

Related Occupations

Other health occupations requiring approximately 1 year of training after high school include licensed practical nurses, certified respiratory therapists, medical laboratory assistants, medical assistants, dental assistants, optometric assistants, and physical therapy aides.

Sources of Additional Information

For additional information on a career as a surgical technologist and a list of CAAHEP-accredited programs, contact:

☛ Association of Surgical Technologists, 7108-C South Alton Way, Englewood, CO 80112. Internet: <http://www.ast.org>

For information on certification, contact:

☛ Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist, 7790 East Arapahoe Rd., Suite 240, Englewood, CO 80112-1274.

Communications-Related Occupations

Announcers

(O*NET 34017 and 34021)

Significant Points

- Competition for announcer jobs will continue to be keen.
- Jobs at small stations usually have low pay, but offer the best opportunities for beginners.
- Related work experience at a campus radio station or as an intern at a commercial station can be helpful in breaking into the occupation.

Nature of the Work

Announcers in radio and television perform a variety of tasks on and off the air. They announce station program information such as program schedules and station breaks for commercials or public service information, and they introduce and close programs. Announcers read prepared scripts or ad-lib commentary on the air when presenting news, sports, weather, time, and commercials. If a written script is required, they may do the research and writing. Announcers also interview guests and moderate panels or discussions. Some provide commentary for the audience during sporting events, parades, and other events. Announcers are often well known to radio and television audiences and may make promotional appearances and remote broadcasts for their stations.

Radio announcers are often called *disc jockeys*. Some disc jockeys specialize in one kind of music. They announce music selections and may decide what music to play. While on the air, they comment on the music, weather, and traffic. They may take requests from listeners, interview guests, and manage listener contests.

Newscasters or *anchors* work at large stations and specialize in news, sports, or weather. (See the related statement on news analysts, reporters, and correspondents elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) *Show hosts* may specialize in a certain area of interest such as politics, personal finance, sports, or health. They contribute to the preparation of the program content; interview guests; and discuss issues with viewers, listeners, or an in-studio audience.

Announcers at smaller stations may cover all of these areas and tend to have more off-air duties as well. They may operate the control board, monitor the transmitter, sell commercial time to advertisers, keep a log of the station's daily programming, and do production work. Consolidation and automation make it possible for announcers to do some work previously performed by broadcast technicians. (See the statement on broadcast and sound technicians elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) Announcers use the control board to broadcast programming, commercials, and public service announcements according to schedule. Public radio and television announcers are involved with station fundraising efforts.

Announcers frequently participate in community activities. Sports announcers, for example, may serve as masters of ceremonies at sports

club banquets or may greet customers at openings of sporting goods stores.

Although most announcers are employed in radio and television broadcasting, some are employed in the cable television or motion picture production industries. Other announcers may use a public address system to provide information to the audience at sporting and other events. Some disc jockeys announce and play music at clubs, dances, restaurants, and weddings.

Working Conditions

Announcers usually work in well-lit, air-conditioned, sound-proof studios.

The broadcast day is long for radio and TV stations—some are on the air 24 hours a day—so announcers can expect to work unusual hours. Many present early morning shows, when most people are getting ready for work or commuting, while others do late night programs.



Competition for announcer jobs will be keen in large markets.

Announcers often work within tight schedule constraints, which can be physically and mentally stressful. For many announcers, the intangible rewards—creative work, many personal contacts, and the satisfaction of becoming widely known—far outweigh the disadvantages of irregular and often unpredictable hours, work pressures, and disrupted personal lives.

Employment

Announcers held about 60,000 jobs in 1998. Nearly all were staff announcers employed in radio and television broadcasting, but some were freelance announcers who sold their services for individual assignments to networks and stations, or to advertising agencies and other independent producers. Many announcing jobs are part time.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Entry to this occupation is highly competitive. Formal training in broadcasting from a college or technical school (private broadcasting school) is valuable. Station officials pay particular attention to taped auditions that show an applicant's delivery and—in television—appearance and style on commercials, news, and interviews. Those hired by television stations usually start out as production assistants, researchers, or reporters and are given a chance to move into announcing if they show an aptitude for “on-air” work. Newcomers to TV broadcasting also may begin as news camera operators. (See the statement on photographers and camera operators elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) A beginner's chance of landing an on-air job is remote, except possibly for a small radio station. In radio, newcomers usually start out taping interviews and operating equipment.

