

**Indicator 45. Average Wage Rates and Injury Rates in Major Employment Categories Within the Forest Sector**

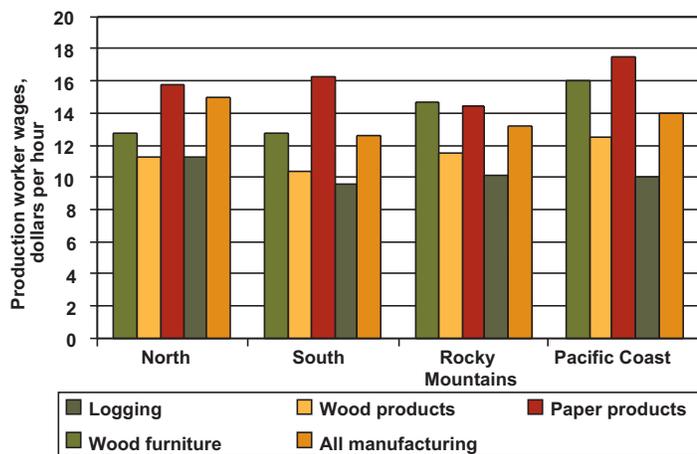


Figure 45-1. Production worker wages: logging, wood products, paper products, wood furniture, and all manufacturing, 1997, dollars per hour, by regions.

**What Is the Indicator and Why Is It Important?**

This indicator measures forest sector wage rates and injury rates as a measure of workforce health and welfare. The forest sector includes wood and nonwood forest products industries, research, management, protection, education, recreation, and tourism. Comparison of wages in the forest sector with similar occupations by region provides an indication of the economic viability of the sector and potential for income security in dependent communities. Decreasing injury rates may reflect improved occupational health and safety and employment quality, a benefit for communities.

**What Does the Indicator Show?**

Annual wages and salaries in deflated dollars for paper and allied products industries have increased steadily since 1930 and have remained above the average for all manufacturing and all domestic employment. In 2000, the average annual wage was \$46,519. Wages and salaries for lumber and wood

products in deflated dollars increased from 1930 to about 1980, decreased in the 1980s, but have increased since about 1990. In 2000, the average annual wage was \$30,018. In 1997, the highest production worker wages for logging, wood products, and paper products were on the Pacific Coast, and the highest wages for furniture products was in the North. Average salaries in State forestry agencies include jobs in forest management and protection. In 1996, the average salary for district foresters was highest in on the Pacific Coast (\$50,000), followed by the North (\$41,211), the South (\$39,233), and the Rocky Mountains (\$35,970). The average salary for forestry technicians ranged from \$25,000 in the North to \$18,500 in the Rocky Mountains. USDA Forest Service median salary for full-time employees (in 1996 dollars) increased from a range of \$11,000–\$22,000 in 1992 to \$37,000–\$46,000 in 2001. Salaries cover employees in the National Forest System, Research and Development, and State and Private Forestry. The increase came with a decrease in employees in the lowest pay ranges during the 1990s. Wages for collecting nonwood forest products vary widely. For example, mushroom picking may pay as little as \$30 a day to as much as \$15 per hour. Higher wages are possible for experienced pickers, but most workers earn low wages. Many workers receive fewer benefits or lower wages than if they worked in the formal economy. Since 1976, the illness and injury rates for wood and furniture products industries, while higher than the average for all manufacturing, have fallen in line with the rate for all manufacturing. The illness and injury rate for paper industries has been below the national average since 1984. In 2000, the annual occurrence of illness or injury per 100 workers was 12.1 for wood products, 6.8 for paper products, 9.8 for wood furniture, and 9 for all manufacturing. Information on injury rates for workers in four State forestry agencies (forest management and protection) in the South shows the rate has ranged from 8 to 19 occurrences per 100 workers in recent years. Information on wages and salaries and injury rates for the large number of jobs specifically linked to forest-based recreation and tourism, a substantial contribution to local and national economies, and in research and education has not been determined.