

**Occupational Profile**  
**Respiratory Therapists**  
OES (Occupational Employment Statistics) CODE: 32302

| Cameron County       |                           | Hidalgo/Starr/Willacy Counties |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Employment 2000      | Projected Employment 2010 | Employment 2000                | Projected Employment 2010 |
| 80                   | 110                       | 110                            | 170                       |
| Absolute Change      |                           | Absolute Change                |                           |
| #                    | %                         | #                              | %                         |
| 30                   | 37.5                      | 60                             | 54.5                      |
| Is License Required? | Growth to Replacement     | Is License Required?           | Growth to Replacement     |
| No                   | 1:0                       | No                             | 1:1                       |
| Hourly Wage 2002     |                           | Hourly Wage 2002               |                           |
| Mean                 | Median                    | Mean                           | Median                    |
| \$15.16              | \$15.71                   | \$18.74                        | \$18.65                   |

**Job Description:**

Respiratory Therapists evaluate, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders. To evaluate patients, therapists test the capacity of the lungs and analyze oxygen and carbon dioxide concentration. They also measure the patient's potential of hydrogen (pH), which indicates the acidity or alkalinity level of the blood. To measure lung capacity, therapists have patients breathe into an instrument that measures the volume and flow of oxygen during inhalation and exhalation. By comparing the reading with the norm for the patient's age, height, weight, and sex, respiratory therapists can determine whether lung deficiencies exist.

**Average Education Required**

Most occupations in this zone require training in vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree. Some may require a bachelor's degree.

**Related Occupations**

Respiratory therapists, under the supervision of a physician, administer respiratory care and life support to patients with heart and lung difficulties. Other workers who care for, treat, or train people to improve their physical condition include dialysis technicians, [registered nurses](#), [occupational therapists](#), [physical therapists](#), and radiation therapists.

**Skills Required**

- Operation and Control -- Controlling operations of equipment or systems
- Reading Comprehension -- Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents
- Monitoring -- Assessing how well one is doing when learning or doing something
- Problem Identification -- Identifying the nature of problems
- Active Listening -- Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate
- Operation Monitoring -- Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly
- Critical Thinking -- Using logic and analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches

| <b>Industrial Employment Patterns</b> |                                  |                             |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Industry Code</b>                  | <b>Industry</b>                  | <b>Percent of Employees</b> |
| 8060                                  | Hospitals                        | 86.7%                       |
| 8080                                  | Home Health Care Services        | 3.5%                        |
| 7350                                  | Misc. Equipment Rental & Leasing | 3.2%                        |