

Low Postures

The Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) publishes job-related information on physical demands; environmental conditions; education, training, and experience; as well as cognitive and mental requirements. The job requirements reflect those necessary for workers to perform critical tasks in support of the critical job functions, and not the capabilities of individual workers. Low posture estimates are physical demand requirements.

There are four positions included in low postures:

- **Crawling** – moving about on hands and knees or hands and feet.
- **Crouching** – bending the body downward and forward by bending the legs and spine.
- **Kneeling** – bending the legs at the knees to come to rest on the knee or knees.
- **Stooping** – bending the body forward and down while bending the spine at the waist 45 degrees or more either over something below waist level or down towards an object on or near the ground. Stooping should be significant enough that when bending, if arms were extended, workers' hands would be at or below the knees. Stooping must be performed while standing.

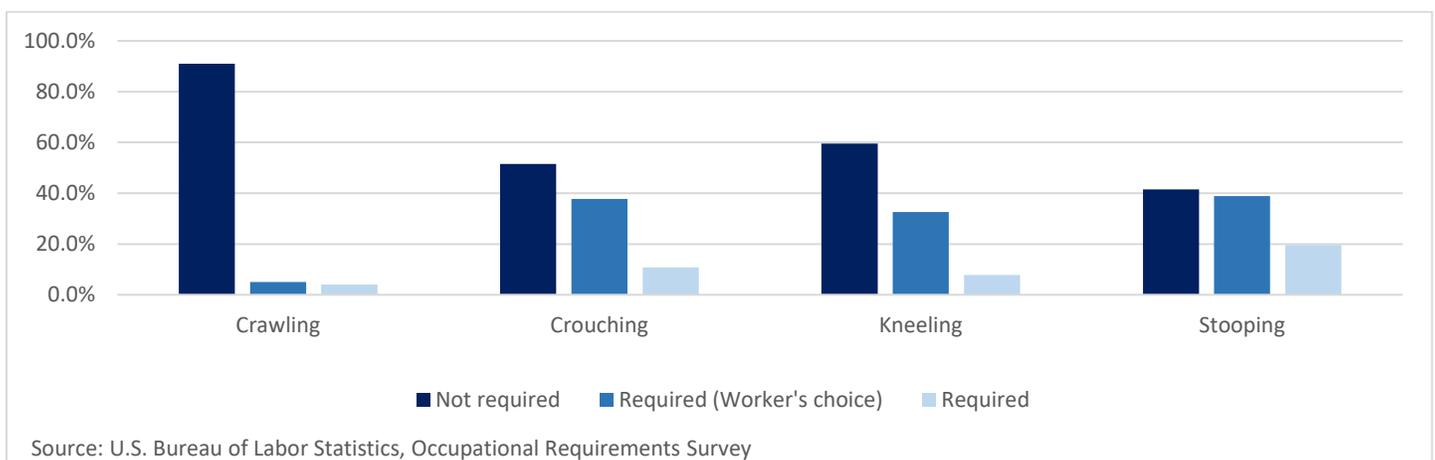
The low posture estimates indicate the percentage of workers with the requirement to perform critical tasks in low postures and are provided as:

- **Not required** – when low postures are not required or no low posture position is generally required to perform critical tasks.
- **Required** – when the job, the nature of critical tasks performed, or the physical settings of work environment dictates the use of specific postures.
- **Worker's choice** – when none of the criteria from required apply and workers may choose the posture they use (for instance, workers may be able to either crouch or kneel to perform a job requirement).

Low postures were not required for 40.4 percent of civilian workers. There were some occupations where 100 percent of workers were not required to perform critical tasks in low postures. For example, postsecondary economics teachers, operations research analysts, insurance sales agents, and switchboard operators.

