

MONTANA

PREVAILING WAGE RATES FOR HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION SERVICES 2026

Effective: **April 25, 2026**

*Greg Gianforte, Governor
State of Montana*

*Sarah Swanson, Commissioner
Department of Labor & Industry*

To obtain copies of prevailing wage rate schedules, or for information relating to public works projects and payment of prevailing wage rates, visit ESD at erd.dli.mt.gov/labor-standards or contact:

Employment Standards Division
Montana Department of Labor and Industry
P. O. Box 8011
Helena, MT 59604
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The department welcomes questions, comments, and suggestions from the public. In addition, we'll do our best to provide information in an accessible format, upon request, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

MONTANA PREVAILING WAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry, in accordance with Sections 18-2-401 and 18-2-402 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA), has determined the standard prevailing rate of wages for the occupations listed in this publication.

The wages specified herein control the prevailing rate of wages for the purposes of Section 18-2-401, et seq., MCA. Each employer is required to pay (as a minimum) the rate of wages, including fringe benefits, travel allowance, zone pay and per diem applicable to the classification under which the work is being performed as provided in the attached wage determinations.

All Montana Prevailing Wage Rates are available on the department's website at <https://erd.dli.mt.gov/labor-standards/state-prevailing-wage-rates/> or by contacting the department at (406) 444-6543.

In addition, this publication provides general information concerning compliance with Montana's Prevailing Wage Law and the payment of prevailing wages. For detailed compliance information relating to public works contracts and payment of prevailing wage rates, please consult the regulations on the department's website at <https://erd.dli.mt.gov/labor-standards/public-contracts-prevailing-wage-law/> or contact the department at (406) 444-6543.

SARAH SWANSON
Commissioner
Department of Labor and Industry
State of Montana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MONTANA PREVAILING WAGE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Date of Publication	3
B. Definition of Highway Construction	3
C. Definition of Public Works Contract	3
D. Prevailing Wage Schedule	3
E. Rates to Use for Projects	3
F. Wage Rate Adjustments for Multiyear Contracts	3
G. Fringe Benefits	4
H. Dispatch City	4
I. Zone Pay	4
J. Computing Travel Benefits	4
K. Per Diem	4
L. Apprentices	4
M. Posting Notice of Prevailing Wages	5
N. Employment Preference	5
O. Projects of a Mixed Nature	5
P. Occupations Definitions Website	5
Q. Welder Rates	5
R. Foreman Rates	5

WAGE RATES:

BRICK, BLOCK, AND STONE MASONS	6
CARPENTERS	6
CEMENT MASONS AND CONCRETE FINISHERS	6
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS	
OPERATORS GROUP 1	6
OPERATORS GROUP 2	7
OPERATORS GROUP 3	7
OPERATORS GROUP 4	8
OPERATORS GROUP 5	8
OPERATORS GROUP 6	8
OPERATORS GROUP 7	8
CONSTRUCTION LABORERS	
LABORERS GROUP 1	9
LABORERS GROUP 2	9
LABORERS GROUP 3	9
LABORERS GROUP 4	10
DIVERS	10
DIVER TENDERS	10
ELECTRICIANS	11
IRONWORKERS - STRUCTURAL STEEL AND REBAR PLACERS	11
LINE CONSTRUCTION	
EQUIPMENT OPERATOR	11
GROUNDMAN	11
LINEMAN	12
MILLWRIGHTS	12
PAINTERS	12
PILE BUCKS	12
TRUCK DRIVERS	13

A. Date of Publication

B. Definition of Highway Construction

The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM), 24.17.501(3) – (3)(b), states “*Highway construction projects include, but are not limited to, the construction, alteration, or repair of roads, streets, highways, runways, taxiways, alleys, trails, paths, and parking areas, bridges constructed or repaired in conjunction with highway work, and other similar projects not incidental to building construction or heavy construction.*”

Highway construction projects include, but are not limited to, alleys, base courses, bituminous treatments, bridle paths, concrete pavement, curbs, excavation and embankment (for road construction), fencing (highway), grade crossing elimination (overpasses or underpasses), guard rails on highways, highway signs, highway bridges (overpasses, underpasses, grade separation), medians, parking lots, parkways, resurfacing streets and highways, roadbeds, roadways, runways, shoulders, stabilizing courses, storm sewers incidental to road construction, street paving, surface courses, taxiways, and trails.”

