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Quality of Employment in Canada

Night work, 2022

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Night work, 2022

Working a regular night shift or night hours is a relatively uncommon type of schedule, accounting for 1.7% of all workers in their main job in April 2022. However, tracking this type of schedule provides important information on a group of workers who may experience more challenges balancing their work and personal life. Industries where a higher proportion of workers usually work at night include transportation and warehousing, business, building and other support services, and retail trade. Landed immigrants, as well as Filipino and Black workers, were more likely to work at night.

According to the International Labour Organization Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171)¹, night work means all work which is performed during a period of no less than seven consecutive hours, including the interval from midnight to 5 a.m. Data from Statistics Canada on night work refer to persons who work regular night shifts or night hours, and do not limit the definition to seven consecutive hours. The night work indicator is therefore the percentage of workers whose usual schedule is a regular night shift or night hours.

Night work can be a voluntary adaptation of work hours, but in many cases people work at night due to operational needs in settings such as hospitals and factories. Working at night may impact workers' ability to balance their work hours with care and family responsibilities. In addition, night shifts are associated with a higher risk of depression,² metabolic syndrome³ and other health conditions.

Data and analyses presented in this article are mostly based on a supplement to the Labour Force Survey collected in April 2022 among workers aged 15 to 69. Data refer to the main job and are not seasonally adjusted. Additional data points from the 2016 General Social Survey and the 2020 Survey on Quality of Employment are also reported for the same age group.

Historical trends

In April 2022, 323,000 people, or 1.7% of workers aged 15 to 69, usually worked a regular night shift. While the prevalence of night work may be affected by seasonal employment patterns, previous data collected at other times of the year suggest that the share of Canadians who usually work at night has remained relatively stable in recent years.

According to the General Social Survey: Canadians at work and home, 2.0% of workers had a regular night shift in the fall of 2016.

Data from the Survey on Quality of Employment, collected immediately before the pandemic in March 2020, indicate that among those who were working, or who had worked in the last 12 months, 1.8% had a regular night shift or night hours.

A recent snapshot

In April 2022, working a regular night shift or night hours was more common among men (2.1%) compared with women (1.3%). There was little difference in the rate of night work between workers aged 15 to 24, 25 to 54 and 55 to 69.

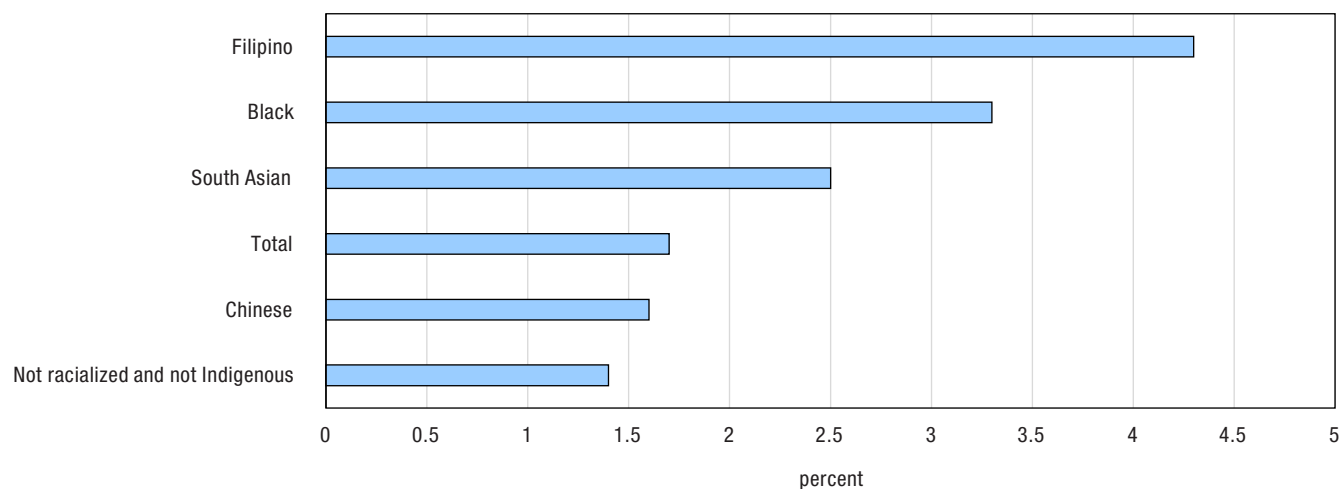
The prevalence of regular night hours varied by level of education, and workers aged 25 to 69 with a high school diploma or less (2.5%) were more than twice as likely to work at night than those with a bachelor's degree or higher (0.9%).

