

## General

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## Quick Overview

Industries in the Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing subsector make goods by processing plastics materials and raw rubber. The core technology employed by establishments in this subsector is that of plastics or rubber product production. Plastics and rubber are combined in the same subsector because plastics are increasingly being used as a substitute for rubber; however the subsector is generally restricted to the production of products made of just one material, either solely plastics or rubber.

Many manufacturing activities use plastics or rubber, for example the manufacture of footwear, or furniture. Typically, the production process of these products involves more than one material. In these cases, technologies that allow disparate materials to be formed and

combined are of central importance in describing the manufacturing activity. In NAICS, such activities (the footwear and furniture manufacturing) are not classified in the Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing subsector because the core technologies for these activities are diverse and involve multiple materials.

Within the Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing subsector, a distinction is made between plastics and rubber products at the industry group level, although it is not a rigid distinction, as can be seen from the definition of Industry 32622, Rubber and Plastics Hose and Belting Manufacturing. As materials technology progresses, plastics are increasingly being used as a substitute for rubber; and eventually, the distinction may disappear as a basis for establishment classification.

In keeping with the core technology focus of plastics, lamination of plastics film to plastics film as well as the production of bags from plastics only is classified in this subsector. Lamination and bag production involving plastics and materials other than plastics are classified in the NAICS Subsector 322, Paper Manufacturing.

The plastics and rubber products manufacturing subsector consists of these industry groups:

- Plastics Product Manufacturing: NAICS 3261
- Rubber Product Manufacturing: NAICS 3262





NOTE: There was a change in the definition of this subsector between NAICS 2002 and NAICS 2007. Some of the data below reflect the 2002 definition and some reflect the 2007 definition. See the [BLS implementation schedule for NAICS 2007](#) to find out which BLS programs have already implemented NAICS 2007.

## Workforce Statistics

This section provides information relating to employment and unemployment in plastics and rubber products manufacturing. While most data are obtained from employer or establishment surveys, information on industry unemployment comes from a national survey of households. The following tables present an overview of the industry including the number of jobs, the unemployment rate of those previously employed in the industry, mass layoffs, data for occupations common to the industry, and projections of occupational employment change.

## Employment, Unemployment, and Layoffs

| Data series   | Back data | Aug. 2008 | Sep. 2008 | Oct. 2008        | Nov. 2008        |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Employment (in thousands)</b>  |           |           |           |                  |                  |
| <b><u>Employment, all employees</u></b><br><b>(seasonally adjusted)</b> | ✘         | 726.4     | 720.0     | <u>(P)</u> 712.4 | <u>(P)</u> 700.0 |

| <b>Data series</b>   | <b>Back data</b>  | <b>Aug. 2008</b> | <b>Sep. 2008</b> | <b>Oct. 2008</b> | <b>Nov. 2008</b> |
|--|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b><u>Employment, production workers</u></b><br><b>(seasonally adjusted)</b> |    | 570.3            | 564.2            | (P) 556.0        | (P) 545.5        |
| <b>Unemployment</b>  |   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| <b><u>Unemployment rate</u></b>  |    | 11.1%            | 8.5%             | 8.5%             | 10.7%            |
| <b>Layoffs</b>   |   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| <b><u>Mass layoff events</u></b>   |  | 30               | 16               | 47               | 74               |
| <b><u>Initial claimants for unemployment benefits</u></b>                    |  | 3,625            | 1,224            | 4,903            | 7,013            |
| Footnotes<br>(P) Preliminary   |   |                  |                  |                  |                  |

(Source: [Current Employment Statistics](#), [Current Population Survey](#), [Mass Layoff Statistics](#))

## Employment by Occupation

| <b>Data series</b>   | <b>Employment,<br/>2007</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b><u>Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic</u></b> | 40,000                      |

| <b>Data series</b>  | <b>Employment,<br/>2007</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <b><u>Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders</u></b>        | 23,500                      |
| <b><u>First-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers</u></b>                         | 34,080                      |
| <b><u>Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers</u></b>  | 26,710                      |
| <b><u>Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic</u></b> | 64,930                      |
| <b><u>Packers and packagers, hand</u></b>   | 31,010                      |
| <b><u>Team assemblers</u></b>   | 49,340                      |

(Source: [Occupational Employment Statistics](#))



## Projections



For projected (future) employment estimates, see the [National Employment Matrix](#), which includes employment estimates by industry and occupation for plastics and rubber products manufacturing.

(Source: [Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections](#))

## Earnings and Hours

This section presents data on employee earnings and weekly hours. The latest industry averages of hourly earnings and weekly hours for production or nonsupervisory employees are shown. In addition, recent hourly and annual earnings are shown for occupations commonly found in plastics and rubber products manufacturing.

## Earnings and Hours of Production Workers

| <b>Data series</b>                    | <b>Back data</b>  | <b>Aug. 2008</b> | <b>Sep. 2008</b> | <b>Oct. 2008</b> | <b>Nov. 2008</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b><u>Average hourly earnings</u></b> |  | \$15.84          | \$15.92          | (P) \$15.97      | (P) \$16.04      |
| <b><u>Average weekly hours</u></b>    |  | 41.0             | 40.8             | (P) 40.7         | (P) 40.6         |

| <b>Data series</b>           | <b>Back data</b> | <b>Aug. 2008</b> | <b>Sep. 2008</b> | <b>Oct. 2008</b> | <b>Nov. 2008</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Footnotes<br>(P) Preliminary |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |

(Source: [Current Employment Statistics](#))

