



Technical information:  
<http://www.bls.gov/mls/>

(202) 691-6392

USDL 03-762

Media contact:

691-5902

For release: 10:00 A.M. EST

Wednesday, November 26, 2003

## MASS LAYOFFS IN OCTOBER 2003

Employers initiated 1,523 mass layoff actions in October 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 158,240. (See table 1.) Fewer mass-layoff initial claims were filed against employers in temporary help services, discount department stores, semiconductors and related devices, and broadwoven fabric mills compared with October 2002. The number of initial claims fell to their lowest levels for October since 2000. From January through October 2003, the total number of events, at 15,596, and the number of initial claims, at 1,557,750, were lower than the January-October period a year ago (15,650 events and 1,740,722 initial claims).

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.

### Industry Distribution

Supermarkets and other grocery stores, with 13,682 initial claimants, and temporary help services, with 11,964 initial claimants, together accounted for 16 percent of all initial claims in October. (See table A.) The 10 industries reporting the highest number of mass-layoff initial claims accounted for 34 percent of the total.

The manufacturing sector recorded 29 percent of all mass layoff events and 34 percent of all initial claims filed in October. A year ago, manufacturing reported 33 percent of events and 38 percent of initial claims. Within manufacturing, the number of claimants was highest in transportation equipment (10,229) and food processing (10,034). (See table 2.)

Retail trade accounted for 8 percent of events and 14 percent of initial claims filed in October, with layoffs mostly in supermarkets and other grocery stores. Administrative and waste services accounted for 15 percent of events and 14 percent of initial claims during the month, mainly in temporary help services. Twelve percent of the events and 8 percent of the initial claims were from the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector, largely among farm labor contractors and crew leaders. An additional 9 percent of all layoff

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

Industry	Initial claims	October peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Supermarkets and other grocery stores .....	13,682	2003	13,682
Temporary help services .....	11,964	1998	18,760
Farm labor contractors and crew leaders .....	5,824	1998	9,617
Motion picture and video production .....	5,403	1997	7,692
Professional employer organizations .....	3,478	2001	3,523
Fruit and vegetable canning .....	3,394	2002	4,500
Farm machinery and equipment mfg. ....	3,061	1999	3,986
Automobile manufacturing .....	2,441	2001	7,563
Discount department stores .....	2,310	2002	4,959
Other postharvest crop activities .....	2,191	1998	2,529

p=preliminary.

events and 7 percent of initial claims filed during October were from construction firms, primarily among specialty trade contractors.

Government establishments accounted for 5 percent of events and initial claims filed during the month, particularly in transit and ground passenger transportation. The 7,527 initial claims in government were the most for an October since 1997. The total number of events and initial claims in government from January through October of this year have already exceeded those for all of 2002.

Compared with October 2002, the largest decreases in initial claims were reported in administrative and support services (-5,512) and computer and electronic products manufacturing (-4,562). The largest over-the-year increase in initial claims was in food and beverage stores (+11,257).

#### Geographic Distribution

Among the four regions, the highest number of initial claims in October due to mass layoffs was reported in the West, 68,376. (See table 3.) Administrative and support services, agriculture and forestry support activities, and food and beverage stores accounted for 37 percent of all initial claims in that region during the month. The Midwest region was next, with 43,432 initial claims, followed by the South, with 29,371, and the Northeast, with 17,061.

The number of initial claimants in mass layoffs declined over the year in three of the four regions, with the largest decrease in the West (-8,687). 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 (-8,056) and South Atlantic (-4,549). The West North Central division had the only increase (+8,791).

California recorded the largest number of initial claims filed in mass layoff events this October, 57,322, mostly in administrative and support services and in agriculture and forestry support activities. Pennsylvania reported 9,143 initial claims, followed by Missouri (8,165) and Illinois (7,890). These four states accounted for 53 percent of all layoff events and 52 percent of initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 4.)

California registered the largest over-the-year decrease in the number of initial claims (-7,722), followed by South Carolina (-3,849). The largest over-the-year increase occurred in Missouri (+6,927).

From January through October, California reported 409,420 initial claims, 26 percent of the national total. The states with the next highest numbers of initial claims were Pennsylvania (93,603), Ohio (85,707), New York (78,487), and Texas (78,108).

---

Mass Layoffs in November 2003 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, December 23, 2003.