1. International Labour Organization. 1990. "[C171 - Night Work Convention \(No.171\)](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312316)". Geneva: ILO. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312316
2. Lee, A., S. K. Myung, J. J. Cho, Y. J. Jung, J. L. Yoon and M. Y. Kim. 2017. "Night shift work and risk of depression: meta-analysis of observational studies." *Journal of Korean Medical Science*. Vol. 32, no. 7, 1091-1096. <https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2017.32.7.1091>
3. Wang F, L. Zhang, Y. Zhang, B. Zhang, Y. He, S. Xie, M. Li, X. Miao, E. Y. Y. Chan, J. L. Tang, M. C. S. Wong., Z. Li, I. T. S. Yu and L. A. Tse. 2014. "Meta-analysis on night shift work and risk of metabolic syndrome." *Obesity Reviews*. Vol. 15, No. 9, 709-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.12194>

Immigrants and some racialized groups were also more likely to work at night. The proportion of workers with a regular night shift was 2.3% for landed immigrants compared with 1.5% for those born in Canada. Among racialized groups, Filipino (4.3%) and Black workers (3.3%) were among the most likely to work at night.

Chart 1

Proportion of workers (%) aged 15 to 69 who usually work a regular night shift or night hours by largest racialized groups, April 2022



Notes: According to results from the Census of population, South Asian (2.6 million), Chinese (1.7 million), Black (1.5 million) and Filipino (960,000) were the largest racialized groups by population in 2021.

Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Supplement, custom tabulation.

While the prevalence of night work varied by industry and major occupational group, in no case did it exceed more than 10% of workers. In April 2022, the transportation and warehousing industry had one of the highest proportions of workers who usually worked a regular night shift or night hours (5.5%). Other industries with relatively high rates of night work include the business, building and other support services industry (4.5%), accommodation and food services (2.8%), retail trade (2.7%) and manufacturing (2.7%). Private sector employees (2.1%) were more likely to work at night than public sector employees (1.3%) and self-employed workers (0.6%).

At the occupational level, the share of workers with a regular night shift or night hours was relatively high among processing and manufacturing machine operators and related production workers (6.6%), labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities (6.4%) and assisting occupations in support of health services (5.9%), an occupational group which includes nurses' aides and orderlies.

In terms of job characteristics, regular night hours were equally common for full-time (1.7%) and part-time workers (1.7%), and there was little difference between permanent (1.9%) and temporary employees (1.8%).

Workers who usually work at night were also less likely to have a flexible schedule, and few of them worked from home. In April 2022, among workers who usually worked at night, 13.5% were able to choose when they started and finished their workday, compared with 37.2% among those with regular daytime hours. Further, even at a time when working from home was elevated during the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority of workers with a regular night shift or regular night hours usually worked exclusively at locations other than their home (97.2%), compared with 72.2% for workers who worked regular daytime hours.

Information on the indicator

Description or definition

The **night work** indicator is the number of workers whose usual schedule in their main job is a regular night shift or night hours, expressed as a percentage of all employed persons.

Source

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, April 2022.

Statistics Canada, Labour Market Indicators Supplement, April 2022.

General Social Survey: Canadians at Work and Home, 2016 (Cycle 30).

Survey on Quality of Employment, 2020.

Information for interpretation

For more information on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) methodology and population coverage, please consult the [Guide to the Labour Force Survey, 2020](#).

Detailed information on concepts and methodology are also available for the [General Social Survey: Canadians at Work and Home](#) and the [Survey on Quality of Employment](#).

The April 2022 LFS Supplement was collected as part of the labour market indicators program. The sample consists of households in their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th month of participation in the LFS and the survey population is limited to those aged 15 to 69 living in the provinces. For more information see [Labour Market Indicators](#).

The LFS estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling variability. The analysis focuses on differences between estimates that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

Occupations are coded according to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2016, while industry coding is based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2017.

Other related information

Additional Statistics Canada data are available on the following subject:

[Hours of work and work arrangements](#)