C. Definition of Public Works Contract

Section 18-2-401(11)(a), MCA defines “public works contract” as “*...a contract for construction services let by the state, county, municipality, school district, or political subdivision or for nonconstruction services let by the state, county, municipality, or political subdivision in which the total cost of the contract is in excess of \$25,000...*”.

D. Prevailing Wage Schedule

This publication covers only Highway Construction occupations and rates in the specific localities mentioned herein. These rates will remain in effect until superseded by a more current publication. Current prevailing wage rate schedules for Building Construction, Heavy Construction and Nonconstruction Services occupations can be found on the internet at <https://erd.dli.mt.gov/labor-standards/state-prevailing-wage-rates/> or by contacting the department at (406) 444-6543.

E. Rates to Use for Projects

ARM, 24.17.127(1)(c), states “*The wage rates applicable to a particular public works project are those in effect at the time the bid specifications are advertised.*”

F. Wage Rate Adjustments for Multiyear Contracts

Section 18-2-417, MCA states:

“(1) Any public works contract that by the terms of the original contract calls for more than 30 months to fully perform must include a provision to adjust, as provided in subsection (2), the standard prevailing rate of wages to be paid to the workers performing the contract.

(2) The standard prevailing rate of wages paid to workers under a contract subject to this section must be adjusted 12 months after the date of the award of the public works contract. The amount of the adjustment must be a 3% increase. The adjustment must be made and applied every 12 months for the term of the contract.

(3) Any increase in the standard rate of prevailing wages for workers under this section is the sole responsibility of the contractor and any subcontractors and not the contracting agency.”

G. Fringe Benefits

Section 18-2-412, MCA states:

“(1) To fulfill the obligation...a contractor or subcontractor may:

(a) pay the amount of fringe benefits and the basic hourly rate of pay that is part of the standard prevailing rate of wages directly to the worker or employee in cash;

(b) make an irrevocable contribution to a trustee or a third person pursuant to a fringe benefit fund, plan, or program that meets the requirements of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 or that is a bona fide program approved by the U. S. department of labor; or

(c) make payments using any combination of methods set forth in subsections (1)(a) and (1)(b) so that the aggregate of payments and contributions is not less than the standard prevailing rate of wages, including fringe benefits and travel allowances, applicable to the district for the particular type of work being performed.

(2) The fringe benefit fund, plan, or program described in subsection (1)(b) must provide benefits to workers or employees for health care, pensions on retirement or death, life insurance, disability and sickness insurance, or bona fide programs that meet the requirements of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 or that are approved by the U. S. department of labor.”

Fringe benefits are paid for all hours worked (straight time and overtime hours). However, fringe benefits are not to be considered a part of the hourly rate of pay for calculating overtime, unless there is a collectively bargained agreement in effect that specifies otherwise.

H. Dispatch City

Section 18-2-411(6), MCA, defines dispatch city as *“...the courthouse in the city from the following list which is closest to the center of the job: Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula and Sidney.”*

I. Zone Pay

Zone pay is not travel pay. ARM, 24.17.103(25), defines zone pay as *“...an amount added to the base pay; the combined sum then becomes the new base wage rate to be paid for all hours worked on the project. Zone pay must be determined by measuring the road miles one way over the shortest practical maintained route from the dispatch city to the center of the job.”* See section H above for a list of dispatch cities.

