

# News

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## **MASS LAYOFFS IN DECEMBER 2003 AND ANNUAL AVERAGES FOR 2003**

Employers initiated 1,929 mass layoff actions in December 2003, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month, according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each action involved at least 50 persons from a single establishment, and the number of workers involved totaled 192,633. (See table 1.) The number of layoff events and initial claims were sharply lower than a year ago, with both measures at the lowest levels for December since 1999. Fewer mass-layoff initial claims were filed against employers in motion picture and video production, in highway, street, and bridge construction, and in temporary help services in December 2003 compared with December 2002.

The total of layoff events for all of 2003 was 18,963 and the total of initial claimants was 1,888,926. The annual totals were lower than in 2002 (20,277 and 2,245,051, respectively). Additional information on the annual data is provided starting on page 3 of this release.

### Industry Distribution

School and employee bus transportation, with 12,178 initial claimants, and highway, street, and bridge construction, with 11,254 initial claimants, together accounted for 12 percent of all initial claims in December. (See table A.) The 10 industries reporting the highest number of mass-layoff initial claims accounted for 29 percent of the total.

The manufacturing sector recorded 34 percent of all mass layoff events and 40 percent of all initial claims filed in December. A year ago, manufacturing reported 40 percent of events and 48 percent of initial claims. Within manufacturing, the number of claimants was highest in transportation equipment (21,061) and food processing (9,285). (See table 2.)

Construction accounted for 17 percent of events and 13 percent of initial claims filed in December, with layoffs mostly in highway, street, and bridge construction. Administrative and waste services accounted for 10 percent of events and 9 percent of initial claims during the month, mainly in temporary help services. Seven percent of the events and 8 percent of the initial claims were from the transportation and warehousing sector, largely among school and employee bus transportation. An additional 7 percent of all layoff events and 8 percent of initial claims filed during December were from accommodation and food services, primarily among food services contractors.

Government establishments accounted for 4 percent of events and 3 percent of initial claims filed during the month, particularly in executive, legislative and general government.

**Table A. Industries with the largest mass-layoff initial claims in December 2003<sup>p</sup>**

Industry	Initial claims	December peak	
		Year	Initial claims
School and employee bus transportation.....	12,178	1996	13,146
Highway, street, and bridge construction .....	11,254	2000	17,277
Food service contractors .....	9,229	2003	9,229
Temporary help services .....	7,661	2001	14,929
Professional employer organizations .....	2,822	2000	4,032
Misc. plastics product manufacturing .....	2,713	2002	5,563
Misc. transportation equipment mfg. ....	2,659	2003	2,659
Light truck and utility vehicle mfg. ....	2,597	2000	7,338
Manufactured home, mobile home, mfg. ....	2,380	2002	2,601
Household refrigerator and home freezer manufacturing .....	2,324	2000	5,758

p=preliminary.

Compared with December 2002, the largest decreases in initial claims were reported in plastics and rubber products manufacturing (-8,197), motion picture and sound recording industries (-5,454), and computer and electronic product manufacturing (-5,294). The largest over-the-year increase in initial claims was in professional and technical services (+1,500).

#### Geographic Distribution

Among the four regions, the highest number of initial claims in December due to mass layoffs was reported in the Midwest, 87,806. (See table 3.) Transportation equipment manufacturing and heavy and civil engineering construction accounted for 33 percent of all initial claims in that region during the month. The West region was next, with 37,923 initial claims, followed by the Northeast, with 34,437, and the South, with 32,467.

The number of initial claimants in mass layoffs declined over the year in all four of the regions, with the largest decrease in the South (-28,193). This was the first December in which all four regions had over-the-year declines since the mass layoffs program began in 1995. Eight of the nine geographic divisions had over-the-year decreases in the number of initial claims associated with mass layoffs, with the largest decreases in the Pacific (-20,430) and South Atlantic (-14,776) divisions. The Mountain division had the only increase (+144).

Among the states, California recorded the largest number of initial claims filed in mass layoff events in December, 25,953, mostly in administrative and support services, followed by professional and technical services and educational services. Indiana reported 15,330 initial claims, followed by Illinois (15,006) and Michigan (12,275). These four states accounted for 37 percent of all layoff events and 36 percent of initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 4.)