# 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 October 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	<sup>r</sup> 284,629	31.8	<sup>r</sup> 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	<sup>r</sup> 421,570	36.9	<sup>r</sup> 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	<sup>r</sup> 333,197	34.8	<sup>r</sup> 71.9
April .....	1,581	161,412				
May .....	1,703	174,204				
June .....	1,691	157,552				
Second Quarter .....	4,975	493,168	<sup>r</sup> 2,131	<sup>r</sup> 415,316	<sup>r</sup> 42.8	<sup>r</sup> 84.2
July .....	2,087	226,435				
August .....	1,258	133,839				
September <sup>p</sup> .....	868	82,647				
Third Quarter <sup>p</sup> .....	4,213	442,921	<sup>2</sup> 1,375	<sup>2</sup> 181,793	32.6	41.0
October <sup>p</sup> .....	1,523	158,240				

<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.

<sup>r</sup> = revised.

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

Industry	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2003 <sup>p</sup>
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	1,497	1,258	868	1,523	171,100	133,839	82,647	158,240
Total, private .....	1,448	1,201	799	1,453	165,372	126,266	76,296	150,713
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting .....	178	38	43	188	16,045	2,135	2,382	13,007
Mining .....	8	4	4	5	565	283	259	343
Utilities .....	6	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	532	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Construction .....	116	114	82	143	9,738	7,862	5,205	11,422
Manufacturing.....	493	405	271	438	64,655	52,620	31,428	53,741
Food .....	84	42	44	96	12,169	5,803	4,145	10,034
Beverage and tobacco products .....	8	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	16	477	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	1,237
Textile mills .....	24	21	21	9	4,786	7,154	3,510	1,533
Textile product mills .....	12	8	( <sup>2</sup> )	8	1,511	739	( <sup>2</sup> )	881
Apparel .....	18	25	10	25	2,445	2,255	1,212	2,592
Leather and allied products .....	5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	384	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Wood products .....	22	21	11	15	2,114	1,773	969	1,163
Paper .....	11	13	10	12	968	1,083	834	1,049
Printing and related support activities .....	8	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	11	710	231	( <sup>2</sup> )	998
Petroleum and coal products .....	5	-	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	651	-	-	( <sup>2</sup> )
Chemicals .....	8	7	9	7	598	549	602	546
Plastics and rubber products .....	18	24	10	16	1,658	2,203	886	1,390
Nonmetallic mineral products .....	12	6	5	13	874	463	420	1,193
Primary metals .....	24	23	24	29	3,687	1,988	2,011	3,444
Fabricated metal products .....	21	32	5	23	1,722	2,806	826	2,093
Machinery .....	47	39	21	35	8,309	6,606	2,073	7,212
Computer and electronic products .....	63	34	26	26	6,923	2,675	4,820	2,361
Electrical equipment and appliances .....	25	21	9	11	4,879	2,564	1,142	2,493
Transportation equipment .....	49	50	31	55	6,856	9,476	4,825	10,229
Furniture and related products .....	14	21	11	15	1,749	2,513	1,254	1,995
Miscellaneous manufacturing .....	15	11	10	11	1,185	1,351	662	883
Wholesale trade .....	23	18	22	22	1,948	1,322	1,808	1,760
Retail trade .....	112	99	69	115	15,506	9,980	5,789	21,870
Transportation and warehousing .....	41	86	20	37	5,022	9,025	1,723	3,003
Information .....	53	51	26	52	9,019	9,114	5,791	7,755
Finance and insurance .....	25	41	35	35	2,123	3,113	2,371	2,541
Real estate and rental and leasing .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	5	12	( <sup>2</sup> )	349	382	718
Professional and technical services .....	42	41	29	30	3,525	3,775	3,730	2,447
Management of companies and enterprises .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Administrative and waste services .....	224	168	109	233	26,896	16,242	9,606	21,380
Educational services.....	-	7	8	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	592	634	( <sup>2</sup> )
Health care and social assistance .....	28	32	13	37	1,902	2,427	945	2,407
Arts, entertainment, and recreation .....	17	19	19	28	1,263	1,386	1,237	2,039
Accommodation and food services .....	58	45	37	62	5,057	3,228	2,623	5,176
Other services, except public administration.....	14	22	3	7	908	2,234	183	459
Unclassified .....	5	4	1	5	369	259	50	343
Government .....	49	57	69	70	5,728	7,573	6,351	7,527
Federal .....	9	10	13	20	815	1,287	1,910	1,649
State .....	14	16	14	16	1,991	1,766	1,417	1,383
Local .....	26	31	42	34	2,922	4,520	3,024	4,495

<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. Dash represents zero.

