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Thursday, April 17, 2008

## GM, Ford to cut pay for summer temps

Those workers will earn about \$14 an hour instead of \$18; Chrysler won't hire any fill-ins.

Sharon Terlep / The Detroit News

Taking a part-time summer job with one of Detroit's Big Three automakers has long meant good, quick money for thousands of workers.

But the payoff just got smaller.

Workers hired by General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co. for temporary summer [help](#) will now make about \$14 an hour -- not \$18 -- as part of the automakers' new labor deals with the United Auto Workers. The temporary summer workers fill in for most jobs in the factories.

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Chrysler LLC, struggling to pare back production to meet declining demand for its cars and trucks, doesn't plan to hire temps this summer, Chrysler spokesman Ed Saenz said Wednesday. It will be the automaker's third straight year of hiring few to no summer temps.

The pay cut is one more sign that Detroit's automakers aren't the haven of [high](#) wages they once were.

"It'd be nice to have those jobs be higher paying. But in the grand scheme of things, given the economy and the auto industry, having the jobs in the first place is most important," said Scott Watkins, a consultant at East Lansing-based Anderson

Economic Group. "The good news is that those temporary jobs are there at any amount."

Detroit's automakers usually hire temps to take the place of vacationing factory workers. GM said it hires a few thousand workers across the country; [Ford](#) placed its number in the hundreds.

The tally of summer hires this year will depend on the carmakers' production schedules and, at GM, could be affected by the strike at parts maker American Axle & Manufacturing Inc. A parts shortage created by the stoppage has forced GM to idle or cut shifts at about two dozen factories.

### Jobs filled by referrals

Temporary workers are typically hired through a referral process in which existing workers recommend a friend or relative for the job. Salaried and hourly employees are generally allowed one referral each.

"It's a way that GM and the UAW can work together to allow people to go on vacation but meet the production needs of the business," GM spokesman Dan Flores said.

Traditionally, under UAW agreements with the automakers, those fill-in workers have earned 70 percent of the average assembly line hourly wage, which amounted to about \$18.30.

But last fall's landmark labor deals between the UAW and the Big Three dramatically altered pay scales on the line.

The UAW agreed to allow the companies to implement a two-tier wage system in the factories, with lower-paid workers making as little as \$14, or about half the current hourly wage.

At GM, the second tier of workers comprises new hires assigned to jobs that aren't considered a core part

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**Who else gets \$14**  
Tens of thousands of future hires at Detroit's Big Three will have starting wages of \$14 an hour. Here's how the pay of new auto jobs compares with average hourly wages of other jobs.

		
Job: Parking enforcement workers Avg. hourly wage: \$14.00	Job: Construction laborers Avg. hourly wage: \$15.11	Job: Clerk Avg. hourly wage: \$15.88
<b>More jobs</b>		<b>Average wages</b>
School bus drivers	\$24.14	
Medical secretaries	14.33	
Door-to-door sales/street vendors	14.00	
Balliffs	15.07	
Dental assistants	15.51	

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; May 2005 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates  
The Detroit News

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of building cars. Chrysler's system is similar. At Ford, all new hires will be paid the lower wage until 20 percent of the work force falls into the lower tier.

All temporary summer hires will fall into the second-tier wage at Ford. The decision avoids a situation where a part-timer would be making more than a full-time, UAW-represented employee.

#### Hiring increases in summer

The automakers employ temporary workers year-round, but hiring generally spikes in the summer because of vacations. Many of the temps hired by the Big Three to replace workers who took buyouts in 2006 will become permanent hires under the labor deal. Summer help will not be eligible for full-time jobs.

GM worker Troy Miller, who has seen summer help come and go during a decade at the automaker's service parts operation in Columbus, Ohio, said the workers are at a disadvantage because they're not represented by the UAW. They often work longer hours and with less breaks than full-timers, he said. "I don't think it's fair they make less," he said. "They work 'em hard."

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