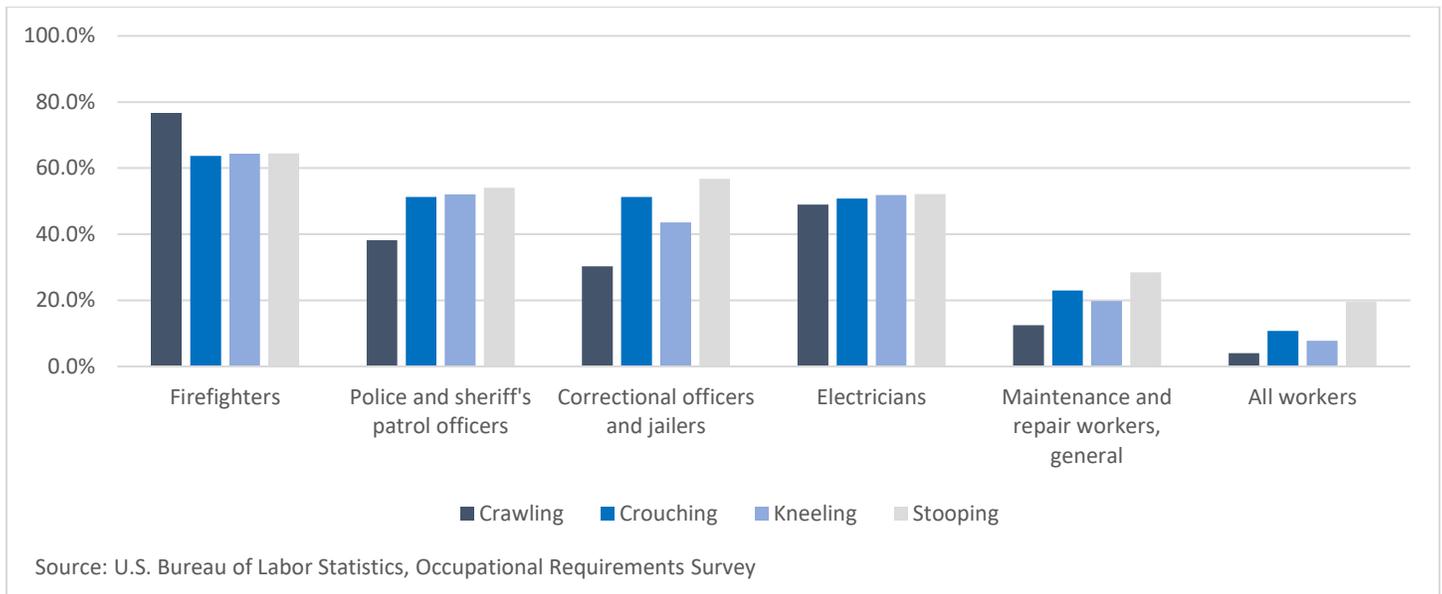
While 59.6 percent of civilian workers were required to perform critical tasks in low postures, crouching was required for 10.8 percent of workers. Another 37.7 percent of civilian workers were able to choose whether to crouch to complete critical tasks. (See Chart A.)

Chart A. Percentage of civilian workers with low posture requirements, 2020



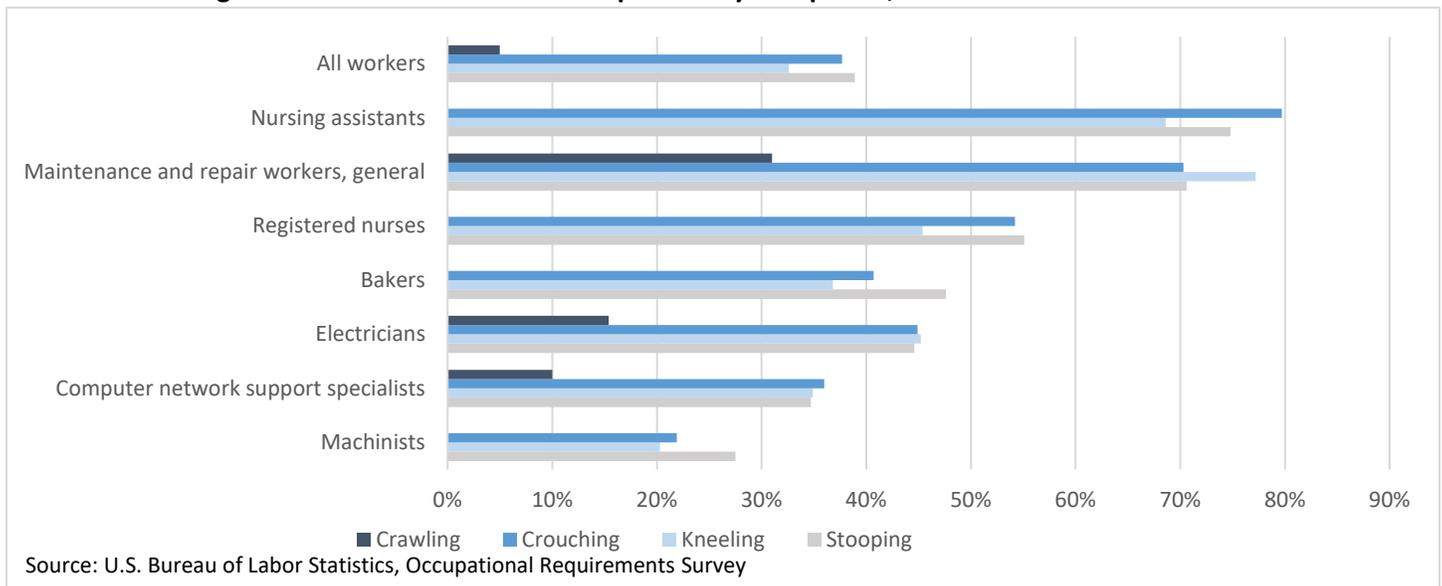
Crawling was required for 76.6 percent of firefighters, 63.7 percent were required to crouch, 64.4 percent were required to kneel, and 64.5 percent were required to stoop. (See Chart B.)