**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			
	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>p</sup>	October 2003 <sup>p</sup>
United States <sup>1</sup> .....	1,497	1,258	868	1,523	171,100	133,839	82,647	158,240
Northeast .....	181	220	107	184	20,961	21,272	12,115	17,061
New England .....	38	25	19	16	4,694	2,151	4,559	1,157
Middle Atlantic .....	143	195	88	168	16,267	19,121	7,556	15,904
South .....	304	330	196	278	35,515	34,673	19,287	29,371
South Atlantic .....	159	164	96	134	17,819	18,195	8,698	13,270
East South Central .....	48	68	31	44	6,198	8,033	4,144	5,310
West South Central .....	97	98	69	100	11,498	8,445	6,445	10,791
Midwest .....	293	239	165	325	37,561	30,872	16,868	43,432
East North Central .....	238	199	125	264	30,761	25,707	12,646	27,841
West North Central .....	55	40	40	61	6,800	5,165	4,222	15,591
West .....	719	469	400	736	77,063	47,022	34,377	68,376
Mountain .....	52	42	30	47	4,669	4,080	2,568	4,038
Pacific .....	667	427	370	689	72,394	42,942	31,809	64,338

<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			
	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>P</sup>	October 2003 <sup>P</sup>	October 2002	August 2003	September 2003 <sup>P</sup>	October 2003 <sup>P</sup>
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	1,497	1,258	868	1,523	171,100	133,839	82,647	158,240
Alabama .....	17	24	8	13	2,833	3,740	1,164	1,671
Alaska .....	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	3	301	( <sup>2</sup> )	185	295
Arizona .....	16	10	4	8	1,169	703	423	700
Arkansas .....	10	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	6	1,117	( <sup>2</sup> )	268	1,140
California .....	612	383	345	616	65,044	37,814	29,429	57,322
Colorado .....	13	( <sup>2</sup> )	6	8	1,142	( <sup>2</sup> )	439	581
Connecticut .....	5	3	4	3	516	237	291	200
Delaware .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	598	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
District of Columbia .....	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-
Florida .....	70	80	43	66	4,604	5,554	2,555	4,608
Georgia .....	35	20	19	23	3,219	2,077	2,130	2,838
Hawaii .....	10	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	6	800	( <sup>2</sup> )	196	462
Idaho .....	5	11	6	10	708	1,500	463	1,203
Illinois .....	57	50	41	74	8,676	7,996	4,510	7,890
Indiana .....	22	29	13	22	3,629	3,478	983	2,118
Iowa .....	12	10	9	18	2,339	1,650	1,108	3,680
Kansas .....	8	6	6	6	768	775	547	738
Kentucky .....	21	21	16	23	2,479	2,377	2,259	3,136
Louisiana .....	12	17	4	12	954	1,215	231	1,045
Maine .....	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	3	680	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	180
Maryland .....	10	5	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	1,263	422	( <sup>2</sup> )	256
Massachusetts .....	21	15	10	9	2,318	1,388	1,047	713
Michigan .....	39	11	18	42	4,111	2,369	1,861	4,263
Minnesota .....	17	6	7	17	2,000	505	511	2,845
Mississippi .....	5	8	( <sup>2</sup> )	4	429	571	( <sup>2</sup> )	200
Missouri .....	16	15	13	18	1,238	1,521	1,307	8,165
Montana .....	3	4	( <sup>2</sup> )	5	327	599	( <sup>2</sup> )	360
Nebraska .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	5	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	749	( <sup>2</sup> )
Nevada .....	11	11	12	10	1,043	915	879	835
New Hampshire .....	5	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	543	195	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
New Jersey .....	23	33	8	27	2,561	2,708	691	2,906
New Mexico .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	127	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
New York .....	41	94	38	44	5,226	10,633	3,384	3,855
North Carolina .....	12	32	11	19	1,494	6,680	897	2,039
North Dakota .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-
Ohio .....	58	54	29	66	7,178	6,389	2,979	7,316
Oklahoma .....	5	6	5	12	957	603	359	1,614
Oregon .....	20	27	5	39	3,123	2,447	375	3,784
Pennsylvania .....	79	68	42	97	8,480	5,780	3,481	9,143
Rhode Island .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-
South Carolina .....	19	10	5	7	4,555	870	1,548	706
South Dakota .....	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-
Tennessee .....	5	15	5	4	457	1,345	608	303
Texas .....	70	74	57	70	8,470	6,571	5,587	6,992
Utah .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )
Vermont .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-
Virginia .....	8	13	14	14	619	1,887	1,321	1,376
Washington .....	21	14	14	25	3,126	1,714	1,624	2,475
West Virginia .....	3	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	468	-	( <sup>2</sup> )	-
Wisconsin .....	62	55	24	60	7,167	5,475	2,313	6,254
Wyoming .....	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-	3	( <sup>2</sup> )	-	-	216
Puerto Rico .....	4	10	7	7	402	1,035	573	567

<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.