California registered the largest over-the-year decrease in the number of initial claims (-16,272), followed by South Carolina (-11,205). The largest over-the-year increase occurred in Michigan (+5,775).

**Table B. Number of mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, 1996-2003**

Year	Layoff events	Initial claimants for unemployment insurance
1996 .....	14,111	1,437,628
1997 .....	14,960	1,542,543
1998 .....	15,904	1,771,069
1999 .....	14,909	1,572,399
2000 .....	15,738	1,835,592
2001 .....	21,467	2,514,862
2002 <sup>r</sup> .....	20,277	2,245,051
2003 .....	18,963	1,888,926

r=revised.

### Review of 2003

During 2003, 18,963 layoff events occurred, resulting in 1,888,926 initial claim filings for unemployment insurance. In 2002, there were 20,277 events and 2,245,051 initial claimants. (See table B.)

The 10 industries with the highest number of mass-layoff initial claims accounted for 25 percent of the total in 2003. (See table C.) In 2002, they comprised 23 percent of the total. The top five industries had the same rankings in both years.

Manufacturing accounted for 32 percent of all mass layoff events and 39 percent of initial claims filed during 2003. A year earlier, manufacturing accounted for 35 percent of events and 40 percent of initial claims. Initial claim filings were most numerous in transportation equipment, 178,282, followed by food processing, 87,353, and machinery manufacturing, 60,370. Compared with 2002, the largest decrease in initial claims occurred in computer and electronic products (-39,070) and machinery manufacturing (-27,340). The largest over-the-year increase in initial claims occurred in transportation equipment (+1,777).

The number of initial claims filed in 2003 due to mass layoffs was higher in the West, 594,937, than in any other region. Layoffs in administrative and support services, motion picture and sound recording, and agricultural and forestry support activities accounted for 32 percent of the claims in the West. The fewest number of mass-layoff initial claims was reported in the Northeast region, 306,462. For the second consecutive year, over-the-year decreases in mass-layoff initial claims occurred in each of the four regions. The largest decreases in initial claims were in the West (-151,121) and South (-110,520).

Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, California recorded the largest number of initial claims filed in mass layoff events for the period (467,573), 25 percent of the national total. The states with the next highest numbers of initial claims were Pennsylvania (112,356), Ohio (102,864), New York (93,583), and Illinois (90,181). Half of all events and 46 percent of all initial claims were from these five states.

California reported the largest over-the-year decrease in initial claims (-108,537), followed by Texas (-36,208), and South Carolina (-30,005). The largest over-the-year increases occurred in New York (+8,005) and Georgia (+7,121).

**Table C. Industries with largest mass layoff initial claims in 2003<sup>p</sup>**

Industry	2003		2002	
	Initial claims	Rank	Initial claims	Rank
Temporary help services .....	119,738	1	154,797	1
School and employee bus transportation .....	61,465	2	64,559	2
Motion picture and video production .....	46,006	3	51,255	3
Highway, street, and bridge construction .....	38,635	4	42,700	4
Food service contractors .....	37,446	5	37,363	5
Automobile manufacturing .....	36,152	6	24,464	11
Elementary and secondary schools .....	35,494	7	27,443	10
Professional employer organizations .....	32,031	8	36,951	6
Supermarkets and other grocery stores .....	31,713	9	20,183	15
Farm labor contractors and crew leaders .....	28,967	10	35,926	7

p=preliminary.

#### Note

The monthly data series in this release cover mass layoffs of 50 or more workers beginning in a given month, regardless of the duration of the layoffs. Information on the length of the layoff is obtained later and issued in a quarterly release that reports on mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days (referred to as “extended mass layoffs”). The quarterly release provides more information on the industry classification and location of the establishment and on the demographics of the laid-off workers. Because monthly figures include short-term layoffs of 30 days or less, the sum of the figures for the 3 months in a quarter will be higher than the quarterly figure for mass layoffs of more than 30 days. (See table 1.) See the Technical Note for more detailed definitions.

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The report on Extended Mass Layoffs in the Fourth Quarter of 2003 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, February 12, 2004. The report on Mass Layoffs in January 2004 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, February 25, 2004.