Chart B. Percentage of workers with low posture requirements by occupation, 2020



Crawling is the only low posture that implies movement and it is less easily replaced by other low postures. Although crawling is less interchangeable, there may be instances where workers have a choice whether to crawl or perform another posture. For example, construction laborers may have a choice of whether to crawl to spread cement, which is easiest, but they may also stoop, kneel, or crouch if they prefer. Crawling was required for 15.9 percent of construction laborers. (See Chart C.)

Chart C. Percentage of workers with choice of low posture by occupation, 2020



Durations of low postures

Low posture duration estimates are also published when possible. However, these measure the duration of low postures and are not available for individual postures (crawling, crouching, kneeling, and stooping).



Duration estimates provide the percentage of workers performing low posture by duration, indicating the portion (or range within the) workday spent performing critical tasks in low postures. For instance, 13.4 percent of workers in management occupations were required to perform critical tasks in low postures up to two percent of the workday (seldom) and 7.0 percent were required to perform tasks in low postures occasionally (from two percent to 1/3 of the workday).

The sum of these estimates equals the total percentage of workers in management occupations low posture requirements: 20.5 percent.

Similarly, while 96.4 percent of construction laborers are required to perform tasks in low postures, 73.6 percent of those workers perform critical tasks in low postures occasionally (from two percent to 1/3 of the workday) and 21.5 percent perform tasks in low postures seldom (up to two percent of the workday). (See Table 2.)

Table 1. Percentage of workers with low posture requirement durations by occupation, 2020

Occupation	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Required
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	-	74.7	17.9	100.0
Nursing assistants	15.0	72.1	-	99.1
Construction laborers	-	73.6	21.5	96.4
Chefs and head cooks	49.6	35.1	-	87.4
Shipping, receiving, and inventory clerks	9.7	71.8	-	86.6
Bartenders	19.9	56.7	-	78.9
Occupational health and safety specialists	35.6	31.4	-	67.1
Food service managers	17.6	36.3	-	53.9
Hosts and Hostesses	20.2	22.7	-	43.0
Computer network support specialists	25.7	12.4	-	38.1
Secondary school teachers	15.7	15.3	-	31.8
Office clerks, general	22.5	6.9	-	29.6

Note: Dashes indicate that estimate was not publishable or there are no workers with the requirement. Constantly (defined as 2/3 or more of the workday) is not published for any occupations in the 2020 Occupational Requirements Survey.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

Additional resources:

- [Latest news release](#)
- [Archived ORS news releases](#)
- [Handbook of Methods](#)
- [Collection manuals](#)
- [Factsheets](#)

Articles:

- [Sitting and standing requirements in 2020](#)
- [Job requirements for animal caretakers on National Mutt Day](#)
- [Three-fourths of workers had to interact with the public in 2019; 4.3 percent worked around crowds](#)
- [Physical requirements in food preparation and serving jobs](#)
- [Job requirements and wages for auto mechanics in 2018](#)
- [Occupational requirements and benefits for nurses in the United States in 2018](#)
- All [The Economics Daily](#) (TED) articles on ORS
- [A look at teachers' job requirements, employer costs, and benefits \(PDF\)](#)
- [The Occupational Requirements Survey: estimates from preproduction testing](#)

For additional information on occupational requirements see the [ORS homepage](#) or download the [ORS complete dataset](#) to explore the latest estimates.

