

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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Quality Control Inspectors

PRINTER-FRIENDLY

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Summary



[Job Outlook](#)

Employment of quality control inspectors is projected to decline 3 percent from 2023 to 2033.

Despite declining employment, about 65,200 openings for quality control inspectors 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 quality control inspectors.

[Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of quality control inspectors with similar occupations.

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

Learn more about quality control inspectors by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

What Quality Control Inspectors Do



Quality control inspectors remove or discard all products and equipment that fail to meet specifications.

Quality control inspectors examine products and materials for defects or deviations from specifications.

Duties

Quality control inspectors typically do the following:

- Read blueprints and specifications
- Monitor operations to ensure that they meet production standards
- Recommend adjustments to the assembly or production process
- Inspect, test, or measure materials
- Measure products with calipers, gauges, or micrometers
- Operate electronic inspection equipment and software
- Accept or reject finished items
- Remove all products and materials that fail to meet specifications
- Report inspection and test data such as weights, temperatures, grades, moisture content, and quantities inspected

Quality control inspectors, also called testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers, monitor nearly all manufactured products to ensure that they meet specified standards. Job duties vary across the manufacturing industries in which most of these inspectors work, which include foods, glassware, motor vehicles, electronic components, and structural steel.

Quality control workers use a variety of tools. Although some still use hand-held measuring devices, such as calipers and alignment gauges, workers more commonly operate electronic inspection equipment, such as coordinate-measuring machines (CMMs) and three-dimensional (3D) scanners. Inspectors testing electrical devices may use voltmeters, ammeters, and ohmmeters to test potential difference, current flow, and resistance, respectively.

Quality control workers record the results of their inspections through test reports. When they find defects, inspectors notify supervisors and help to analyze and correct production problems.

Some manufacturers have automated inspection processes, with advanced vision inspection systems installed at one or several production points. Inspectors monitoring these automated systems check equipment, review output, and conduct random product checks.

The following are examples of types of quality control inspectors:

Materials inspectors check production materials by sight, sound, or feel to locate imperfections such as cuts, scratches, missing pieces, or crooked seams. Materials inspectors also may use devices such as infrared microscopes to analyze plastic, rubber, and other substances and to look for deterioration or defects.

Mechanical inspectors generally verify that parts fit, move correctly, and are properly lubricated. They may check the pressure of gases and the level of liquids, test the flow of electricity, and conduct test runs to ensure that machines run properly.

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[Work Environment ->](#)

Work Environment



Quality control inspectors may be required to stand for long periods of time or lift heavy objects.

Quality control inspectors held about 595,500 jobs in 2023. The largest employers of quality control inspectors were as follows:

Manufacturing	64%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	9
Administrative and support services	8
Wholesale trade	6

Inspectors may be required to stand for long periods and may have to lift heavy items.

Injuries and Illnesses

Some quality control inspectors are exposed to loud noises, moving mechanical parts, and hazardous contaminants, such as airborne particles that irritate the eyes and skin. Workers typically wear protective eyewear, ear plugs, and appropriate clothing to help protect themselves from injury.

Work Schedules

Most quality control inspectors work full time. Some inspectors work evenings, overnight, or weekend shifts. Shift assignments may be based on seniority. Overtime may be required to meet production deadlines.

<- What They Do

How to Become One ->

How to Become a Quality Control Inspector



Quality control inspectors usually receive up to one year of on-the-job training.

Quality control inspectors typically need a high school diploma to enter the occupation and receive on-the-job training once employed.

Education

Quality control inspectors typically need a high school diploma for entry-level jobs. Postsecondary certificate programs are available for instruction on quality control concepts, such as inspection planning and auditing. Students in these programs also gain familiarity with tools and technologies that quality control inspectors use.

Some employers require or prefer to hire candidates who have an associate’s or bachelor’s [degree](#) in a field such as quality control management or [engineering](#).

Training

Workers typically receive on-the-job training that lasts more than 1 month and up to 1 year.

In some industries, such as automobile and aerospace manufacturing, inspectors train for the occupation in an apprenticeship program. Apprentices typically receive paid on-the-job training and instruction. Requirements for entering these programs, which are typically sponsored by trade associations or businesses, may include having a high school diploma, related work experience, or relevant licenses.

Training for new inspectors may cover the use of special meters, gauges, computers, and other instruments; quality control techniques such as Six Sigma; blueprint reading; safety; and reporting requirements.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

The [American Society for Quality](#) (ASQ) offers various certifications, including a designation for [Certified Quality Inspector](#) (CQI), and various levels of [Six Sigma certifications](#). Although optional, certification may demonstrate a level of competence and professionalism that makes candidates more attractive to employers. It also may increase opportunities for advancement. Requirements for certification generally include a certain number of years of experience in the field and passing an exam.

Important Qualities

Detail oriented. Quality control inspectors must be able to focus to notice flaws or deficiencies in finished products or materials.

Math skills. Knowledge of basic math is important for measuring, calibrating, and calculating specifications in quality control testing.

Mechanical skills. Quality control inspectors use tools and machinery when testing products.

Physical stamina. Some quality control inspectors must stand for long periods on the job.

