma or equivalent</div> <div><b>2024 Median Pay:</b> \$63,510</div>
<div><a href="#">Machinists and Tool and Die Makers</a></div> <div><b>Job Duties:</b> Machinists and tool and die makers set up and operate equipment to produce precision metal parts, instruments, and tools.</div> <div><b>Entry-Level Education:</b> <a href="#">See How to Become One</a></div> <div><b>2024 Median Pay:</b> \$57,700</div>
<div><a href="#">Painting and Coating Workers</a></div> <div><b>Job Duties:</b> Painting and coating workers apply finishes, often using machines, to a range of products.</div> <div><b>Entry-Level Education:</b> <a href="#">See How to Become One</a></div> <div><b>2024 Median Pay:</b> \$47,390</div>
<div><a href="#">-&lt; State &amp; Area Data</a></div> <div><a href="#">More Info -&gt;</a></div>

# Contacts for More Information

For more information about metal and plastic machine workers, including training and certification, visit

[Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, International](#)  (FMA)

[National Institute for Metalworking Skills](#)  (NIMS)

For information about manufacturing careers, machinery, and equipment, visit

[Association for Manufacturing Technology](#)  (AMT)

[National Tooling and Machining Association](#)  (NTMA)

[Precision Machined Products Association](#)  (PMPA)

[Precision Metalforming Association](#)  (PMA)

## Occupational Requirements Survey

For a profile highlighting selected BLS data on occupational requirements, see

[Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders](#) (PDF)

## O\*NET

[Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators](#) 

- [Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers](#)
- [Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Forging Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Foundry Mold and Coremakers](#)
- [Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Metal-Refining Furnace Operators and Tenders](#)
- [Milling and Planing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Model Makers, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Patternmakers, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Plating Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Pourers and Casters, Metal](#)
- [Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic](#)
- [Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders](#)

[<- Similar Occupations](#)

**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Metal and Plastic Machine Workers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/production/metal-and-plastic-machine-workers.htm> (visited *July 15, 2025*).

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