

RADIOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGIST



get on the diagnostic services path

Is this the job for me?

Take this quick quiz to find out if radiographic technologist is a good direction for you:

- 1 Are you interested in working in the medical field?
 YES NO
- 2 Do you like to operate sophisticated equipment?
 YES NO
- 3 Do you want a job where you help figure out and solve problems?
 YES NO
- 4 Do you like to work as part of a team?
 YES NO
- 5 Are you very detail-oriented?
 YES NO
- 6 Are you good at explaining things?
 YES NO
- 7 Want to get into a career in about two years?
 YES NO

If you answered yes to several of these questions, you may be on the right track!

What's it all about?

A radiographic technologist, also called an X-ray technologist or radiographer, uses highly sophisticated equipment to create images of patients' internal organs, tissues and bones. Physicians then use these images to diagnose and track the progress of patients' illnesses and injuries.

Following the instruction of physicians, radiographic technologists perform a variety of procedures such as X-rays, which show the body's bones, and fluoroscopies, which show the body's internal organs. With additional training, radiographic technologists can specialize in other procedures, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerized tomography (CT) scanning.

What do radiographic technologists do?

Some common tasks performed by radiographic technologists include:

- Get instructions from doctors about which procedures to perform.
- Explain procedures to patients, and answer questions.
- Prepare patients for procedures. This may include starting an IV or giving patients a special liquid to drink.
- Make sure patients remove jewelry or other items that interfere with imaging equipment.
- Follow radiation safety measures to protect patients and staff.

- Make sure that only necessary parts of the patient's body are exposed to X-ray radiation. Protect the rest of patient's body with a lead apron.
- Position patient on the examining table and arrange equipment so that images can be made.
- Monitor patients during procedure, and report problems to doctors.
- Adjust exposure time and distance of X-ray equipment, using computer and mechanical controls.
- Monitor images shown on video screens.
- Review images and evaluate clarity to ensure doctors will be able to read them.
- Consult with doctors on the images.
- Oversee and train radiologic staff.
- Maintain and update patient records.
- Maintain special equipment.
- Take inventory of medical supplies.

How much money can I make?

In Alaska, radiographic technologists earn an average hourly wage of \$27.63, and have an average annual salary of \$57,470.

How do I become a radiographic technologist? How long does it take?

To become a radiographic technologist, you must:

- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Complete a radiologic technology training program, preferably with an associate's degree or greater.
- May earn national certification by taking an exam.

Most radiographic technologists earn at least an associate's degree, which takes about two years of study, while others go on to earn a four-year bachelor's degree. Students may also pursue training in specialty areas, such as nuclear medicine technology, mammography, CT scanning, MRI and radiation therapy.

Learn more about radiographic technologist programs in Alaska by reviewing the "training providers" section later in this publication.

Attention high school students!

Think you want to become a radiographic technologist? Well, the time to start planning is now. In general, you should take four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, two years of science and possibly two years of a second language. You should also consider taking college preparatory or advanced placement (AP) courses. Other recommended classes and electives include:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Health care occupations
- Health education
- Medical lab technology
- Introduction to health care
- Basic computer
- Community health
- Computer technology
- Safety and first aid

You should also discuss your plans with a teacher, counselor or parent, and check to see what work-based learning opportunities,

such as field trips, job shadowing and internships, are available in your community.

Are there jobs available?

There are currently about 15 job openings a year for radiographic technologists in Alaska, and this occupation is expected to continue to grow quickly (25.6 percent growth compared to 14.8 percent for all occupations).

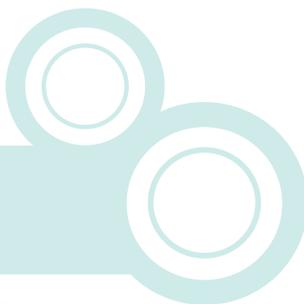
Where are the jobs?

Radiographic technologists work wherever there is a health care provider who has the equipment and authority to order images. About half of all radiographic technologists work in hospitals, while others work in doctors' offices, medical labs, clinics and dental offices.

What else is on this pathway?

Want to learn about other possible opportunities in the diagnostic services career pathway? Be sure to read about medical laboratory technicians – another diagnostic services "hot job" in Alaska!





ethan nelson

RADIOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGIST

When Ethan Nelson found out his sister was expecting twins, he not only realized he was going to be an uncle, he also discovered his future career – a radiographic technologist, also called a radiology technologist.

“When my sister dragged me along to one of her ultrasound exams, I was so intrigued by the technology, the images and the professionalism of the ultrasound technologist that I looked into the field,” said Ethan, who had been taking classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), but was unsure what he wanted to do career-wise.

Ethan soon found that a radiology technology program was offered through UAF by the University of Alaska Anchorage. He enrolled and, two years later, he graduated with an associate of applied science in radiology technology and is now working in the field. Currently employed at Fairbanks Urgent Care, Ethan recently accepted a position at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital.

“I enjoy working at a small clinic, but I really want to work in a hospital where the full extent of my radiology skills can be applied,” said Ethan, who was recently awarded the title of registered technologist by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.

In his job, Ethan said he uses a combination of quality patient care and X-ray equipment to obtain diagnostic images for radiologists to read and provide diagnoses.

“With radiology technology, I get to interact with people and am also taking part in improving the lives of those in need through the use of cutting-edge technology,” he said. “I love that each workday is so diverse and unique. Every patient has different needs to be met. I never know what learning experience is waiting around the corner for me.”

In the future, Ethan said he is interested in furthering his education and going into a specialized field, such as computerized tomography (CT). He said he is also interested in teaching.

“It may seem like a lot of work to become a radiology technologist, but it is all worth it,” he said.

