



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Workforce Development and Advancement

Carrie Roth
Director

6606 W. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23230

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Contact: Timothy Aylor, Senior Economist
Economic Information & Analytics Division
(804) 786-3976 or (804) 786-7496

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Virginia Layoffs Number Estimated at 35,000 in November

**—Latest BLS Jobs Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Shows Layoffs Down Ten Percent
Over the Year—**

RICHMOND— The Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (DWDA) announced today that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' November 2023 Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) reports a decrease in layoffs in the Commonwealth.

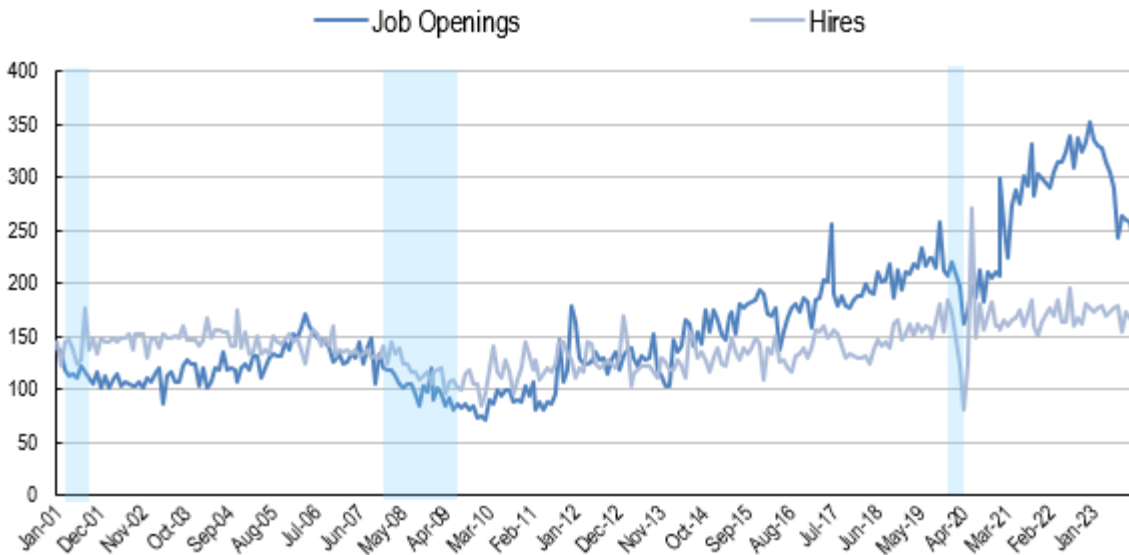
According to the most recent BLS JOLTS survey data, the number of November 2023 layoffs in Virginia fell by seventeen percent over the month and by 4,000, or ten percent, over the year. BLS JOLTS data provides information on all the pieces that go into the net change in the number of jobs. These components include job openings, hires, layoffs, voluntary quits, and other job separations (which includes retirements and worker deaths). Putting those components together reveals the overall change in payroll employment. JOLTS data is seasonally adjusted and describes conditions on the last business day of the month. Current month's data are preliminary and the previous month's data have been revised.

On the last business day in November, there were 249,000 **job openings** in Virginia, seasonally adjusted, a 10,000 decrease from October's 2023's revised 259,000 job openings. Nationwide, the number of job openings changed little at 8.8 million; this measure is down from a series high of 12.0 million in March 2022. Over the month, job openings decreased in transportation, warehousing, and utilities (-128,000) and in federal government (-58,000). Job openings increased in wholesale trade (+63,000). The largest decreases in the job openings level occurred in Florida (-66,000), Georgia (-36,000), and Tennessee (-22,000). The largest increases occurred in Texas (+67,000), Illinois (+65,000), and Colorado (+21,000).

(more)

Virginia job openings and hires, January 2001 to November 2023 (in thousands)

In November 2023, there were 249,000 job openings in Virginia, seasonally adjusted, a 10,000 decrease from October's 2023's revised 259,000 job openings. With the partial recovery, job openings remained 17 percent higher than five years earlier in November 2018.