# Technical Note

The Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program is a federal-state program that uses a standardized, automated approach to identifying, describing, and tracking the effects of major job cutbacks, using data from each state's unemployment insurance database. Each month, states report on establishments which have at least 50 initial claims filed against them during a consecutive 5-week period. These establishments then are contacted by the state agency to determine whether these separations lasted 31 days or longer, and, if so, other information concerning the layoff is collected. States report on layoffs lasting more than 1 month on a quarterly basis.

A given month contains an aggregation of the weekly unemployment insurance claims filings for the Sunday through Saturday weeks in that month. All weeks are included for the particular month, except if the first day of the month falls on Saturday. In this case, the week is included in the prior month's tabulations. This means that some months will contain 4 weeks and others 5 weeks, and the number of weeks in a given month may be different from year to year. Therefore,

analysis of over-the-month and over-the-year change should take this calendar effect into consideration.

The MLS program resumed operations in April 1995 after it had been terminated in November 1992 due to lack of funding. Prior to April 1995, monthly layoff statistics were not available.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

## Definitions

*Initial claimant.* A person who files any notice of unemployment to initiate a request either for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or for a subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

*Mass layoff event.* Fifty or more initial claims for unemployment insurance benefits filed against an establishment during a 5-week period, regardless of duration.

**Table 1. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, October 2001 to December 2003**

Date	Total mass layoffs		Extended mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days		Realization rates <sup>1</sup>	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2001						
October .....	1,831	215,483				
November .....	2,721	295,956				
December .....	2,440	268,893				
Fourth Quarter .....	6,992	780,332	2,697	502,502	38.6	64.4
2002						
January .....	2,146	263,777				
February .....	1,382	138,808				
March .....	1,460	161,316				
First Quarter .....	4,988	563,901	1,750	316,489	35.1	56.1
April .....	1,506	165,814				
May .....	1,723	179,799				
June .....	1,584	162,189				
Second Quarter .....	4,813	507,802	1,905	353,017	39.6	69.5
July .....	2,042	245,294				
August .....	1,248	128,103				
September .....	1,062	124,522				
Third Quarter .....	4,352	497,919	1,383	284,629	31.8	57.2
October .....	1,497	171,100				
November .....	2,153	240,171				
December .....	2,474	264,158				
Fourth Quarter .....	6,124	675,429	2,257	421,570	36.9	62.4
2003						
January .....	2,315	225,430				
February .....	1,363	124,965				
March .....	1,207	113,026				
First Quarter .....	4,885	463,421	1,700	333,197	34.8	71.9
April .....	1,581	161,412				
May .....	1,703	174,204				
June .....	1,691	157,552				
Second Quarter .....	4,975	493,168	2,131	415,316	42.8	84.2
July .....	2,087	226,435				
August .....	1,258	133,839				
September .....	868	82,647				
Third Quarter .....	4,213	442,921	<sup>2, P</sup> 1,375	<sup>2, P</sup> 181,793	<sup>P</sup> 32.6	<sup>P</sup> 41.0
October .....	1,523	158,240				
November <sup>P</sup> .....	1,438	138,543				
December <sup>P</sup> .....	1,929	192,633				
Fourth Quarter <sup>P</sup> .....	4,890	489,416				

<sup>1</sup> The event realization rate is the percentage of total mass layoff events lasting more than 30 days. The initial claimant realization rate is the percentage of total mass-layoff initial claimants associated with layoffs lasting more than 30 days.

<sup>2</sup> These quarterly numbers are provisional and will increase as more

data on these layoffs become available. Recent experience suggests that the number of extended mass layoff events is generally revised upwards by less than 10 percent and the number of initial claimants associated with such events increases by 25-40 percent.

<sup>P</sup> = preliminary.

