

Job Security

Years ago, job security meant finding a good job with a good company and settling in for life. Today Job Security is a moving target and less dependent upon the company with whom we are employed. Some may argue that Job Security is a thing-of-the-past, but Job Security in the 21st century needs to be thought of in a different way.

Secure Industries (types of workplaces)

Dr. Laurence Shatkin, in his book **150 Best Jobs for a Secure Future** (Jist, 2012) identifies six industries that are expected to be the most stable industries, no matter what the state of the economy:

- Health Care
- Government
- Education
- Computer Systems Design
- Utilities
- Repair & Maintenance

Dr. Shatkin also identifies specific occupations (types of jobs) within these industries that are expected to be more secure. Click on the [Downloads](#) tab to see sample pages of his book at <http://jist.emcp.com/150-best-jobs-for-a-secure-future.html>. A copy of his book is available for viewing in the MCC Counseling Center.

Two major changes affecting Job Security in the 21st century are the global economy and advances in technology. Notice that in at least some of the industries above, it would be difficult to outsource jobs in those industries to overseas companies. Notice too, that the Computer Systems Design industry is directly related to the trend of technological change.

Observing Industry trends over time increases our awareness about how economic changes can affect our life's work in the future. Use this awareness to make plans to develop new skills through on-the-job learning, volunteer work, or by taking a class. In today's economy, many people increase their job security by continually developing new skills to keep up with rapid changes in their current occupation or to be prepared for the possibility of a future job change.

Secure Occupations (types of jobs)

- Occupations employing larger numbers of workers are usually more secure, unless the job market is saturated with job applicants interested in those jobs. While researching career options, ask about the supply & demand of workers in certain occupations or industries.
- Occupations that are more difficult to prepare for, are usually more secure. Examples are occupations that require a lot of education or training, or those that are difficult to achieve for many people. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) careers are examples of occupations that may be more secure because some people find these topics difficult to pursue.

Increase your Job Security

Dr. Laurence Shatkin in his book, **150 Best Jobs for a Secure Future** observes that the job market bounced back quickly after the recessions during the 1950's – 2000's. After the 2001 recession, it took a little over 3 years for the economy to recover, and the time to recover after the 2008 recession resulted in an even slower recovery. Below are tips, some from Dr. Shatkin, to help increase your own job security while employed and during times of unemployment:

- **During times of unemployment while you are searching for a job:** Employers may wonder what you've been doing to keep your skills up-to-date. You can volunteer using skills related to the kind of work you desire, take a course to update or add new relevant skills, or find temporary or short-term work. This way you will be keeping up with your skills as well as networking with other people, which is the most effective way of finding a new job.

- **To increase your job security while employed:**
 - Focus on providing core services or products in your organization. The “add on services or products” may be cut in difficult economic times.
 - Be very productive during your work day, go beyond the “call of duty” in your job.
 - Be pleasant to work with, respect others, and develop a good reputation related to how you get along with others and in the quality of your work.
 - Find a niche related to your core skills that not many people are involved in.
 - Don't hide your contributions to the organization; be visible. For example, share information about a project you've worked on, collaborate with others, or contribute to newsletters.
 - Be visible in your line of work outside of your workplace too, volunteer in the community, attend seminars or professional meetings, etc.
 - Believe in yourself: know your strengths, do your best work, but try to live your life in balance, making time for life outside of career activities.
 - Keep your job search materials up-to-date. Update your resume, have a good idea of other jobs you could pursue if you weren't currently employed.
 - Some people have a very strong passion to pursue a career field or to use some of their specific strengths in the job market. Such people cannot imagine doing anything else. If this describes you, seek advice from a variety of mentors to learn about all the possible career paths that you can consider to help you reach your goal if not now, in your lifetime.
 - Consider the possibility of self-employment, is this a possibility for your skills or knowledge? Seek advice from an Illinois Small Business Development Center or take courses in Entrepreneurship. More info at <http://www.shahcenter.mchenry.edu/sbdc/index.asp> or <http://www.mchenry.edu/entrepreneur/index.asp>.
 - Manage your finances carefully. A number of Financial Planners recommend as a high priority to save at least 3-6 months of your income for an emergency, such as job loss. Some recommend saving 8 months of income for the economic times of our times. **

** References

- Money Management International at: <http://www.moneymanagement.org/Budgeting-Tools/Credit-Articles/Savings/Building-Personal-Financial-Security-Establish-an-Emergency-Savings-Account.aspx>
- Suzy Orman's Simplify your Life at: <http://www.oprah.com/money/Suzy-Orman-9-Small-Financial-Steps-That-Will-Pay-Off-Big>