J. Computing Travel Benefits

ARM, 24.17.103(23), states *“‘Travel pay,’ also referred to as ‘travel allowance,’ is and must be paid for travel both to and from the job site, except those with special provisions listed under the classification. The rate is determined by measuring the road miles one direction over the shortest practical maintained route from the dispatch city or the employee's home, whichever is closer, to the center of the job.”* See section H above for a list of dispatch cities.

K. Per Diem

ARM, 24.17.103(19), states *“‘Per diem’ typically covers costs associated with board and lodging expenses. Per diem is paid when an employee is required to work at a location outside the daily commuting distance and is required to stay at that location overnight or longer.”*

L. Apprentices

Wage rates for apprentices registered in approved federal or state apprenticeship programs are contained in those programs. Additionally, Section 18-2-416(2), MCA states *“...The full amount of any applicable fringe benefits must be paid to the apprentice while the apprentice is working on the public works contract.”* Apprentices not registered in approved federal or state apprenticeship programs will be paid the appropriate journey level prevailing wage rate when working on a public works contract.

M. Posting Notice of Prevailing Wages

Section 18-2-406, MCA, provides that contractors, subcontractors, and employers who are “...*performing work or providing construction services under public works contracts, as provided in this part, shall post in a prominent and accessible site on the project or staging area, not later than the first day of work and continuing for the entire duration of the project, a legible statement of all wages and fringe benefits to be paid to the employees.*”

N. Employment Preference

Sections 18-2-403 and 18-2-409, MCA require contractors to give preference to the employment of bona fide Montana residents in the performance of work on public works contracts.

O. Projects of a Mixed Nature

Section 18-2-418, MCA states:

“(1) The contracting agency shall determine, based on the preponderance of labor hours to be worked, whether the public works construction services project is classified as a highway construction project, a heavy construction project, or a building construction project.

“(2) Once the project has been classified, employees in each trade classification who are working on that project must be paid at the rate for that project classification”

P. Occupations Definitions

You can find definitions for these occupations on the following Bureau of Labor Statistics website:

http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm

Q. Welder Rates

Welders receive the rate prescribed for the craft performing an operation to which welding is incidental.

R. Foreman Rates

Rates are no longer set for foremen. However, if a foreman performs journey level work, the foreman must be paid at least the journey level rate.

WAGE RATES

BRICK, BLOCK, AND STONE MASONS

No Rate Established

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CARPENTERS

Wage	Benefit
\$38.05	\$16.33

Zone Pay:
0-30 mi. free zone
>30-60 mi. + \$4.00/hr.
>60mi. + \$6.00/hr.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CEMENT MASONS AND CONCRETE FINISHERS

Wage	Benefit
\$27.89	\$16.51

Zone Pay:
0-30 mi. free zone
>30-60 mi. + \$+ \$2.95/hr.
>60mi. + \$4.75/hr.

Duties Include:

Smooth and finish surfaces of poured concrete, such as floors, walks, sidewalks, or curbs. Align forms for sidewalks, curbs, or gutters.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 1

Wage	Benefit
\$31.52	\$12.70

Travel Pay:
0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

This group includes but is not limited to:

Air Compressor; Auto Fine Grader; Belt Finishing; Boring Machine (Small); Cement Silo; Crane, A-Frame Truck Crane; Crusher Conveyor; DW-10, 15, and 20 Tractor Roller; Farm Tractor; Forklift; Form Grader; Front-End Loader, under 1 cu. yd; Oiler, Heavy Duty Drills; Herman Nelson Heater; Mucking Machine; Oiler, All Except Cranes/Shovels; Pumpman.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 2

