

Cashiers



Occupational Brief Title Codes:

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Work Classification Based Related

D.O.T. Occupations:

- Money Counters
- Racetrack Paymasters
- Ticket Sellers
- Toll Collectors

Interests Based Related

G.O.E. Occupations:

- Check Cashiers
- Coupon Redemption Clerks
- Express Clerks (Motor Freight)
- Gambling Cashiers
- Layaway Clerks
- Parimutuel Ticket Sellers
- Post Office Clerks
- Tellers (Financial Institutions)
- Ticket Agents

Skills Based Related

O*NET Occupations:

- Billing, Cost, and Rate Clerks
- Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food
- Counter and Rental Clerks
- Parts Salespersons
- Postal Service Clerks
- Receptionists and Information Clerks

Noteworthy Quote:

"Being a cashier is a very interesting job. You never know who you are going to meet. It is also very satisfying because you can help other people. A cashier's job is important. Cashiers need to keep on top of sales and prices, while helping customers with payment options."

Brandy Mulvaney, Cashier, Modern Market, Moravia, New York

Cashiers (cash`iers) operate cash registers by entering the items purchased in order to come up with a total amount owed by the customer. They work in grocery stores, department stores, and all other retail locations.

Whenever people buy goods or services at a store, they deal with a cashier who takes the money received as payment for the purchases. In department stores, drugstores, other retail stores, restaurants, and movie theaters, cashiers record transactions of money going into or out of their station.

Cashiers are important workers in any business. They handle large sums of money for the employers who depend on them to perform their duties competently and honestly. An important part of this work is public relations. In most establishments today, self-service has become the norm. As a result, the only store employees who deal person-to-person with the customers are the cashiers. These workers serve in an important role as representatives of the business and their employees.

Work Performed

Since they work in many kinds of businesses, cashiers may have different job titles. Their duties also may differ somewhat. All, however, work with customers. They total bills, take money for goods or services, make change, fill out charge forms, and give the customers receipts.

Cashiers usually work at an assigned station. They have their own drawer containing money called a "bank," which they work with throughout their shift. They count their bank to see that it contains the correct amount of money and enough change to operate during their shift. At the end of their shift, they count



Cashiers handle large sums of money for employers who depend on them to perform their duties competently and honestly.

Photo by COEI

the money again and compare it with totals given by the cash register. A small difference may be overlooked. However, repeated shortages are cause for dismissal in many places of business.

Most establishments now use computerized cash registers. Supermarkets and other retail stores also have optical scanners connected to the computer terminals. As moving belts convey the groceries or other goods across the scanner, the device reads the universal product codes printed on the products and transmits the codes to the computer. The computer identifies the items and the price for each. The customer can read the description of each item and its price, as well as the total amount owed, on a screen.

In grocery stores or large supermarkets, cashiers accept coupons or other special discounts and enter these deductions in the computer. They total the final bill and take payment. Cashiers may accept checks, cash, food stamps, or charge cards. They follow store policies for these transactions. They may ask for identification from the customer, or they may call for an authorization to accept a check. When the sale is complete, the cashier issues a receipt in the form of a paper tape or a printout. This document itemizes the goods, lists the total, and states the kind of payment. In many supermarkets, cashiers also bag the groceries.

In other stores, cashiers may key the price of each item into the register manually. They check the prices from the marked packages, from their knowledge of store prices, or from a list posted near the cash register. After they key in the prices of all items, the cash register totals the amount. Cashiers take payment and hand the sales slip or register tape to the customers.

Cashiers may also have other duties. They may accept returns and make exchanges. They check the goods to see that they are in good condition. Cashiers then determine where or when the items were purchased and the method of payment used.

At the end of their shift, cashiers count the money in their drawer. They separate charge forms, return slips, coupons, and other noncash items. Finally, they take their drawer to a supervisor.

In many stores, cashiers may stock shelves or check in deliveries. They may help inventory goods or supplies. Sometimes cashiers assist with reordering the goods. They may use order books or electronic equipment that keeps a running inventory of goods and stock on hand.

Cashiers in theaters take payment, operate a ticket-dispensing machine and make change, and answer telephone inquiries about the feature playing. In many fast food restaurants, cashiers also take the customers' orders.

Cashiers in hotels may take care of safe-deposit boxes in which guests store valuables. They may keep track of charges for special services to guests, such as

long-distance telephone calls, valet service, and room service. Cashiers in hotels tell front desk clerks when guests check out.

Working Conditions

Most cashiers work standing at a checkout counter or in a booth. Generally, their workplace is pleasant, well-lighted, and well-ventilated. Since many work near the entrance to the business, they may be subject to cold air in winter and heat in summer.

The work is very repetitious. Cashiers sometimes work under great pressure doing the same tasks over and over again at a high rate of speed. Dealing with customers can also be stressful. Cashiers must accommodate themselves to the customers, who can hold up the line with unreasonable demands or who are sometimes angry or impatient. The work can also be strenuous at times. In bagging groceries, cashiers often lift heavy boxes or packages. Since they are also responsible for large sums of money, they may not leave their station unattended without a supervisor's approval.

Hours and Earnings

The business in which they work may require evening, weekend, and holiday work. Some cashiers work a five-day, forty-hour week. More than half, however, work part time or fewer than thirty hours a week. In stores that are open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, cashiers may work weekends, split shifts, and odd hours. Those who work weekends may get time off during the week.