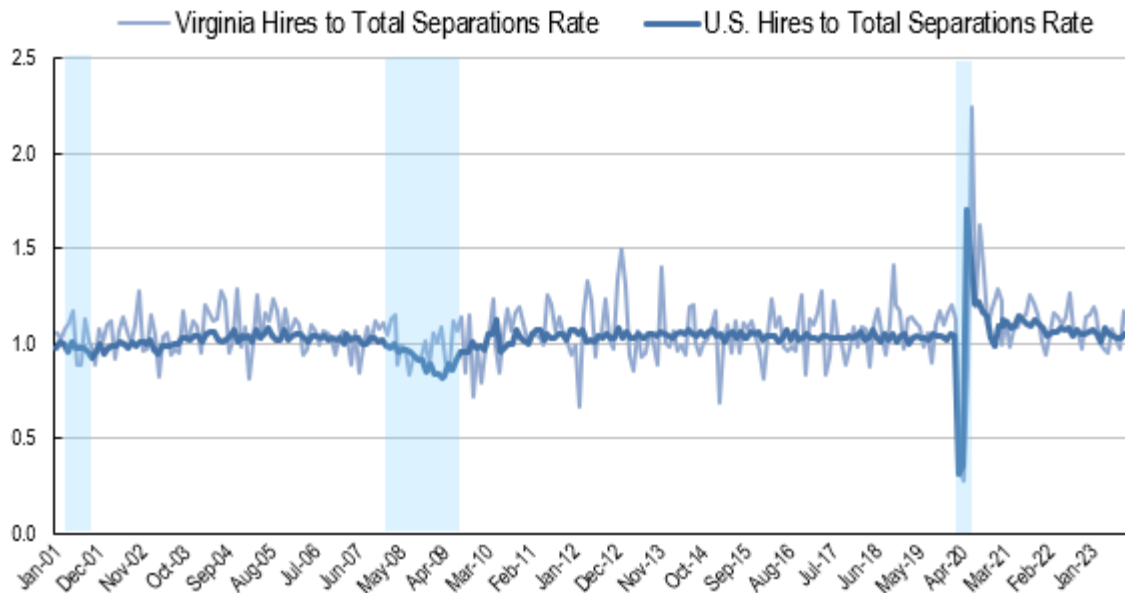
Source: DWDA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data. Seasonally adjusted. Shaded areas represent economic recessions.

In Virginia, the November **job openings rate** was 5.6%, down 0.3 points from October. The U.S. job openings rate was unchanged at 5.3 percent in November 2023. The U.S. rate was 2.1 percentage points lower than its peak of 7.4 percent in March 2022 and the lowest since the rate was 5.1 percent in February 2021. The largest decreases in job openings rates occurred in Mississippi (-1.3 percentage points), and in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee (-0.6 point each). The increases occurred in Illinois (+1.0 point) and Colorado (+0.7 point).

The **number of hires** in Virginia edged down to 165,000 in November, a decrease of 2,000 over the month and by 1,000 from five years earlier in November 2018. JOLTS defines hires as all additions to the payroll during the month. The number of hires was over double the series low of 81,000 in April 2020. Nationwide in November, the number of hires decreased to 5.5 million (-363,000). The number of hires decreased in professional and business services (-163,000). The largest decreases in the hires level occurred in California (-117,000), Arizona (-21,000), and Oregon (-16,000). A large increase occurred in Alaska (+3,000). In Virginia, the **hires rate** was unchanged from October's revised four percent rate. In November, the U.S. was little changed at 3.5 percent. The largest decreases in the hires rate occurred in Montana (-1.0 percentage point), as well as in Arizona and Oregon (-0.7 point each). The increase occurred in Alaska (+0.9 point).

The Number of Hires as a Percentage of Total Separations, January 2001 to November 2023

The percentage of hires to total separations is an indication of employer ability to fill open positions and held steady in recent months at around 1.1. Since mid 2020, U.S. hires have typically exceeded separations while Virginia has seen similar trends.



Source: DWDA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey data. Shaded areas represent economic recessions.

