



CAREER PROFILE

Aircraft Maintenance Technician

JOB OUTLOOK¹

Prior to the pandemic, overall employment of aircraft maintenance technicians was projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations over the next decade. Air traffic is expected to increase over time, and new technicians will be needed to replace those who are leaving the field.

SALARY RANGE⁵

\$54,920 – \$89,820

WHO ARE THEY?¹

Aircraft maintenance technicians are highly observant, detail-oriented, dexterous professionals who inspect, maintain, and repair different types of aircraft. They notice and draw accurate conclusions about information provided by engine noises and gauge data to determine whether aircraft systems are in need of repair or replacement. They complete technical trainings, interpret complex repair manuals, and adjust airline parts to precise specifications. Aircraft technicians are proficient with a variety of power and precision tools used in aircraft maintenance operations. They are able to coordinate finger and hand movements to manipulate and adjust parts, carry and move heavy equipment, and maintain balance while climbing on airplanes.

WHAT DO THEY DO?¹

Aircraft maintenance technicians perform scheduled maintenance and repairs to ensure that airplanes are in safe operating condition. They interpret gauges and use diagnostic tools to conduct tests of instruments and parts of aircraft. They study flight information and examine parts to identify mechanical and electrical issues. They read complex manuals to learn repair procedures and utilize a variety of hand and power tools to replace defective parts and address problems. Finally, aircraft maintenance technicians conduct inspections to ensure completed work is up to standard and keep records of repair work. In all of their work, maintenance technicians are required to follow rules and equipment maintenance schedules established by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Although many aircraft maintenance technicians work on different parts of aircraft, many become experts on one section, such as the engine, the hydraulic system, or the electrical system. Others specialize on a single aircraft type, including jets, helicopters, or piston-driven airplanes



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EDUCATION/ TRAINING³

- Aircraft mechanics must complete an FAA-certified airframe and/or powerplant training. This can either be completed through a designated training program or through on-the-job experience.
- Avionics technicians usually earn an associate's degree prior to beginning work. They will need training and coursework in aviation systems and computer repair.

HOW DO I BECOME ONE? ¹

Many airline maintenance technicians receive training at an aviation maintenance technician school that is certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Others are trained on the job after they receive a high school diploma or during military service. FAA regulations require that aircraft maintenance must be done either by FAA-certified mechanics or individuals working under the supervision of certified mechanics. Separate certifications are offered for airframe ("A") mechanics, or body work, and powerplant ("P") mechanics, or engine work.

FAA-certified mechanics must be at least 18 years old, speak fluent English, and have 30 months of experience to qualify to receive "A," "P," or "A&P" certification. They also must pass oral, written, and practical examinations within a two-year time frame. There also are coursework and experience requirements for maintaining FAA certification.

Avionics technicians, those who specialize in electronic and flight instrument systems, can work to receive Aircraft Electronics Technician (AET) certification from the National Center for Aerospace Transportation Technologies (NCATT).

¹ "Occupational Outlook Handbook." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/installation-maintenance-and-repair/aircraft-and-avionics-equipment-mechanics-and-technicians.htm>.