



Technical information:
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USDL 03-563

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For release: 10:00 A.M. EDT
Thursday, October 23, 2003

MASS LAYOFFS IN SEPTEMBER 2003

Employers initiated 868 mass layoff actions in September 2003, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month, according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each action involved at least 50 persons from a single establishment, and the number of workers involved totaled 82,647. (See table 1.) With fewer layoffs in long distance freight trucking, temporary help services, and department stores compared with September 2002, the number of layoff events and the number of initial claims were down sharply, falling to their lowest levels for September since 1999. From January through September 2003, the total number of events, at 14,073, and the number of initial claims, at 1,399,510, were lower than the January-September period a year ago.

The monthly data series in this release cover mass layoffs of 50 or more workers beginning in a given month, regardless of the duration of the layoffs. Information on the length of the layoff is obtained later and issued in a quarterly release that reports on mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days (referred to as "extended mass layoffs"). The quarterly release provides more information on the industry classification and location of the establishment and on the demographics of the laid-off workers. Because monthly figures include short-term layoffs of 30 days or less, the sum of the figures for the 3 months in a quarter will be higher than the quarterly figure for mass layoffs of more than 30 days. (See table 1.) See the Technical Note for more detailed definitions.

Industry Distribution

Temporary help services, with 5,737 claims, accounted for 7 percent of all initial claims in September. (See table A.) Five of the 10 industries reporting the highest number of mass-layoff initial claims recorded their peak level for September this year.

The manufacturing sector recorded 31 percent of all mass layoff events and 38 percent of all initial claims filed in September. A year ago, manufacturing reported 33 percent of events and 35 percent of initial claims. Within manufacturing, the number of claimants was highest in transportation equipment (4,825), followed by computer and electronic products (4,820), food manufacturing (4,145), and textile mills (3,510). (See table 2.)

The administrative and waste services sector accounted for 13 percent of events and 12 percent of initial claims filed in September, with layoffs mostly in temporary help services. The information sector accounted for 3 percent of events and 7 percent of initial claims during the month, mainly in motion picture and video production. Eight percent of the events and 7 percent of the initial claims were from retail trade, largely from general merchandise stores. An additional 9 percent of all layoff events and 6 percent of initial claims filed during September were from construction firms, primarily among specialty trade contractors.

Table A. Industries with the largest mass layoff initial claims in September 2003^p

Industry	Initial claims	September peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Temporary help services	5,737	2001	12,752
Motion picture and video production	4,422	1997	11,176
Semiconductors and related device mfg.	3,652	2003	3,652
Broadwoven fabric mills	2,652	2003	2,652
Payroll services	2,051	1999	4,737
Professional employer organizations	1,711	2001	2,435
Elementary and secondary schools	1,544	2002	2,297
Public finance activities	1,153	2003	1,153
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	1,095	2003	1,095
Nonresidential electrical contractors	1,072	2003	1,072

p=preliminary.

Government establishments accounted for 8 percent of events and initial claims filed during the month, particularly in local executive, legislative, and general government agencies and in educational services. The 6,351 initial claims in government were the most for any September since the mass layoffs series began in 1995.

Compared with September 2002, the largest decreases in initial claims were reported in truck transportation (-11,270), administrative and support services (-4,760), and general merchandise stores (-3,689). The largest over-the-year increase in initial claims was in motion picture and sound recording (+1,397).

Geographic Distribution

Among the four regions, the highest number of initial claims in September due to mass layoffs was reported in the West, 34,377. (See table 3.) Administrative and support services and motion picture and sound recording accounted for 32 percent of all initial claims in that region during the month. The South region was next, with 19,287 initial claims, followed by the Midwest, with 16,868, and the Northeast, with 12,115.

The number of initial claimants in mass layoffs declined over the year in all four regions, with the largest decrease in the West (-16,849). Eight of the nine geographic divisions had over-the-year decreases in the number of initial claims associated with mass layoffs, with the largest decreases in the Pacific (-15,298), South Atlantic (-7,698), and East North Central (-7,258). The New England division had the only increase (+2,640).

California recorded the largest number of initial claims filed in mass layoff events this September, 29,429, mostly in administrative and support services and in the motion picture and sound recording industries. Texas reported 5,587 initial claims, followed by Illinois (4,510), Pennsylvania (3,481), and New York (3,384). These five states accounted for 60 percent of all layoff events and 56 percent of initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 4.)