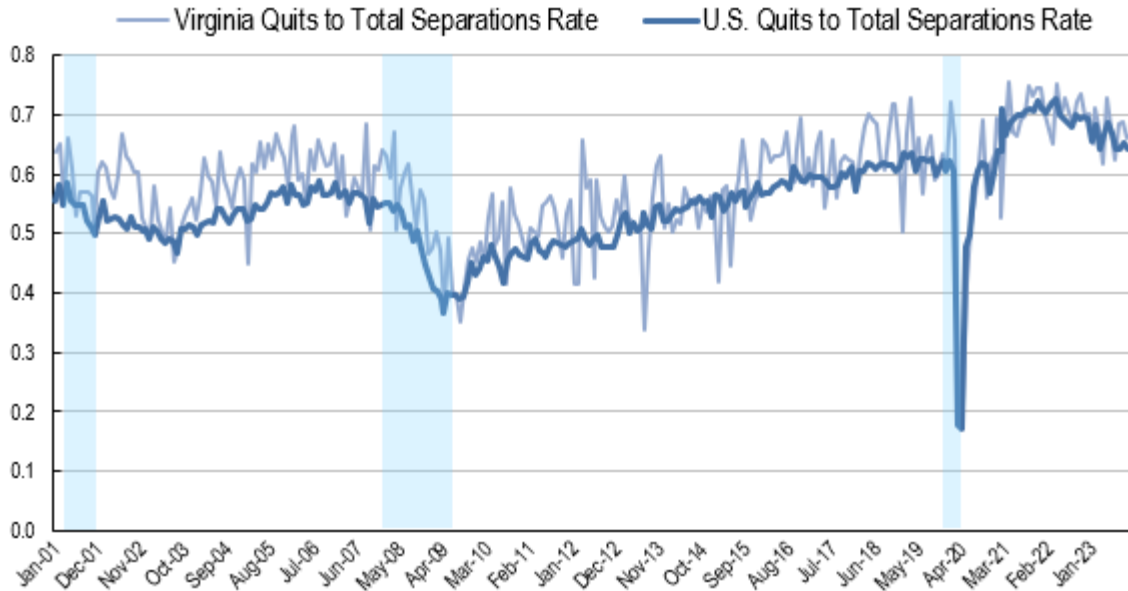
The Virginia **hires-per-job-openings (HPJO) ratio** was little changed in November at 66 percent and has been like the rate nationwide in recent months. This measure shows the rate of hiring compared to open jobs and is a proxy for time to fill positions. For the last two years, the rate has hovered between five and six hires for every ten job openings in the Commonwealth.

In November 2023, the Virginia **'annual fill' rate** (the ratio of 'this month' hires to 'last month' job openings, over the year) remained significantly above the historical, typical level of 1.0 at 1.14. The fill rate is a measure used to evaluate how labor markets differ in the pace that job openings are filled. An annual fill rate near or above 1.0 can indicate that employers are growing more efficient at filling job openings. On the other hand, an annual fill rate of less than 1.0 can indicate a tighter labor market, with employers having greater difficulty filling job openings compared to a year earlier. Going back to 2001, the highest annual fill rate occurred during June 2020 because, after the nationwide shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, employers across the country sought to quickly hire for vacated positions. The lowest fill rate in Virginia occurred in June 2021. During that time, there were many factors that hindered the filling of vacant positions by employers, such as health concerns, employee skills, and childcare needs, but the biggest factor was the comparison against the historic re-hiring hike the year before.

On the last business day of November, the number of **total separations** in Virginia decreased by 14,000 to 142,000. The number of U.S. total separations in November decreased to 5.3 million (-292,000). The largest decreases in the total separations level occurred in Pennsylvania (-60,000), New Jersey (-47,000), and

Quits as a Percentage of Total Separations, January 2001 to November 2023

In November 2023, the share of quits to total separations stood at 64 percent in Virginia. Nationwide's falling trend indicates reduced confidence in workers' ability to leave their job for a better job. Its level is in line with the indicator's longterm trends.



