

Pest Control Technician

Find what is chewing, biting or nesting, then get rid of it. A licensed trade you can enter straight out of high school.

TYPICAL PAY

\$46,340

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$36k to \$61k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Houses, restaurants, warehouses, farms, roadsides and golf courses

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
A diploma or an equivalency is what most companies ask for, plus a clean driving record.
- 2 Get hired as a trainee** Weeks
Large national companies and local firms both hire with no experience. Expect a background check and a drug test.
- 3 Company and state training** Weeks to a year
Classroom hours on pesticide safety, labels, pests and the law, plus supervised work in the field. This runs from a few weeks to a year depending on the state.
- 4 Pass the state exams** One sitting each
A core exam on safety and law, then a category exam for the work you do, for example structural, termite or ornamental and turf.
- 5 Work your own route** Year 1 to 2
Once certified you run jobs alone, sign off on treatments and train the next new hire.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from week one, no tuition and no debt
- + A licensed skill that employers compete for
- + You work alone, outdoors, without a desk
- Crawlspace, attics, heat, and things that bite
- You handle pesticides, so safety rules are strict for a reason
- Seasonal swings in hours and pay

Good to know

It is a 13 billion dollar industry

The National Pest Management Association puts the United States pest management industry above \$13 billion and says it serves more than 4,000 member companies. Most of them are small local firms ra...

Your license has an expiry date

Under the federal certification rule, no state may let a pesticide applicator go longer than 5 years without recertifying. In practice most states make you collect continuing education credits every yea...

Optional boosts

Termites and wood destroying organisms. Fumigation. Mosquito and vector control. Food plants and commercial accounts.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Pesticide Handlers, Sprayers, and Applicators, Vegetation (37-3012.00)
Environmental Protection Agency: revised certification standards for pesticide applicators
Texas Department of Agriculture: pesticide licensing
National Pest Management Association

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/pest-control-technician>



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