

Small Engine Mechanic

Mowers, chainsaws, generators, snow blowers and outboards. Short training, fast hands, steady work.

TYPICAL PAY

\$47,880

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$35k to \$67k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Dealership service bays, hardware and equipment stores, rental yard...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma or equivalent** Grade 12
A diploma or a GED (high school equivalency credential) is enough for most shops. Auto shop class is a direct advantage.
- 2 Get into a shop** Weeks
Dealerships, rental yards, marinas, hardware stores and golf courses all have service bays. Many will hire you with no experience for assembly and basic service.
- 3 Training, if you want it** Up to 1 year
A one-year community college certificate in small engine or power equipment technology, or a longer private program. Optional, but it gets you past setup work faster.
- 4 Manufacturer certification** Ongoing
Brands run their own technician courses. Dealers pay for these and they are the real credential in this trade.
- 5 Lead technician or your own shop** 5 to 10 years
Diagnose anything that rolls in, train the new hires, or open your own bay. Many mechanics go independent within ten years.

Pros and cons

- + Earning within months, with little or no tuition
- + You see a machine fixed and running the same day
- + Easy trade to go independent in, with low startup costs
- Pay ceiling is lower than most of the trades on this site
- Seasonal: long hours in spring, thin weeks in winter
- Fuel, oil, exhaust and noise all day

Good to know

Old gasoline destroys more engines than wear

Gasoline goes stale and gums up a carburetor within months. A huge share of the machines that come into a small engine shop are not broken at all: they were put away full of fuel last season and left.

A generator shop's busiest day is a blackout

Hurricanes, ice storms and grid failures send people to the nearest shop with a generator that has not been run in three years. Technicians in storm-prone states work the longest hours of their ye...

Optional boosts

Commercial turf equipment. Outboard and marine engines. Generators and standby power. Battery and electric equipment.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Outdoor Power Equipment and Other Small Engine Mechanics (49-3053.00)

My Next Move: Motorcycle Mechanics (49-3052.00), the neighboring trade

Universal Technical Institute: motorcycle and powersports technician program

Apprenticeship.gov: the federal 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/small-engine-mechanic>



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