

Roustabout

Motorman

Roughneck

Worm

Motorman. Roughneck. Worm. Those colloquial terms are sometimes used to describe workers who perform manual labor in oil fields. Sound appealing? Thankfully, the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system provides a structure under which common job duties are grouped and formal occupational titles are assigned. Under SOC, someone who assembles and repairs oil field equipment is called a Roustabout.

Roustabouts' job duties are actually somewhat wide-ranging beyond the assembly and repair of oil field equipment. While they spend much of their time bolting together platforms, assembling pump parts and tightening pipes, they may also be responsible for guiding mobile equipment such as cranes and bulldozers, checking safety harnesses, digging ditches and cleaning up spilled oil. Naturally, roustabouts can expect to perform these tasks outdoors and in all weather conditions. The work schedule for this occupation tends to be aligned with the drilling schedule of the respective oil rig, which means it is fairly common for roustabouts to work nontraditional schedules such as seven days on and seven days off, or shifts longer than eight hours. Consequently, part-time opportunities can be hard to come by. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that entry into this occupation is relatively accessible, as stringent education or work experience requirements are rare. However, some employers do prefer roustabout candidates to have some form of applied technology training where they acquired basic skills in the areas of mechanics, welding and heavy equipment operation, among others.

In Utah, the Uintah Basin holds 78 percent of the state's oil and gas extraction employment, and, by extension, the majority of the state's roustabouts. As of May 2011, there were an estimated 1,570 roustabouts in Utah at a median wage of \$17.09 an hour. An employment level of 1,570 may not seem to represent an overwhelming demand for roustabouts, but consider that the location quotient for this occupation is 3.35. Location quotients measure the concentration of occupational employment within one area compared to another. In this case, a location quotient of 3.35 for roustabouts in Utah means that relative to our employment base, Utah employs roustabouts at a rate that is over three times greater than the national rate.

On the other hand, our high rate of roustabout employment is partially attributable to the fact that not all states house oil extraction activities. Further, economic factors exogenous to Utah affect the demand for roustabouts by influencing the price of oil and alerting the quantities at which oil extraction output is most profitable. And since these factors tend to be variable, it follows that the demand for roustabouts is also susceptible to variability. Nevertheless, Utah roustabout employment is expected to grow at a faster-than-average rate in both the short and long term.

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Labor Statistics for Roustabouts in Utah

Employment	Median Hourly Wage	Projected Annual Growth Rate through 2013	Projected Annual Growth Rate through 2020	Location Quotient
1,570	\$17.09	9.3%	2.8%	3.35

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services and Bureau of Labor Statistics, (2012).

