

## **WELDERS AND FABRICATORS**

### **Nature of the Work**

Welders and Fabricators specialize in work pertaining to the field of construction, steel erection, factory production and maintenance. Welders and Fabricators inspect parts that are in need of repair or interpret blue prints and obtain the needed materials and equipment to complete the assigned task. Using hand and power tools such as saws, punches, shears, welding machines, and torches as well as measuring and layout equipment such as tape measures, squares and scribes, welders create and assemble the items needed to complete a project.

Welders and Fabricators are also called to perform related tasks at times such as grinding and finishing parts, or fitting and tacking parts for later operation. Welders often work closely with machinists and engineers to ensure that the finished item will be to the specifications set forth at the beginning of the job.

Employees in small establishments, where they are often the only welder, may be expected to be a well-rounded individual in many aspects of welding. In larger establishments, their duties may be limited to several processes and work one particular product or task.

### **Working Conditions**

Welders and Fabricators often carry out several different tasks in a single day, at any number of locations. They may work inside of a single building or in several different buildings. They may have to stand for long periods, lift heavy objects, and work in uncomfortably hot or cold environments, in awkward and cramped positions, or on ladders. They are subject to electrical shock, burns, falls, cuts, and bruises. Most welders work a 40-hour week. Some work evening, night or weekend shifts.

Those employed in small establishments often operate with only limited supervision. Those working in larger establishments frequently are under the direct supervision of an experienced worker.

### **Employment**

Employment of welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers is projected to grow 4 percent from 2014 to 2014. Skilled welders with up-to-date training should have good job opportunities.

### **Job Outlook**

Job openings should be plentiful. Welding and Fabrication is a large occupation with significant turnover, and many job openings should result from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or stop working for other reasons.

Studies show that there are more than 500,000 welders employed in the U.S. And the need for these skilled workers is only getting stronger as virtually all construction and manufacturing companies require some form of welding, from the production of assemblies to maintenance and repair. Skilled welders are in short supply and the situation is only getting worse. According to AWS and other industry research, the average age of a welder is in the mid-fifties, with many approaching 60 years old. It is estimated that more than half of the industry's highly trained workforce is nearing retirement, creating a potential shortage of more than 200,000 skilled welders.

### **Earnings**

Nationally, the median wages (2015) for welders in was \$18.35 per hour or \$38,150 per year. In 2010 entry-level positions averaged \$24,490 per year, or \$11.78 per hour, while the top 10 percent of welders earned \$55,240, or \$26.56 per hour. Some Welders and Fabricators are members of unions, including the United Steel Workers Union and the United Automobile Workers.

## 51-4121.06 - Welders, Cutters, and Welder Fitters

Use hand-welding or flame-cutting equipment to weld or join metal components or to fill holes, indentations, or seams of fabricated metal products.

**Sample of reported job titles:** Aluminum Welder, Fabrication Welder, Fabricator, Fitter/Welder, Maintenance Welder, Mig Welder, Sub Arc Operator, Welder, Welder-Fitter, Welder/Fabricator

Additional Information About this Job Classification is Available Online at:

<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/51-4121.06>

### Wages & Employment Trends

Median wages data collected from **Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers**.  
Employment data collected from **Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers**.  
Industry data collected from **Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers**.

**Median wages (2015)** \$18.34 hourly, \$38,150 annual

**State wages**



**Employment (2014)** 398,000 employees

**Projected growth (2014-2024)** ■■■ Slower than average (2% to 4%)

**Projected job openings (2014-2024)** 128,500

**State trends**



**Top industries (2014)** [Manufacturing](#)  
[Construction](#)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics [2015 wage data](#) and [2014-2024 employment projections](#). "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period (2014-2024). "Projected job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

*In 2016 Welders, Cutters, and Welder Fitters were been selected as a Bright Outlook Occupation:*

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Bright Outlook occupations are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, will have large numbers of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations. [More details...](#)

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This occupation, [Welders, Cutters, and Welder Fitters](#), is projected to have large numbers of **job openings**.