

Security Systems Technician

Install and fix alarms, cameras, card readers and fire detection. Low voltage, high responsibility.

TYPICAL PAY

\$60,070

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$39k to \$81k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Homes, offices, schools, warehouses, data centers, a servi...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Electronics, computer classes and shop. A clean record matters here because you will work inside people's homes.
- 2 Get hired as a helper** 0 to 12 months
Pulling cable, mounting devices, drilling and labelling. Six months to a year of this before you touch programming.
- 3 State license or registration** Weeks
Most states require an alarm installer credential, with fingerprints and a background check. Your employer usually walks you through it.
- 4 Learn to program and commission** Year 1 to 2
Panels, keypads, networked cameras, card readers and integrations. This is where you stop being a helper.
- 5 Certify and specialize** Year 2 onward
Fire alarm certification, manufacturer certifications and networking. Then service lead, project foreman or system designer.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from week one with no tuition and no debt
- + Above the national median wage within a few years
- + The federal profile flags it as a bright outlook job, growing fast
- Attics in August, crawlspaces in February, ladders all year
- On-call weeks mean your phone can go off at 3am
- Customers are often stressed or suspicious when you arrive

Optional boosts

Fire alarm certification. Networking skills. Access control systems. Manufacturer certifications.

Good to know

The industry is older than the technology

ESA (the Electronic Security Association) was founded in 1948 and is the largest trade association in this field in the United States. Its member companies employ over 500,000 people and serve roughly...

Fire codes name a certification by name

Very few trades have a specific private certification written into public safety codes. Fire alarm work does: NICET (the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies) certification is required by...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers (49-2098.00)

Electronic Security Association and its National Training School

NICET: certification for fire alarm and building systems technicians

Apprenticeship.gov: United States Department of Labor

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/security-systems-technician>



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