Source: DWDA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey data. Shaded areas represent economic recessions.

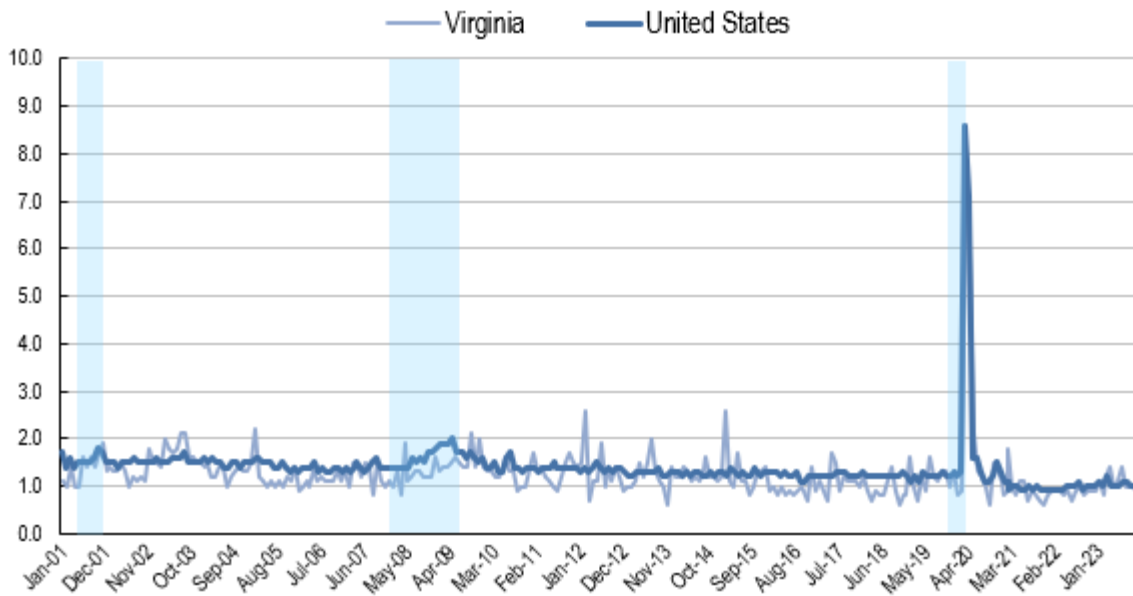
North Carolina (-45,000). The largest increases occurred in Washington (+21,000), as well as in Idaho and South Dakota (+6,000 each). The Virginia **total separations rate** decreased from 3.7 to 3.4 percent. The U.S. total separations rate also edged down to 3.4 percent. The total separations rate increased for establishments with 5,000 or more employees. The number of total separations decreased in professional and business services (-158,000) and in educational services (-28,000). Significant decreases in total separations rates occurred in Louisiana (-1.2 percentage points), as well as in Maine and New Jersey (-1.1 points each). The increases occurred in South Dakota (+1.3 points), North Dakota (+1.2 points), and Washington (+0.6 point).

An estimated 95,000 workers quit jobs from Virginia employers in November. The **number of quits** decreased by 8,000 from October's revised figure of 103,000. That was a fifteen percent decrease over-the-year and a four percent decrease from five years earlier. Quits, a component of total separations, are voluntary separations initiated by the employee. The number of quits nationwide edged down to 3.5 million (-157,000). The number of quits decreased in professional and business services (-77,000) and in educational services (-23,000). The **quits rate** in the Commonwealth edged down to 2.3 percent and remained at levels seen over the last two years. Over the month, the U.S. rate was little changed at 2.2 percent. The quits rate increased for establishments with 5,000 or more employees.

The number of **layoffs and discharges** in Virginia fell to 35,000 in November. This was a decrease of ten percent over the year, but still at low, pre-Pandemic levels. Layoffs and discharges are countercyclical,

The Rate of Layoffs and Discharges, January 2001 to November 2023

In November 2023, the layoff and discharge rate in Virginia stood at 0.8%. The U.S. and Virginia layoff rates held steady at about the same level in recent months and remained below longterm trends.