**Table 2. Industry distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance**

Industry	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2003 <sup>p</sup>
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	2,474	1,523	1,438	1,929	264,158	158,240	138,543	192,633
Total, private .....	2,396	1,453	1,380	1,846	257,470	150,713	133,818	185,928
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting .....	72	188	146	53	4,663	13,007	10,294	3,178
Mining .....	26	5	8	21	1,981	343	568	1,937
Utilities .....	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	3	401	( <sup>2</sup> )	308	160
Construction .....	408	143	263	335	31,998	11,422	20,999	25,684
Manufacturing.....	984	438	408	648	126,826	53,741	48,419	77,915
Food .....	89	96	70	89	10,597	10,034	8,410	9,285
Beverage and tobacco products .....	9	16	9	5	1,032	1,237	938	781
Textile mills .....	46	9	13	31	6,676	1,533	1,178	4,299
Textile product mills .....	23	8	8	14	3,014	881	483	2,102
Apparel .....	42	25	14	32	5,101	2,592	1,269	3,232
Leather and allied products .....	10	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	7	854	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	842
Wood products .....	64	15	29	55	7,219	1,163	3,852	5,000
Paper .....	21	12	12	12	1,540	1,049	856	934
Printing and related support activities .....	11	11	8	7	1,186	998	570	627
Petroleum and coal products .....	9	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	10	932	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	863
Chemicals .....	11	7	10	9	1,523	546	908	735
Plastics and rubber products .....	77	16	27	40	11,776	1,390	2,085	3,579
Nonmetallic mineral products .....	54	13	21	49	5,366	1,193	2,089	4,079
Primary metals .....	65	29	22	33	7,179	3,444	2,470	3,421
Fabricated metal products .....	72	23	31	39	8,249	2,093	2,696	4,045
Machinery .....	57	35	28	24	7,547	7,212	4,642	3,629
Computer and electronic products .....	69	26	19	19	6,702	2,361	1,468	1,408
Electrical equipment and appliances .....	39	11	12	20	8,304	2,493	2,671	4,726
Transportation equipment .....	158	55	51	122	25,408	10,229	9,696	21,061
Furniture and related products .....	35	15	10	14	3,868	1,995	856	1,607
Miscellaneous manufacturing .....	23	11	8	17	2,753	883	891	1,660
Wholesale trade .....	36	22	23	27	2,748	1,760	2,421	2,443
Retail trade .....	113	115	76	98	11,417	21,870	6,877	9,203
Transportation and warehousing .....	141	37	42	131	15,874	3,003	4,127	15,528
Information .....	54	52	37	40	10,396	7,755	5,918	3,839
Finance and insurance .....	27	35	19	27	2,095	2,541	1,485	1,764
Real estate and rental and leasing .....	7	12	8	4	431	718	432	562
Professional and technical services .....	56	30	33	57	4,595	2,447	3,175	6,095
Management of companies and enterprises .....	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	1,458	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	296
Administrative and waste services .....	228	233	163	200	20,106	21,380	13,925	17,256
Educational services.....	8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	6	475	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	327
Health care and social assistance .....	28	37	28	27	3,337	2,407	2,243	2,075
Arts, entertainment, and recreation .....	25	28	26	20	1,724	2,039	1,920	1,795
Accommodation and food services .....	155	62	75	131	15,302	5,176	7,348	14,701
Other services, except public administration.....	15	7	15	12	1,174	459	1,081	955
Unclassified .....	6	5	2	3	469	343	1,646	215
Government .....	78	70	58	83	6,688	7,527	4,725	6,705
Federal .....	6	20	9	13	672	1,649	820	1,419
State .....	14	16	22	10	1,031	1,383	1,917	830
Local .....	58	34	27	60	4,985	4,495	1,988	4,456

<sup>1</sup> Data were reported by all states and the District of Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

<sup>p</sup> = preliminary.

NOTE: Industry data reflect the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2002.

**Table 3. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance by census region and division**

Census region and division	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>p</sup>	December 2003 <sup>p</sup>
United States <sup>1</sup> .....	2,474	1,523	1,438	1,929	264,158	158,240	138,543	192,633
Northeast .....	444	184	210	350	43,796	17,061	21,478	34,437
New England .....	119	16	29	66	13,823	1,157	2,282	6,904
Middle Atlantic .....	325	168	181	284	29,973	15,904	19,196	27,533
South .....	557	278	265	335	60,660	29,371	27,438	32,467
South Atlantic .....	290	134	135	192	32,679	13,270	13,822	17,903
East South Central .....	140	44	35	59	16,041	5,310	4,212	6,510
West South Central .....	127	100	95	84	11,940	10,791	9,404	8,054
Midwest .....	830	325	426	780	101,493	43,432	46,298	87,806
East North Central .....	609	264	313	596	71,477	27,841	31,687	64,802
West North Central .....	221	61	113	184	30,016	15,591	14,611	23,004
West .....	643	736	537	464	58,209	68,376	43,329	37,923
Mountain .....	76	47	51	63	6,881	4,038	4,606	7,025
Pacific .....	567	689	486	401	51,328	64,338	38,723	30,898

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 1, table 2.

