

Packer

A packer packs goods by hand or using machines, often on a production line, to prevent damage to goods and products during transport and delivery.

The Work

You could be:

- putting items into containers such as boxes, crates, sacks and trays
- using a forklift truck to lift heavy items
- checking items for faults
- using a shrink-wrapping machine to cover containers with plastic or protecting heavy or fragile goods with bubble wrap, polystyrene or cardboard
- sealing packages with glue, tape or staples
- labelling and stacking the containers
- marking up orders on the computer and emailing the customer that the goods are on their way
- cleaning up work areas and ensuring health and safety rules are followed.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour.

Recent posts have advertised hourly rates up to £12.00 per hour. There may be a chance to boost income through overtime and bonuses.

Conditions

- You will work in a factory, warehouse or store, where it may be dusty and noisy.
- You will usually work 37-40 hours a week. This often includes shifts with additional hours for overtime.
- You normally have to work very quickly.
- You might work in one place for most of the day, working at a conveyer belt.
- Work may include lifting heavy objects.
- The work can be repetitive, where you do the same thing over and over.
- You may have to wear protective clothing such as goggles, masks, gloves and overalls.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications.
- Some employers will ask you to take a practical test to show how well you can work with your hands.

Most jobs are with manufacturing companies, mail order firms and large shops, although more packing jobs are now being done by machinery. Removal firms, antique dealers and export companies use specialist packers and there will continue to be a demand for them. Jobs are advertised on recruitment websites, including the Universal Jobmatch website, and in local papers.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- a practical approach
- strength and fitness
- awareness of health and safety procedures.

You should be able to:

- work quickly, neatly and carefully
- concentrate well
- work alone and as part of a team.
- follow instructions.

Training

- Training is usually on the job.
- You would complete short in-house training courses such as health and safety, manual handling and packing procedures.

Getting On

- After you gain experience, you may be able to become a specialist packer.
- You may be promoted to be a supervisor, chargehand or inspector.

Contacts

Packaging Society

Website: www.iom3.org/packaging-society

X: @ThePackagingSoc

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.