Wage	Benefit
\$34.01	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Air Doctor; Backhoe\Excavator\Shovel, up to and incl. 3 cu. yds; Bit Grinder; Bituminous Paving Travel Plant; Boring Machine, Large; Broom, Self-Propelled; Concrete Travel Batch; Concrete Float & Spreader; Concrete Bucket Dispatcher; Concrete Finish Machine; Concrete Conveyor; Distributor; Dozer, Rubber-Tired, Push, & Side Boom; Elevating Grader\Gradall; Field Equipment Serviceman; Front-End Loader, 1 cu. yd up to and incl. 5 cu. yds; Grade Setter; Heavy Duty Drills, All Types; Hoist\Tugger, All; Hydralift Forklifts & Similar; Industrial Locomotive; Motor Patrol (except finish); Mountain Skidder; Oiler, Cranes\Shovels; Pavement Breaker, EMSCO; Power Saw, Self-Propelled; Pugmill; Pumpcrete\Grout Machine; Punch Truck; Roller, other than Asphalt; Roller, Sheepsfoot (Self-Propelled); Roller, 25 tons and over; Ross Carrier; Rotomill, under 6 ft; Trenching Machine; Washing /Screening Plant

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 3

Wage	Benefit
\$34.66	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Asphalt Paving Machine; Asphalt Screed; Backhoe\Excavator\Shovel, over 3 cu. yds; Cableway Highline; Concrete Batch Plant; Concrete Curing Machine; Concrete Pump; Cranes, Creter; Cranes, Electric Overhead; Cranes, 24 tons and under; Curb Machine\Slip Form Paver; Finish Dozer; Front-End Loader, over 5 cu. yds; Mechanic\Welder; Pioneer Dozer; Roller Asphalt (Breakdown & Finish); Rotomill, over 6 ft; Scraper, Single, Twin, or Pulling Belly-Dump; YO-YO Cat Haul Truck, Articulating Trucks, Vac Truck.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 4

Wage	Benefit
\$35.60	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Asphalt\Hot Plant Operator; Cranes, 25 tons up to and incl. 44 tons; Crusher Operator; Finish Motor Patrol; Finish Scraper.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 5

Wage	Benefit
\$36.94	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Cranes, 45 tons up to and incl. 74 tons.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 6

Wage	Benefit
\$38.13	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Cranes, 75 tons up to and incl. 149 tons; Cranes, Whirley (All).

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS GROUP 7

Wage	Benefit
\$40.73	\$12.70

This group includes but is not limited to:

Cranes, 150 tons up to and incl. 250 tons; Cranes, over 250 tons—add \$1.00 for every 100 tons over 250 tons; Crane, Tower (All); Crane Stiff-Leg or Derrick; Helicopter Hoist.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Travel Pay:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$70/day
>85 miles \$100/day

CONSTRUCTION LABORERS GROUP 1/FLAG PERSON FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Wage	Benefit
\$27.71	\$10.75

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CONSTRUCTION LABORERS GROUP 2

Wage	Benefit
\$28.88	\$12.80

This group includes but is not limited to:

General Labor; Asbestos Removal; Burning Bar; Bucket Man; Carpenter Tender; Caisson Worker; Cement Mason Tender; Cement Handler (dry); Chuck Tender; Choker Setter; Concrete Worker; Curb Machine-lay Down; Crusher and Batch Worker; Heater Tender; Fence Erector; Landscape Laborer; Landscaper; Lawn Sprinkler Installer; Pipe Wrapper; Pot Tender; Powderman Tender; Rail and Truck Loaders and Unloaders; Riprapper; Sign Erection; Guardrail and Jersey Rail; Spike Driver; Stake Jumper; Signalman; Tail Hoseman; Tool Checker and Houseman.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CONSTRUCTION LABORERS GROUP 3

Wage	Benefit
\$30.73	\$12.20

This group includes but is not limited to:

Concrete Vibrator; Dumpman (Grademan); Equipment Handler; Geotextile and Liners; High-Pressure Nozzleman; Jackhammer (Pavement Breaker) Non-Riding Rollers; Pipelayer; Posthole Digger (Power); Power Driven Wheelbarrow; Rigger; Sandblaster; Sod Cutter-Power and Tamper.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

CONSTRUCTION LABORERS GROUP 4

Wage	Benefit
\$32.12	\$12.36

This group includes but is not limited to:

