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Demand for industrial and warehouse drivers to surge by 30% in 2025

Excel Recruitment has published its 2025 Industrial and Warehousing Salary Guide, spotlighting a 30% projected growth in demand for drivers and a 50% rise in demand for skilled technicians in the coming year.

With Ireland's job market at full employment and a new minimum wage of €13.50, the guide reveals a talent scarcity that could reshape hiring strategies in the industrial sector, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Excel Recruitment Industrial and Warehousing Salary Guide is an essential resource for understanding the latest salary trends, workforce demands, and operational challenges in Ireland's thriving industrial sector.

With Ireland's unemployment rate at a record low, competition for talent has reached unprecedented levels, which the recruitment experts say is making it particularly difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to attract and retain essential workers.

Key findings from the guide include:

■ **In-demand roles:** The report anticipates high demand for drivers, logistics coordinators, skilled technicians, and warehouse managers.

The continued growth of e-commerce is driving a 30% increase in demand for last-mile delivery drivers and logistics coordinators. Meanwhile, automation and smart factory technology are fuelling a 50% increase in demand for technicians trained in robotics, AI, and digital manufacturing.

■ **Tight labour market:** With unemployment rates hovering around 4%, candidate availability remains limited for critical roles in ware-

■ **Rory Noonan**

housing, logistics, and industrial operations. The scarcity of skilled candidates is expected to intensify competition among employers and is especially challenging for SMEs, which are often outbid by larger corporations offering competitive pay and benefits.

■ **Impact of the new minimum wage:** Ireland's increase in the national minimum wage to €13.50, effective January 2025, will create significant wage pressures, particularly for SMEs. While junior role salaries are likely to rise in line with the new wage, senior roles may see stagnant wages as companies grapple with constrained budgets due to higher staffing costs, statutory sick pay, and PRSI contributions.

John Kearns, industrial division manager at Excel Recruitment, noted the impact of these changes on the Irish industrial and warehousing landscape: "Demand for skilled professionals in this industry is higher than we've seen it in many years, especially in essential roles like logistics and technical maintenance."

"As living costs in Ireland continue to rise, the appeal of relocating for work has declined, leading to a talent shortage that will challenge even the most resourceful employers."

"SMEs, in particular, may feel the strain as larger companies invest in automation and digital transformation to offset rising labour costs."

"The gap between SMEs and large corporations is likely to widen unless smaller companies can offer compelling non-monetary benefits and flexible work options."

According to Mr Kearns the trends and challenges shaping the sector in 2025 will be:

■ **Wage pressures and staffing budgets:** "With the upcoming minimum wage increase and ad-

ditional staffing costs, many businesses will feel pressure to contain wage budgets while remaining competitive.

"SMEs are expected to face the greatest challenges as larger firms continue to attract talent with robust benefits packages."

■ **Shift to automation and technological advancements:** "As companies seek to reduce reliance on low-skilled labour, investments in automation, smart factories, and robotics are likely to increase."

"This trend is expected to intensify competition for tech-savvy professionals capable of operating and maintaining advanced machinery."

■ **Adapting staffing structures:** "Many companies are reassessing their staffing strategies to remain competitive, with larger firms accelerating automation efforts, while smaller companies seek cost-effective ways to retain talent and improve operational efficiency."

Excel Recruitment report that despite these challenges, we project that the industrial and warehousing sector will continue its growth trajectory, driven by rising e-commerce, green logistics, and a focus on digital transformation.

Mr Kearns noted: "Companies able to innovate and offer flexible working conditions will have a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent."

"We are helping the employers we work with to explore non-monetary incentives, such as flexible work arrangements and meaningful benefits, to remain attractive in a candidate-driven market."

"Our 2025 Industrial and Warehousing Salary Guide drives home the need for agility, adaptability, and strategic investment, particularly for SMEs navigating Ireland's high operational costs."