Announcers usually begin at a station in a small community and, if qualified, may move to a better paying job in a large city. They also may advance by hosting a regular program as a disc jockey, sportscaster, or other specialist. Competition is particularly intense for employment by networks, and employers look for college graduates with at least several years of successful announcing experience.

Announcers must have a pleasant and well-controlled voice, good timing, excellent pronunciation, and must know correct grammar usage. Television announcers need a neat, pleasing appearance as well. Knowledge of theater, sports, music, business, politics, and other subjects likely to be covered in broadcasts improves chances for success. Announcers also must be computer-literate because programming is created and edited by computer. In addition, they should be able to ad-lib all or part of a show and to work under tight deadlines. The most successful announcers attract a large audience by combining a pleasing personality and voice with an appealing style.

High school and college courses in English, public speaking, drama, foreign languages, and computer science are valuable, and hobbies such as sports and music are additional assets. Students may gain valuable experience at campus radio or TV facilities and at commercial stations while serving as interns. Paid or unpaid internships provide students with hands-on training and the chance to establish contacts in the industry. Unpaid interns often receive college credit and are allowed to observe and assist station employees. Although the Fair Labor Standards Act limits the work unpaid interns may perform in a station, unpaid internships are the rule; sometimes they lead to paid internships. Paid internships are valuable because interns do work ordinarily done by regular employees and may even go on the air.

Persons considering enrolling in a broadcasting school should contact personnel managers of radio and television stations as well as broadcasting trade organizations to determine the school's reputation for producing suitably trained candidates.

Job Outlook

Competition for jobs as announcers will be keen because the broadcasting field attracts many more jobseekers than there are jobs. Small

radio stations are more inclined to hire beginners, but the pay is low. Interns usually receive preference for available positions. Because competition for ratings is so intense in major metropolitan areas, large stations will continue to seek announcers who have proven that they can attract and retain a large audience.

Announcers who are knowledgeable in business, consumer, and health news may have an advantage over others. While specialization is more common at large stations and the networks, many small stations also encourage it.

Employment of announcers is expected to decline slightly through 2008 due to the lack of growth of new radio and television stations. Openings in this relatively small field will arise from the need to replace those who transfer to other kinds of work or leave the labor force. Job openings also arise because of high turnover within the occupation. Changes in station ownership, format, and ratings frequently cause periods of unemployment for many announcers. Many announcers leave the field because they cannot advance to better paying jobs.

Increasing consolidation of radio and television stations, new technology, and the growth of alternative media sources will contribute to the expected decline in employment of announcers. Consolidation in broadcasting may lead to increased use of syndicated programming and programs originating outside a station's viewing or listening area. Digital technology will increase the productivity of announcers, reducing the time spent on off-air technical and production work. In addition, all traditional media, including radio and television, may suffer losses in audience as the American public increases its use of personal computers.

Employment in this occupation is not significantly affected by downturns in the economy. If recessions cause advertising revenues to fall, stations tend to cut “behind-the-scenes” workers rather than announcers and broadcasters.

Earnings

Salaries in broadcasting vary widely but in general are relatively low except for announcers in large stations in major markets or who work for a network. They are higher in television than in radio and higher in commercial than in public broadcasting.

Median hourly earnings of announcers in 1998 were \$8.62. The middle 50 percent earned between \$6.17 and \$12.76. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$5.63 and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$21.28. Median hourly earnings of announcers in 1997 were \$8.20 in the radio and television broadcasting industry.

Related Occupations

The success of announcers depends upon how well they communicate. Others who must be skilled at oral communication include interpreters, sales workers, public relations specialists, and teachers. Many announcers also must entertain their audience, so their work is similar to other entertainment-related occupations such as actors, directors and producers, dancers, and musicians.

Sources of Additional Information

General information on the broadcasting industry is available from:
 • National Association of Broadcasters, 1771 N St. NW., Washington, DC 20036. Internet: <http://www.nab.org>

Broadcast and Sound Technicians

(O*NET 22599A, 34028B, and 34028C)

Significant Points

- Job applicants will face strong competition for the better paying jobs at radio and television stations serving large cities.