Physical strength. Quality control inspectors may be required to lift or maneuver heavy production materials or finished products.

Technical skills. To ensure that products and parts meet quality standards, inspectors must understand the relevant blueprints, technical documents, and manuals.

<- Work Environment

Pay ->

Pay



The median annual wage for quality control inspectors was \$47,460 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 \$34,590, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$75,510.

In May 2024, the median annual wages for quality control inspectors in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

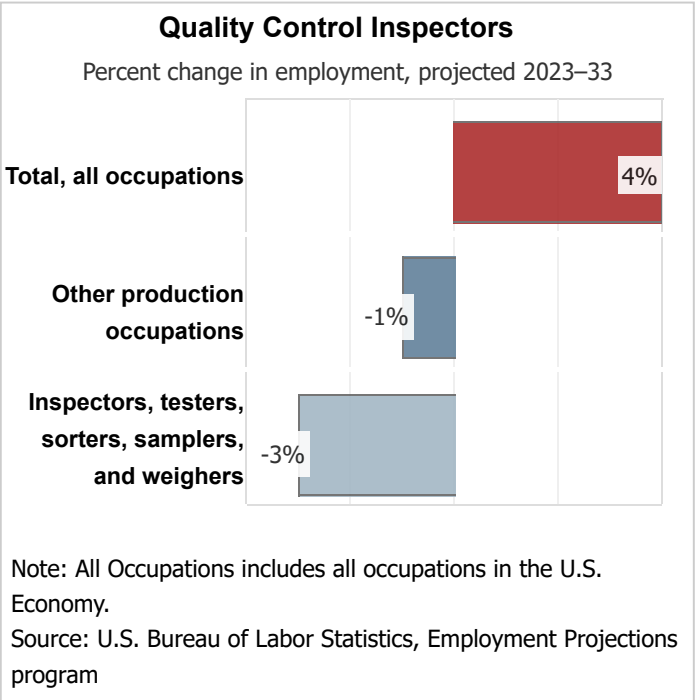
Professional, scientific, and technical services	\$50,300
Manufacturing	48,170
Wholesale trade	46,400
Administrative and support services	37,490

Most quality control inspectors work full time. Some inspectors work evenings, overnight, or weekend shifts. Shift assignments may be based on seniority. Overtime may be required to meet production deadlines.

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[Job Outlook ->](#)

Job Outlook



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Employment

Continued improvements in technology allow manufacturers to automate some inspection tasks, which should increase quality control inspectors’ productivity. For example, use of three-dimensional (3D) scanners decreases the amount of time required to inspect parts and finished goods for correct measurement. As a result, reduced demand is expected for some quality control inspectors.

Despite technological advances in quality control in many industries, automation cannot replace all tasks that inspectors do. Inspections and testing validation will continue to be needed for many products, including those that require testing for taste, texture, or performance.

Employment projections data for quality control inspectors, 2023–33

Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers
SOC Code:
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

51-9061

Employment, 2023:
595,500

Projected Employment, 2033:
577,700

Change, 2023–33 (Percent):
-3

Change, 2023–33 (Numeric):
-17,800

Employment By Industry:
[Get data](#)

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

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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.

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[Similar Occupations ->](#)

Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of quality control inspectors.

[Construction and Building Inspectors](#)

Job Duties:
Construction and building inspectors ensure that construction meets building codes and ordinances, zoning regulations, and contract specifications.

Entry-Level Education:
High school diploma or equivalent

2024 Median Pay:
\$72,120

[Fire Inspectors](#)

Job Duties:
Fire inspectors detect fire hazards, recommend prevention measures, ensure compliance with state and local fire regulations, and investigate causes of fires.

Entry-Level Education:
[See How to Become One](#)

2024 Median Pay:
\$75,480

[Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians](#)

Job Duties:
Industrial engineering technologists and technicians help engineers solve problems affecting manufacturing layout or production.

Entry-Level Education:
Associate's degree

2024 Median Pay:
\$64,790

[Industrial Engineers](#)

Job Duties:
Industrial engineers design, develop, and test integrated systems for managing industrial production processes.

Entry-Level Education:

Bachelor's degree

2024 Median Pay:
\$101,140

Logisticians

Job Duties:
Logisticians analyze and coordinate an organization’s supply chain.

Entry-Level Education:
Bachelor's degree

2024 Median Pay:
\$80,880

[<- State & Area Data](#)

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Contacts for More Information

For details about apprenticeships or other work opportunities in this occupation, contact the offices of the state employment service, the state apprenticeship agency, or local businesses that employ quality control inspectors. Apprenticeship information is available from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Apprenticeship program online or by phone at 1-877-872-5627. Visit [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) to search for apprenticeship opportunities.

For more information about quality control inspectors, including certification, visit

[American Society for Quality](#) (ASQ)

For more information about quality control training, visit

[International Society of Automation](#) (ISA)

[Quality Assurance Association](#) (QAA)

O*NET

[Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers](#)

[<- Similar Occupations](#)

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Quality Control Inspectors, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/production/quality-control-inspectors.htm> (visited *August 04, 2025*).

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