Source: DWDA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey data. Shaded areas represent economic recessions.

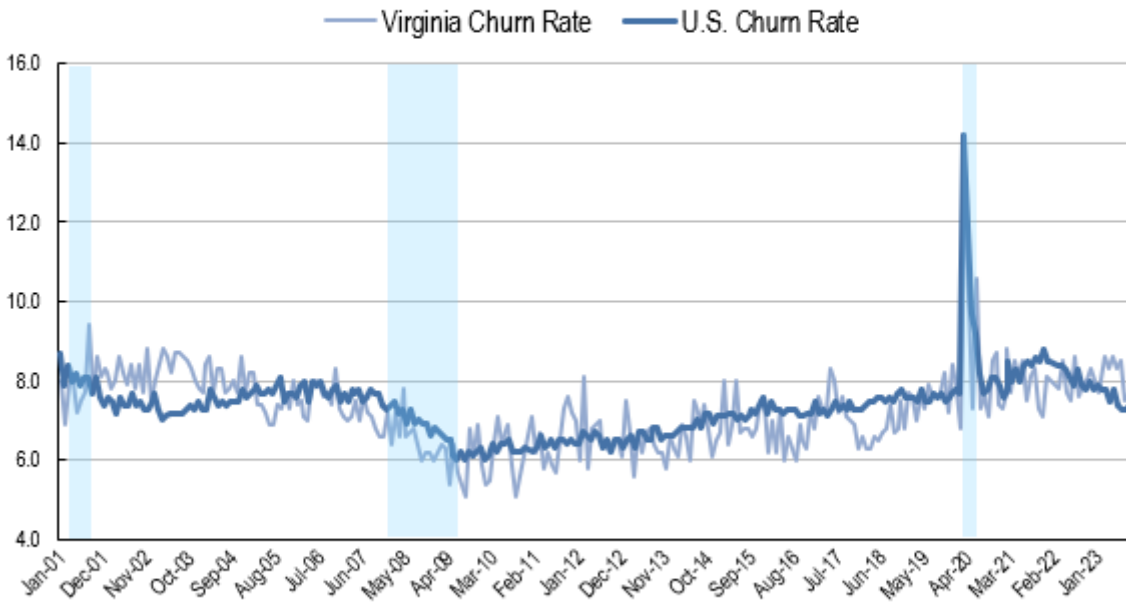
which means that layoffs typically increase during economic contractions and decrease during economic expansions. In November, the number of U.S. layoffs and discharges the number of layoffs and discharges changed little at 1.5 million. The number of layoffs and discharges decreased in durable goods manufacturing (-18,000). The largest decreases in the layoffs and discharges level occurred in New Jersey (-48,000), Pennsylvania (-45,000), and Louisiana (-10,000). The increase occurred in Indiana (+13,000).

The **Virginia layoffs and discharges rate** fell to 0.8 percent, while the U.S. rate was unchanged at one percent. The largest decreases in layoffs and discharges rates occurred in Maine (-1.4 percentage points) and New Jersey (-1.1 points), as well as in New Hampshire and Pennsylvania (-0.7 point each). The increase occurred in Indiana (+0.4 point).

In November 2023, there was one unemployed worker for every two job openings in the Commonwealth, within the range that it has hovered since 2021. This period marked the lowest rates since January 2001, when BLS began collecting the data. In Virginia, **the unemployed per job opening ratio** (sometimes called the ‘job seekers ratio’) peaked at 4.4 unemployed per job opening in February 2010 during the Great Recession. The number of unemployed workers per job opening stood at 3.2 in April 2020 during the height of pandemic employment impacts. Across the U.S., there was a ratio of unemployed people to job openings of 0.7 in November, unchanged over the month. The ratio of unemployed people per job opening has been below 1.0 since July 2021. The number of unemployed people per job opening nationwide reached its highest level of 6.5 in July of 2009, at the height of the Great Recession.

The Churn Rate, January 2001 to October 2023

In October 2023, the churn rate was little changed at 7.6 in the Commonwealth, about the same as the national rate. The rate of movement from job to job has trended downward nationwide since the beginning of 2022.