California registered the largest over-the-year decrease in the number of initial claims (-10,262), followed by Oregon (-3,590).

From January through September, California reported 352,098 initial claims, 25 percent of the national total. The states with the next highest numbers of initial claims were Pennsylvania (84,460), Ohio (78,391), New York (74,632), and Texas (71,116).

The report on Extended Mass Layoffs in the Third Quarter of 2003 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, November 20, 2003. The report on Mass Layoffs in October 2003 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, November 26, 2003.

Technical Note

The Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program is a federal-state program that uses a standardized, automated approach to identifying, describing, and tracking the effects of major job cutbacks, using data from each state's unemployment insurance database. Each month, states report on establishments which have at least 50 initial claims filed against them during a consecutive 5-week period. These establishments then are contacted by the state agency to determine whether these separations lasted 31 days or longer, and, if so, other information concerning the layoff is collected. States report on layoffs lasting more than 1 month on a quarterly basis.

A given month contains an aggregation of the weekly unemployment insurance claims filings for the Sunday through Saturday weeks in that month. All weeks are included for the particular month, except if the first day of the month falls on Saturday. In this case, the week is included in the prior month's tabulations. This means that some months will contain 4 weeks and others 5 weeks, and the number of weeks in a given month may be different from year to year. Therefore,

analysis of over-the-month and over-the-year change should take this calendar effect into consideration.

The MLS program resumed operations in April 1995 after it had been terminated in November 1992 due to lack of funding. Prior to April 1995, monthly layoff statistics were not available.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Definitions

Initial claimant. A person who files any notice of unemployment to initiate a request either for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or for a subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Mass layoff event. Fifty or more initial claims for unemployment insurance benefits filed against an establishment during a 5-week period, regardless of duration.

Table 1. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, July 2001 to September 2003

Date	Total mass layoffs		Extended mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days		Realization rates ¹	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2001						
July	2,117	273,807				
August	1,490	166,148				
September	1,327	160,402				
Third Quarter	4,934	600,357	1,815	371,541	36.8	61.9
October	1,831	215,483				
November	2,721	295,956				
December	2,440	268,893				
Fourth Quarter	6,992	780,332	2,697	502,502	38.6	64.4
2002						
January	2,146	263,777				
February	1,382	138,808				
March	1,460	161,316				
First Quarter	4,988	563,901	1,750	316,489	35.1	56.1
April	1,506	165,814				
May	1,723	179,799				
June	1,584	162,189				
Second Quarter	4,813	507,802	1,905	353,017	39.6	69.5
July	2,042	245,294				
August	1,248	128,103				
September	1,062	124,522				
Third Quarter	4,352	497,919	1,383	284,511	31.8	57.1
October	1,497	171,100				
November	2,153	240,171				
December	2,474	264,158				
Fourth Quarter	6,124	675,429	2,257	421,025	36.9	62.3
2003						
January	2,315	225,430				
February	1,363	124,965				
March	1,207	113,026				
First Quarter	4,885	463,421	1,700	329,153	34.8	71.0
April	1,581	161,412				
May	1,703	174,204				
June	1,691	157,552				
Second Quarter	4,975	493,168	^{2,p} 1,894	^{2,p} 285,884	^p 38.1	^p 58.0
July	2,087	226,435				
August ^p	1,258	133,839				
September ^p	868	82,647				
Third Quarter ^p	4,213	442,921				

¹ The event realization rate is the percentage of total mass layoff events lasting more than 30 days. The initial claimant realization rate is the percentage of total mass-layoff initial claimants associated with layoffs lasting more than 30 days.

² These quarterly numbers are provisional and will increase as more

data on these layoffs become available. Recent experience suggests that the number of extended mass layoff events is generally revised upwards by less than 10 percent and the number of initial claimants associated with such events increases by 25-40 percent.

^p = preliminary.