## Earnings by Occupation

| Data series   | Wages, 2007 |         |          |          |
|---|-------------|---------|----------|----------|
|   | Hourly      |         | Annual   |          |
|   | Median      | Mean    | Median   | Mean     |
| <b><u>Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic</u></b>            | \$13.12     | \$13.74 | \$27,290 | \$28,580 |
| <b><u>Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders</u></b>        | \$13.42     | \$14.02 | \$27,910 | \$29,160 |
| <b><u>First-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers</u></b>                         | \$21.65     | \$22.82 | \$45,020 | \$47,460 |
| <b><u>Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers</u></b>  | \$13.56     | \$14.47 | \$28,210 | \$30,110 |
| <b><u>Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic</u></b> | \$11.84     | \$12.61 | \$24,630 | \$26,240 |
| <b><u>Packers and packagers, hand</u></b>   | \$10.06     | \$10.51 | \$20,920 | \$21,860 |
| <b><u>Team assemblers</u></b>   | \$11.47     | \$12.33 | \$23,850 | \$25,650 |

(Source: [Occupational Employment Statistics](#))

## Work-related Fatalities, Injuries, and Illnesses

This section presents data for the industry on the number of workplace fatalities and the rates of workplace injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers in plastics and rubber products manufacturing. An injury or illness is considered to be work-related if an event or exposure in the work environment either caused or contributed to the resulting condition or significantly aggravated a pre-existing condition.

| <b>Data series</b> | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Fatalities</b>  |             |             |             |             |

| <b>Data series</b>  | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b><u>Number of fatalities</u></b>  | 25          | 24          | 13          | (P) 20      |
| <b>Rate of injury and illness cases per 100 full-time workers</b>               |             |             |             |             |
| <b><u>Total recordable cases</u></b>  | 7.7         | 7.1         | 6.8         | 6.4         |
| <b><u>Cases involving days away from work, job restriction, or transfer</u></b> | 4.7         | 4.1         | 3.9         | 3.7         |
| <b><u>Cases involving days away from work</u></b>                               | 2.0         | 1.7         | 1.6         | 1.6         |
| <b><u>Cases involving days of job transfer or restriction</u></b>               | 2.7         | 2.4         | 2.3         | 2.1         |
| Footnotes<br>(P) Preliminary  |             |             |             |             |

(Source: [Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities](#))



## Prices

This section provides industry-specific pricing information. The producer price index measures the percentage change in prices that domestic producers receive for goods and services. The prices included in the producer price index are from the first commercial transaction. The import price index reflects the percentage change in prices paid to foreign producers for their goods and services within the U.S., while the export price index measures the percentage change in prices received by U.S. producers for goods and services sold outside the U.S.

| <b>Data series</b>                          | <b>Back data</b> | <b>Aug. 2008</b> | <b>Sep. 2008</b> | <b>Oct. 2008</b> | <b>Nov. 2008</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b><u>Producer price index</u></b>          | ✘                | (P) 165.0        | (P) 166.4        | (P) 168.3        | (P) 167.9        |
| <b>Percent change from previous month</b>   |                  | (P) 1.3%         | (P) 0.8%         | (P) 1.1%         | (P) -0.2%        |
| <b><u>Import index</u></b>                  | ✘                | 113.8            | (R) 114.2        | (R) 113.6        | 113.2            |
| <b>Percent change from previous month</b>   |                  | 0.5%             | (R) 0.4%         | (R) -0.5%        | (R) -0.4%        |
| <b><u>Export index</u></b>                  | ✘                | (R) 111.0        | 111.9            | (R) 112.3        | 111.5            |
| <b>Percent change from previous month</b>   |                  | (R) 0.5%         | (R) 0.8%         | (R) 0.4%         | (R) -0.7%        |
| Footnotes<br>(R) Revised<br>(P) Preliminary |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |

(Source: [Producer Price Indexes](#), [International Price Program](#))

## Workplace Trends

This section presents data on the number of establishments in plastics and rubber products manufacturing. Also included in this section is information on productivity, presented as the rate of change in output per hour of workers in the industry.


## Establishments

| <b>Data series</b>              | <b>Back data</b> | <b>2nd quarter 2007</b> | <b>3rd quarter 2007</b> | <b>4th quarter 2007</b> | <b>1st quarter 2008</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Number of establishments</b> |                  |                         |                         |                         |                         |

| <b>Data series</b>             | <b>Back data</b>         | <b>2nd quarter 2007</b> | <b>3rd quarter 2007</b> | <b>4th quarter 2007</b> | <b>1st quarter 2008</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><u>Private industry</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13,788                  | 13,780                  | 13,783                  | (P) 13,967              |
| <b><u>Local government</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1                       | 1                       | 1                       | (P) 1                   |
| <b><u>State government</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Footnotes<br>(P) Preliminary   |                          |                         |                         |                         |                         |

(Source: [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#))

## Productivity

| <b>Data series</b>                                      | <b>Back data</b>  | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> |
|---|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b><u>Labor productivity index, output per hour</u></b> |  | 126.025     | 128.688     | 132.618     | 132.823     |

| <b>Data series</b>                              | <b>Back data</b>         | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2006</b> |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b><u>Percent change from previous year</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4.3         | 2.1         | 3.1         | 0.2         |
| <b><u>Labor index, total labor hours</u></b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 85.305      | 84.626      | 83.016      | 82.288      |
| <b><u>Percent change from previous year</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | -4.2        | -0.8        | -1.9        | -0.9        |
| <b><u>Output index</u></b>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | 107.506     | 108.904     | 110.094     | 109.297     |
| <b><u>Percent change from previous year</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 0.0         | 1.3         | 1.1         | -0.7        |
| <b><u>Unit labor costs index</u></b>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | 103.081     | 101.457     | 102.579     | 104.361     |
| <b><u>Percent change from previous year</u></b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 0.4         | -1.6        | 1.1         | 1.7         |

(Source: [Productivity and Costs](#))

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