Salaries for cashiers vary with the business, regional location, and the duties and skills of the workers. Beginners often start at the minimum wage or slightly higher. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2000, cashiers earned an average of \$6.95 an hour. Wages ranged from a high of more than \$10.39 an hour to a low of less than \$5.61 an hour. Those who work in department stores and grocery stores tend to earn more than those working at drug stores, proprietary stores, and eating and drinking places.

Fringe benefits are usually available only to full-time employees. Cashiers employed full-time may get paid vacations and sick leave. The amount of time depends on length of service. Those employed by supermarkets and stores that have seasonal rushes, such as Christmas, may not be allowed to take vacations at busy seasons. Large firms offer health and hospital insurance. Some offer pension plans. Others offer educational benefits. Cashiers working in restaurants may get one or two free meals a day besides their pay.

Education and Training

Generally, employers hire high school graduates who are at least eighteen years old for cashier jobs. High

school subjects such as basic arithmetic, bookkeeping, and typing will prove helpful. High school students can often get both academic training and practical job experience in distributive education programs.

Employers have programs to teach new workers how to use registers, scanning equipment, and scales. Experienced workers show beginners how to operate registers with scanners that list items and prices on a tape. They explain store policies and procedures for cashing checks or for taking credit cards in payment. After new workers learn procedures, they may be assigned to a checkout counter with an instructor or supervisor nearby.

In larger firms, new employees first spend several days in orientation classes. Subjects discussed may include background on the company and its business, store policies, equipment used, and security procedures.

Licensing, Certification, Unions and Professional Societies

Fewer than 20 percent of all cashiers are union members. Of this number, grocery and supermarket cashiers make up the largest group of union workers. Most belong to the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

Since cashiers often handle large sums of money, they are often bonded. That is, the employer is insured against loss in the event the checker loses company money as a result of a holdup or other unlawful action. These employees, therefore, must be able to meet the standards of bonding companies. Bonding companies evaluate applicants for risks. Often, they fingerprint them and run a background check.

Personal Qualifications

Cashiers should like to work with numbers. They should also have a tolerance for repetitious work. Accuracy is essential. A pleasant and congenial disposition and a desire for working with the public are helpful. Tact and patience are necessary in dealing with some customers. A neat appearance is important.

Occupations can be adapted for workers with disabilities. Persons should contact their school or employment counselors, their state office of vocational rehabilitation, or their state department of labor to explore fully their individual needs and requirements as well as the requirements of the occupation.

Where Employed

In 2000, about 3,400,000 people worked as cashiers. More than one third of all cashiers work in supermarkets and food stores. Others work in drugstores, department stores, restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, theaters, hotels and motels, and amusement parks. They also work in retail establishments such as bakeries,

clothing stores, shoe stores, record stores, hardware stores, nurseries and garden stores, and video rental stores.

Cashiers work in every city, town, and village in the United States. These workers are distributed in much the same pattern as that of the population in general.

Employment Outlook

An expanding demand for goods and services by a growing population makes for a good outlook for these workers. Business expansion, such as the continuing construction of shopping malls, will create jobs for new workers.

Another cause for demand is the high turnover in this occupation. Most openings will arise as cashiers leave the work for one reason or another. Many part-time workers enter this work only temporarily while they are in college or until they reach some other goal.

Traditionally, workers under the age of twenty-five have held these jobs. The number of these workers is declining, however. To attract and retain cashiers, employers may offer higher wages, better benefits, and more flexible working hours. Recruitment efforts may also be directed toward retired workers who prefer part-time work.

On the other hand, many employers prefer part-time cashiers. Part-time workers do not cost employers the money paid out in fringe benefits required for full-time workers. Some businesses are also installing automatic change-making machines, vending machines, and other kinds of automatic and electronic equipment that will decrease the number of cashiers needed in some business operations. Some supermarket chains are experimenting with equipment and systems that permit the customers to total their own purchases and pay for them without the assistance of a cashier. Overall, the outlook is best for part-time workers.

Entry Methods

Applicants may learn of job openings through want ads in local newspapers or through signs posted in supermarkets or other places of business. Friends and business associates may sometimes know of openings.

Job seekers should apply to employers or to the local employment office. For these jobs, employers may require that applicants furnish personal references from former employers or from educational institutions.

Advancement

Cashier work is an excellent way to learn about a business. It may prepare workers for better positions. Most stores promote their own workers rather than hire outsiders to fill advanced jobs. Those who show by their initiative and job performance that they can handle responsibility, have a good chance to advance. Those in supermarkets may become head cashiers, cashier trainers, or customer service desk clerks.

Cashiers who want to become department heads or store managers should learn all they can about the business. They should study, either in school or on their own, marketing, merchandising, and other business subjects. Taking business courses offered in college is a good way to improve one's chances for getting a better job and higher pay. Some supermarket chains offer scholarships or tuition aid to employees who enroll in college courses related to the work in this field.

For Further Research

Food Marketing Institute, 655 15th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Visit their Web Site: www.fmi.org

New Opportunities—The Supermarket Industry and YOU! Brochure. \$.50.

Looking For A Career Brochure-Recruiting Young Associates. Brochure. \$1.50.

Super Careers in Supermarketing. Twenty-four-page booklet. Job descriptions, career options, list of schools offering programs in supermarketing. \$3.00.

National Association of Convenience Stores, 1600 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Visit their Web Site: www.cstorecentral.com

National Grocers Association, 1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 250, Arlington, VA 22201-5758.

Career Opportunities. Free section at their Web Site: www.nationalgrocers.org

National Retail Federation, 325 7th Street, NW 1100, Washington, DC 20004. Visit their Web Site at: www.nrf.com

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, 1775 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006. Visit their Web Site: www.ufcw.org

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