<sup>p</sup> = preliminary.

NOTE: The States (including the District of Columbia) that comprise the census divisions are: New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North

Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.



**Table 4. State distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance**

State	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>P</sup>	December 2003 <sup>P</sup>	December 2002	October 2003	November 2003 <sup>P</sup>	December 2003 <sup>P</sup>
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	2,474	1,523	1,438	1,929	264,158	158,240	138,543	192,633
Alabama .....	32	13	10	27	3,532	1,671	1,384	3,728
Alaska .....	3	3	6	3	175	295	561	213
Arizona .....	10	8	4	8	852	700	257	551
Arkansas .....	8	6	3	6	773	1,140	777	656
California .....	485	616	420	346	42,225	57,322	32,200	25,953
Colorado .....	9	8	7	11	1,013	581	549	1,107
Connecticut .....	8	3	4	13	801	200	312	1,166
Delaware .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
District of Columbia .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	287
Florida .....	77	66	55	63	5,377	4,608	3,533	4,826
Georgia .....	58	23	18	31	5,417	2,838	1,771	3,354
Hawaii .....	7	6	( <sup>2</sup> )	6	1,448	462	( <sup>2</sup> )	506
Idaho .....	18	10	11	12	1,339	1,203	1,408	1,647
Illinois .....	122	74	57	123	15,469	7,890	5,785	15,006
Indiana .....	119	22	42	108	20,385	2,118	4,269	15,330
Iowa .....	65	18	29	46	8,024	3,680	3,464	5,305
Kansas .....	22	6	6	29	3,942	738	696	3,518
Kentucky .....	79	23	14	9	9,849	3,136	1,649	995
Louisiana .....	27	12	23	15	1,691	1,045	1,773	991
Maine .....	8	3	4	5	604	180	306	424
Maryland .....	4	4	9	15	472	256	843	1,119
Massachusetts .....	63	9	17	24	7,495	713	1,373	2,568
Michigan .....	71	42	48	135	6,500	4,263	5,058	12,275
Minnesota .....	51	17	44	51	6,748	2,845	3,849	6,342
Mississippi .....	10	4	3	8	788	200	165	450
Missouri .....	58	18	22	45	8,606	8,165	5,651	6,180
Montana .....	4	5	5	7	538	360	428	918
Nebraska .....	18	( <sup>2</sup> )	7	10	2,015	( <sup>2</sup> )	412	1,411
Nevada .....	26	10	14	20	2,426	835	1,156	2,351
New Hampshire .....	11	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1,210	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
New Jersey .....	74	27	43	76	7,315	2,906	5,985	6,895
New Mexico .....	9	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	3	713	( <sup>2</sup> )	212	278
New York .....	101	44	59	88	9,599	3,855	5,648	9,448
North Carolina .....	10	19	23	23	793	2,039	3,635	1,857
North Dakota .....	5	-	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	483	-	474	( <sup>2</sup> )
Ohio .....	124	66	75	117	11,472	7,316	6,464	10,693
Oklahoma .....	23	12	3	12	2,910	1,614	406	1,278
Oregon .....	45	39	26	26	5,250	3,784	3,058	2,498
Pennsylvania .....	150	97	79	120	13,059	9,143	7,563	11,190
Rhode Island .....	21	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	12	2,921	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	1,775
South Carolina .....	91	7	7	17	13,918	706	547	2,713
South Dakota .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Tennessee .....	19	4	8	15	1,872	303	1,014	1,337
Texas .....	69	70	66	51	6,566	6,992	6,448	5,129
Utah .....	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	6	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	596	( <sup>2</sup> )
Vermont .....	8	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	10	792	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	794
Virginia .....	45	14	16	34	6,298	1,376	2,644	3,372
Washington .....	27	25	32	20	2,230	2,475	2,751	1,728
West Virginia .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	5	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	556	176
Wisconsin .....	173	60	91	113	17,651	6,254	10,111	11,498
Wyoming .....	-	3	-	-	-	216	-	-
Puerto Rico .....	6	7	-	6	698	567	-	486

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 1, table 2.

<sup>2</sup> Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

<sup>P</sup> = preliminary.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.