

Elevator Mechanic

Build and maintain the machines that move millions of people a day, for the best pay in any trade you can enter from high school.

TYPICAL PAY

\$109,910

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$59k to \$159k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

High-rise buildings, hospitals, airports, machine rooms, elevator...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
A diploma or equivalent is required at hire. Algebra, physics and shop all help. You must be 17 to apply and 18 to register as an apprentice.
- 2 Apply when a local list opens** Months to years of waiting
Applications go through a local of the International Union of Elevator Constructors, and some locals open the list only every year or two. There is an aptitude test and an interview.
- 3 Apprenticeship** 4 to 5 years
Four to five years, with about 2,000 hours of supervised full-time work a year plus 100 to 200 classroom hours a year through the National Elevator Industry Educational Program.
- 4 Mechanic exam** At the end of the apprenticeship
After finishing the curriculum and accumulating 8,000 working hours, you become eligible to sit the mechanic exam.
- 5 State license** After the exam
Most states require a licensed elevator mechanic to do this work, and many accept the national mechanic exam toward it.

Pros and cons

- + The best pay of any trade you can enter from high school
- + Free training plus a wage from week one
- + A real pension and family health coverage
- Getting into an apprenticeship can take years of trying
- Heights, shafts and confined spaces every day
- On-call nights, weekends and holidays

Optional boosts

Adjuster. Modernization. Escalators. Elevator inspector.

Good to know

The safety brake came first, then the skyscraper

In 1854 Elisha Otis stood on a platform at a New York exhibition and had the rope cut. The brake caught. Once people believed a falling car would stop, tall buildings became possible, and the trade was born.

The union is older than the Model T

The International Union of Elevator Constructors has represented this trade since 1901 and now has more than 30,000 members across the United States and Canada.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Elevator and Escalator Installers and Repairers (47-4021.00)
National Elevator Industry Educational Program
International Union of Elevator Constructors
Apprenticeship.gov: apprenticeship job finder

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/elevator-mechanic>



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