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Retirements and Attrition for Some Jobs Growing

Aerospace and defense industry retirements in 2008 more than doubled, reports an *Aviation Week and Space Technology* magazine workforce study released this month. The annual analysis found that 5.7 percent of the workforce retired in 2008, versus 2 percent a year ago. Meanwhile, those eligible to retire account for 13 percent, roughly the same as last year.

While overall retirements have more than doubled in the past year, it appears that, despite warnings, a mass wave of retirements hasn't yet come to pass, though the study forecasts retirement eligibility to grow to 18 percent in 2011 and just over 20 percent in 2013. These figures don't include employees in government agencies.

Some job categories appear to be more at risk than others. For example, almost all employees in Research & Development who were eligible to retire in 2008 did so — 15.3 percent were eligible to retire and 15.0 percent took the step.

In 2013, about 1 in 4 employees in Research & Development and Program Management will be eligible to retire. Engineering technicians follow with retirement eligibility at 22 percent in 2013.

The study also noted concerns with the "front-end" of the industry's workforce who are leaving at a higher rate than industry's overall average of 9.7 percent.

The voluntary attrition rate among young professionals (those with 0-5 years of experience) rose to 15.7 percent, up from 14.0 percent a year ago. Within some job categories this number is higher. For example, engineers within this experience group voluntarily left at a rate of 15.9 percent and those in the industry's manufacturing/production workforce left at the rate of 19.4 percent.



Determining the causes of this high attrition rate is one of the priorities of the study's advisory board, which includes AIA President and CEO Marion Blakey and Executive Committee Chairman Robert Stevens, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin.

AIA is a contributing partner in the *Aviation Week* annual survey. All AIA member companies are invited to participate in the survey along with members of the National Defense Industrial Association and the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics.

More information on survey results and other topics, including knowledge management and compensation, are available in the [final report](#).

AIA Source: daphne.dador@aia-aerospace.org