Table 2. Industry distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance

Industry	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^P	September 2003 ^P	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^P	September 2003 ^P
Total ¹	1,062	2,087	1,258	868	124,522	226,435	133,839	82,647
Total, private	1,008	1,932	1,201	799	118,537	215,170	126,266	76,296
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	51	117	38	43	3,801	8,269	2,135	2,382
Mining	7	7	4	4	513	505	283	259
Utilities	(²)	–	(²)	(²)	(²)	–	(²)	(²)
Construction	80	88	114	82	5,735	5,970	7,862	5,205
Manufacturing.....	352	946	405	271	43,755	136,410	52,620	31,428
Food	39	74	42	44	4,688	6,460	5,803	4,145
Beverage and tobacco products	7	8	(²)	(²)	454	614	(²)	(²)
Textile mills	17	27	21	21	3,406	2,828	7,154	3,510
Textile product mills	13	12	8	(²)	2,543	1,048	739	(²)
Apparel	19	36	25	10	2,225	3,093	2,255	1,212
Leather and allied products	3	(²)	(²)	(²)	240	(²)	(²)	(²)
Wood products	12	31	21	11	1,312	3,976	1,773	969
Paper	9	16	13	10	1,007	1,035	1,083	834
Printing and related support activities	7	12	4	(²)	650	723	231	(²)
Petroleum and coal products	–	(²)	–	–	–	(²)	–	–
Chemicals	8	15	7	9	977	1,332	549	602
Plastics and rubber products	15	90	24	10	1,322	11,122	2,203	886
Nonmetallic mineral products	5	30	6	5	410	3,954	463	420
Primary metals	20	66	23	24	2,273	8,676	1,988	2,011
Fabricated metal products	22	59	32	5	2,365	6,235	2,806	826
Machinery	28	65	39	21	3,657	8,669	6,606	2,073
Computer and electronic products	48	60	34	26	5,222	5,534	2,675	4,820
Electrical equipment and appliances	23	33	21	9	2,679	5,445	2,564	1,142
Transportation equipment	32	265	50	31	4,984	60,173	9,476	4,825
Furniture and related products	17	20	21	11	2,834	2,391	2,513	1,254
Miscellaneous manufacturing	8	19	11	10	507	1,648	1,351	662
Wholesale trade	20	36	18	22	1,708	2,776	1,322	1,808
Retail trade	92	108	99	69	10,029	9,065	9,980	5,789
Transportation and warehousing	68	84	86	20	18,128	7,489	9,025	1,723
Information	47	44	51	26	6,585	3,700	9,114	5,791
Finance and insurance	26	35	41	35	2,530	2,569	3,113	2,371
Real estate and rental and leasing	(²)	11	4	5	(²)	751	349	382
Professional and technical services	29	53	41	29	2,811	4,970	3,775	3,730
Management of companies and enterprises	(²)	4	(²)	(²)	(²)	438	(²)	(²)
Administrative and waste services	133	212	168	109	14,255	18,427	16,242	9,606
Educational services.....	5	25	7	8	369	1,714	592	634
Health care and social assistance	18	59	32	13	1,299	4,048	2,427	945
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	19	27	19	19	2,157	2,559	1,386	1,237
Accommodation and food services	49	50	45	37	4,056	3,764	3,228	2,623
Other services, except public administration.....	(²)	19	22	3	(²)	1,115	2,234	183
Unclassified	1	7	4	1	103	631	259	50
Government	54	155	57	69	5,985	11,265	7,573	6,351
Federal	9	10	10	13	1,703	899	1,287	1,910
State	10	24	16	14	980	1,527	1,766	1,417
Local	35	121	31	42	3,302	8,839	4,520	3,024

¹ Data were reported by all states and the District of Columbia.

² Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

^P = preliminary.

NOTE: Industry data reflect the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2002. Dash represents zero.

Table 3. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance by census region and division

Census region and division	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^p	September 2003 ^p	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^p	September 2003 ^p
United States ¹	1,062	2,087	1,258	868	124,522	226,435	133,839	82,647
Northeast	158	336	220	107	15,981	30,187	21,272	12,115
New England	21	69	25	19	1,919	6,148	2,151	4,559
Middle Atlantic	137	267	195	88	14,062	24,039	19,121	7,556
South	259	440	330	196	31,878	48,895	34,673	19,287
South Atlantic	129	200	164	96	16,396	22,033	18,195	8,698
East South Central	51	128	68	31	5,877	14,232	8,033	4,144
West South Central	79	112	98	69	9,605	12,630	8,445	6,445
Midwest	177	697	239	165	25,437	101,533	30,872	16,868
East North Central	134	589	199	125	19,904	79,361	25,707	12,646
West North Central	43	108	40	40	5,533	22,172	5,165	4,222
West	468	614	469	400	51,226	45,820	47,022	34,377
Mountain	35	53	42	30	4,119	4,179	4,080	2,568
Pacific	433	561	427	370	47,107	41,641	42,942	31,809

¹ See footnote 1, table 2.