Hod Carrier, Water Well Laborer; Blaster; Wagon Driller; Asphalt Raker; Cutting Torch; Grade Setter; High-Scaler; Power Saws (Faller & Concrete); Powderman; Rock & Core Drill; Track or Truck Mounted Wagon Drill and Welder incl. Air Arc.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

DIVERS

	Wage	Benefit
Stand-By	\$55.24	\$17.28
Diving	\$110.48	\$17.28

Zone Pay:

0-30 mi. free zone
>30-60 mi. base pay +\$4.00/hr.
>60 mi. base pay +\$6.00/hr.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

DIVER TENDERS

Wage	Benefit
\$54.24	\$17.28

Zone Pay:

0-30 mi. free zone
>30-60 mi. base pay +\$4.00/hr.
>60 mi. base pay +\$6.00/hr.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

ELECTRICIANS

Wage	Benefit
\$39.08	\$20.00

Per Diem:

>60 mi. \$80/day;
Per Diem in Big Sky and West Yellowstone \$125/day

Duties Include:

Electrical wiring; equipment and fixtures; streetlights; electrical control systems. Installation and/or adjusting of building automation controls also during testing and balancing, commissioning and retro-commissioning.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

IRONWORKERS – REINFORCING IRON AND REBAR WORKERS

Wage	Benefit
\$36.83	\$25.78

Per Diem:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$100/day
85+ miles \$150/day

Duties Include:

Position and secure steel bars or mesh in concrete forms in order to reinforce concrete. Use a variety of fasteners, rod-bending machines, blowtorches, and hand tools. Includes rod busters.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

IRONWORKERS – STRUCTURAL IRON AND STEEL WORKERS

Wage	Benefit
\$36.83	\$25.78

Per Diem:

0-45 miles free
45-85 miles \$100/day
85+ miles \$150/day

Duties Include:

Structural steel erection; assemble prefabricated metal buildings; cut, bend, tie, and place rebar; energy producing windmill type towers; metal bleacher seating; handrail fabrication and ornamental steel.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

LINE CONSTRUCTION - EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

Wage	Benefit
\$41.91	\$18.92

Per Diem:

\$60/day

Duties Include:

All work on substations

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

LINE CONSTRUCTION – GROUNDMAN

Wage	Benefit
\$29.96	\$17.64

Duties Include:

All work on substations

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

LINE CONSTRUCTION – LINEMAN

Wage	Benefit
\$56.91	\$18.90

Duties Include:

All work on substations

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

MILLWRIGHTS

Wage	Benefit
\$45.26	\$23.71

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Zone Pay:

0-30 mi. free zone
>30-60 mi. base pay + \$4.00/hr.
>60 mi. base pay + \$6.00/hr.

Per Diem:

\$110/day or employer pays for single occupancy lodging

PAINTERS

Wage	Benefit
\$36.00	\$12.84

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

PILE BUCKS

Wage	Benefit
\$38.05	\$16.33

Duties Include:

Set up crane; set up hammer; weld tips on piles; set leads; ensure piles are driven straight with the use of level or plum bob. Give direction to crane operator as to speed, and direction of swing. Cut piles to grade.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)

Zone Pay:

0-30 mi free zone
>30-60 mi. + \$4.00/hr.
>60 mi. + \$6.00/hr.

TRUCK DRIVERS

	Wage	Benefit
Pilot Car Driver	\$28.21	\$12.57
Truck Driver	\$31.11	\$10.13

Truck drivers include but are not limited to:

Combination Truck and Concrete Mixer and Transit Mixer; Dry Batch Trucks; Distributor Driver; Dumpman; Dump Trucks and similar equipment; Dumpster; Flat Trucks; Lumber Carriers; Lowboys; Pickup; Powder Truck Driver; Power Boom; Serviceman; Service Truck/Fuel Truck/Tireperson; Truck Mechanic; Trucks with Power Equipment; Warehouseman, Partsman, Cardex and Warehouse Expeditor; Water Trucks.

[↑ Back to Table of Contents](#)