Source: DWDA analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey data. Shaded areas represent economic recessions.

The November 2023 **churn rate** (the sum of the hires rate and the total separations rate) slowed slightly to 7.4 from October revised 7.7 rate in Virginia yet indicating still-elevated velocity of rotation into and out of jobs. Nationwide's churn rate fell to 6.9, which was a deceleration over the month and the slowest rate since 2021. An elevated churn rate indicates a labor market with a high hires rate, a high separations rate, or both. It can signify that workers are moving more frequently into and out of jobs in the labor market. Conversely, a low churn rate indicates a labor market with a low hires rate, a low separations rate, or both.

As the 2023 Holiday season began, Virginia's labor market remained tight in November, with low levels of layoffs and plentiful job openings. But the number of job openings continued to trend downward across the country as fewer workers jumped from job to job. The Churn Rate is a measure of this movement. It has steadily trended down since 2021 and, in November, descended to 6.9. This was the slowest pace since the Great Recession recovery year of 2014. For over five years, many have gotten used to the number of job openings being well above separations and hires, for a few reasons. In addition to secular changes in how jobs are filled, strong economic growth in 2017 into 2019 drove demand for more workers. This was followed by the Covid pandemic, with its massive employment dislocations that have yet to be fully shaken out. Before 2017, however, conditions were much different. In fact, during the 07-09 Great Recession and in the years following, the number of hires and separations were significantly higher than job openings.

Job Openings

Job openings include all positions that are open on the last business day of the reference month. A job is open only if it meets the following three conditions: (1) A specific position exists and there is work available for that position; the position can be full time or part time, and it can be permanent, short term, or seasonal; (2) the job could start within 30 days, whether or not the employer can find a suitable candidate during that time; and (3) the employer is actively recruiting workers from outside the establishment to fill the position. Excluded are positions open only to internal transfers, promotions or demotions, or recalls from layoffs.

Hires

Hires include all additions to the payroll during the entire reference month, including newly hired and rehired employees; full-time and part-time employees; permanent, short-term, and seasonal employees; employees who were recalled to a job at the location following a layoff (formal suspension from pay status) lasting more than 7 days; on-call or intermittent employees who returned to work after having been formally separated; workers who were hired and separated during the month; and transfers from other locations. Excluded are transfers or promotions within the reporting location, employees returning from a strike, and employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants.

Separations

Separations include all separations from the payroll during the entire reference month and are reported by type of separation: quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations. Quits include employees who left voluntarily, except for retirements or transfers to other locations. Layoffs and discharges include involuntary separations initiated by the employer, including layoffs with no intent to rehire; layoffs (formal suspensions from pay status) lasting or expected to last more than 7 days; discharges resulting from mergers, downsizing, or closings; firings or other discharges for cause; terminations of permanent or short-term employees; and terminations of seasonal employees (whether or not they are expected to return the next season). Other separations include retirements, transfers to other locations, separations due to employee disability, and deaths. Excluded are transfers within the same location, employees on strike, and employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants.

*Excerpted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Methods, "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey: Concepts," <https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/jlt/concepts.htm>.

The Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (DWDA) plans to release the December 2023 analysis of the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey for Virginia on Friday, February 16, 2024. The data for all states and the U.S. will be available on the BLS website JOLTS page, at <https://www.bls.gov/jlt/>. BLS is scheduled to release the December JOLTS data for states on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

Technical note: The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) produces monthly data on U.S. and regional job openings, hires, quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations from a sample of approximately 21,000 establishments. As a supplement, BLS has begun publishing state estimates that provide monthly information that can be used to better understand the dynamic activity of businesses in state economies that leads to aggregate employment changes. For more information on the program's concepts and methodology, see "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey: *Handbook of Methods*" (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 13, 2020), <https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/jlt/home.htm>. For more information on BLS' state JOLTS estimates, see https://www.bls.gov/jlt/jlt_statedata.htm. *Definitions of JOLTS terms**