



## Research Summary

# Compensation of Longshoremen, Marine Clerks, and Foremen Employed at Marine Terminals in California, Oregon, and Washington Ports

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International Longshore and Warehouse Union members working as Longshoremen, Marine Clerks, and Foremen at America's West Coast ports are the highest-paid blue-collar workers in the nation and enjoy some of the most generous benefits provided to any workers today, according to a study published by Dr. David L. Crawford, Ph.D. and commissioned by the Pacific Maritime Association. In fact, the highest-paid ILWU workers earn more than many white-collar workers who have advanced degrees, the study found.

Analyzing data from PMA, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor (BLS), Kaiser Family Foundation, and Health Research and Educational Trust, Dr. Crawford compared ILWU workers' wages and benefits to other union and non-union workers across a variety of industries. The study was posthumously released in July 2022 following the death of Dr. Crawford, an accomplished labor economist who served as senior fellow in the Management Department of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania as well as president of Econsult Corporation.

### ILWU Member Earnings

ILWU members earn exceptionally high compensation. In 2021, average annual earnings totaled \$194,340 for Class A Longshoremen, \$217,699 for Clerks and \$311,656 for Foremen. <sup>1</sup>

Average earnings for ILWU members exceeded those of airline pilots, engineers, architects, construction workers, and workers in several other fields requiring significant education and training, the study found, according to U.S. Census data for 2019. Of the select fields, Class A Longshoremen earned more than any category except doctors and lawyers.

On an hourly wage basis, the study compared basic shift rates for ILWU workers to those in 22 other occupations, based on BLS data. The Basic 1<sup>st</sup> shift rate of \$46.23 for Longshoremen and Marine Clerks exceeded the mean hourly wages of all but three of those 22 fields: Legal, Management, and Computer and Mathematical. The top-skilled 1<sup>st</sup> shift rate of \$52.03 for Longshoremen and Marine Clerks surpassed all but two: Legal and Management.

Data on the mean and the 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles of the basic hourly wage rates of private sector workers in various occupation groups are reported by the BLS. This data is collected through the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) and is displayed in Table 5.A.1.b. **The rates that are highlighted in yellow are lower than \$46.23 which was the Basic 1st shift rate for Longshoremen and Marine Clerks beginning in July 2021. The rates in that table that are highlighted in yellow or green are**

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<sup>1</sup> Data released after the study was published show that in 2022, the respective average earnings were \$197,514, \$220,014, and \$306,291.

lower than \$52.03, which was the top skilled 1st shift rate for Longshoremen and Marine Clerks beginning in July 2021.

Table 5.A.1.b- Hourly Wage Rate Percentiles by Occupation 2021

Occupation	Hourly Wage Rate Percentiles				Mean Hourly Wage
	25th	50th	75th	90th	
Architecture and Engineering	\$29.55	\$38.39	\$54.11	\$71.37	\$44.10
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	\$17.92	\$24.61	\$38.08	\$58.86	\$31.78
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	\$13.07	\$14.54	\$18.19	\$23.06	\$16.23
Business and Financial Operations	\$25.68	\$36.81	\$48.19	\$62.80	\$39.72
Community and Social Service	\$18.22	\$23.28	\$30.07	\$38.62	\$25.94
Computer and Mathematical	\$30.09	\$46.90	\$61.55	\$78.67	\$48.01
Construction and Extraction	\$18.12	\$23.18	\$30.75	\$44.75	\$26.87
Educational Instruction and Library	\$17.84	\$27.51	\$37.09	\$48.23	\$29.88
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	\$14.00	\$14.36	\$17.86	\$23.14	\$16.70
Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$10.82	\$13.65	\$15.05	\$18.90	\$14.16
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	\$23.41	\$36.08	\$48.00	\$74.43	\$43.80
Healthcare Support	\$13.72	\$14.37	\$17.91	\$22.58	\$16.02
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	\$17.93	\$23.05	\$29.81	\$38.20	\$25.66
Legal	\$28.08	\$39.63	\$75.43	#	\$54.38
Life, Physical, and Social Science	\$23.78	\$34.97	\$48.19	\$63.09	\$38.81
Management	\$35.92	\$49.25	\$77.39	#	\$59.31
Office and Administrative Support	\$14.51	\$18.29	\$23.31	\$30.01	\$20.88
Personal Care and Service	\$11.33	\$14.16	\$18.05	\$23.76	\$16.17
Production	\$14.44	\$18.13	\$23.23	\$29.96	\$20.71
Protective Service	\$15.12	\$22.40	\$31.06	\$46.59	\$25.68
Sales and Related	\$12.92	\$14.71	\$23.55	\$39.28	\$22.15
Transportation and Material Moving	\$14.19	\$17.72	\$22.88	\$29.72	\$19.88
(1) This wage is equal to or greater than \$100.00 per hour or \$208,000 per year					

By educational attainment, the earnings of Longshore workers exceeded averages for those with Bachelor’s Degrees or Master’s Degrees, trailing only those with professional degrees such as M.D.s or J.D.s. The average annual earnings of Foremen exceeded even those with professional degrees.

The study found that ILWU members earned more than twice as much as fire fighters and police, who have similar educational requirements and slightly higher injury rates than dockworkers. Average 2019 earnings for Class A Longshore workers were \$177,205, compared to \$81,270 for fire fighters and police. ILWU Foremen earned 3.5 times more.

The study further adds: “The annual earnings of ILWU workers are due not just to their hourly wages, but also to the fact that the ILWU-PMA contract often requires that ILWU workers be paid for significantly more hours than they actually work. The contract includes, for example, guarantees that workers who begin a shift are generally paid for the entire shift, and in some cases other minimums are stipulated. There is also a Pay Guarantee Program under which workers may be paid when there is no

work available. For these and other reasons, the number of hours paid can significantly exceed the number of hours worked.”

### **ILWU Benefits**

Dr. Crawford’s study included a comprehensive evaluation of benefits for ILWU members and found that they far exceed those available to other American workers. The cost to employers of health care, retirement, holidays, paid vacation, and other benefits totaled an average of \$29.37 per hour, the study found, compared to an average of \$18.80 for union workers and \$8.76 for non-union workers.

ILWU members and their families enjoy far more generous health insurance than other union and non-union workers, who have to contribute to the cost of their health benefits. By contrast, ILWU members pay no premiums, co-pays, or deductibles for comprehensive – and lifelong – health care benefits for the workers and their dependents.

In terms of retirement benefits, ILWU members receive defined benefit pension payments of up to \$95,460 per year, and surviving spouses of Longshoremen and Marine Clerks receive 75% of the retiree’s benefit. The study found that the average pension benefit for an ILWU member is “almost three times as large as the estimated pension of an average high school graduate.”

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