^p = preliminary.

NOTE: The States (including the District of Columbia) that comprise the census divisions are: New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North

Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

Table 4. State distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance

State	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^P	September 2003 ^P	September 2002	July 2003	August 2003 ^P	September 2003 ^P
Total ¹	1,062	2,087	1,258	868	124,522	226,435	133,839	82,647
Alabama	16	45	24	8	2,174	5,466	3,740	1,164
Alaska	(²)	–	(²)	3	(²)	–	(²)	185
Arizona	9	20	10	4	1,618	1,634	703	423
Arkansas	4	8	(²)	3	421	621	(²)	268
California	376	517	383	345	39,691	37,033	37,814	29,429
Colorado	6	7	(²)	6	561	478	(²)	439
Connecticut	4	12	3	4	262	833	237	291
Delaware	–	3	3	(²)	–	1,430	598	(²)
District of Columbia	(²)	(²)	(²)	–	(²)	(²)	(²)	–
Florida	55	76	80	43	4,143	5,356	5,554	2,555
Georgia	16	53	20	19	4,639	7,835	2,077	2,130
Hawaii	4	(²)	(²)	3	428	(²)	(²)	196
Idaho	4	9	11	6	287	957	1,500	463
Illinois	41	85	50	41	6,707	11,117	7,996	4,510
Indiana	16	86	29	13	2,512	18,688	3,478	983
Iowa	9	24	10	9	1,673	4,674	1,650	1,108
Kansas	3	14	6	6	196	1,800	775	547
Kentucky	16	57	21	16	1,773	7,110	2,377	2,259
Louisiana	12	20	17	4	761	2,299	1,215	231
Maine	(²)	3	(²)	–	(²)	178	(²)	–
Maryland	7	16	5	(²)	815	1,149	422	(²)
Massachusetts	12	43	15	10	988	3,947	1,388	1,047
Michigan	14	190	11	18	1,544	21,647	2,369	1,861
Minnesota	9	18	6	7	1,142	2,127	505	511
Mississippi	6	8	8	(²)	782	460	571	(²)
Missouri	15	40	15	13	1,886	12,137	1,521	1,307
Montana	–	3	4	(²)	–	172	599	(²)
Nebraska	6	9	–	5	583	1,231	–	749
Nevada	13	10	11	12	1,133	694	915	879
New Hampshire	3	8	3	(²)	514	944	195	(²)
New Jersey	29	59	33	8	3,424	5,354	2,708	691
New Mexico	(²)	(²)	3	(²)	(²)	(²)	127	(²)
New York	49	92	94	38	5,137	8,253	10,633	3,384
North Carolina	11	11	32	11	1,208	1,298	6,680	897
North Dakota	–	(²)	(²)	–	–	(²)	(²)	–
Ohio	34	133	54	29	5,468	17,086	6,389	2,979
Oklahoma	(²)	9	6	5	(²)	1,947	603	359
Oregon	30	24	27	5	3,965	2,891	2,447	375
Pennsylvania	59	116	68	42	5,501	10,432	5,780	3,481
Rhode Island	(²)	3	(²)	(²)	(²)	246	(²)	(²)
South Carolina	18	17	10	5	2,220	1,815	870	1,548
South Dakota	(²)	(²)	(²)	–	(²)	(²)	(²)	–
Tennessee	13	18	15	5	1,148	1,196	1,345	608
Texas	62	75	74	57	8,280	7,763	6,571	5,587
Utah	(²)	(²)	(²)	–	(²)	(²)	(²)	–
Vermont	–	–	(²)	(²)	–	–	(²)	(²)
Virginia	19	21	13	14	3,092	2,981	1,887	1,321
Washington	21	18	14	14	2,889	1,579	1,714	1,624
West Virginia	(²)	(²)	–	(²)	(²)	(²)	–	(²)
Wisconsin	29	95	55	24	3,673	10,823	5,475	2,313
Wyoming	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Puerto Rico	9	13	10	7	873	1,116	1,035	573

¹ See footnote 1, table 2.

^P = preliminary.

² Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.