



## Building Maintenance Workers (Maintenance and Repair Workers)

# What's this job all about?

Building maintenance workers keep buildings in good shape. They fix plumbing, electrical fixtures, machinery, and even take care of the structure of buildings. If you choose this field you will use carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and masonry skills to keep buildings in good shape. You'll plan routine maintenance of buildings and have to schedule your work.

Some of the maintenance you'll do happens in almost every building. For example, maintenance and repair workers repair leaky faucets, clear clogged drains, and replace light bulbs. Other tasks are more specific to the building they maintain.

Maintenance workers in apartment buildings are more likely to fix walls, roofs, windows, doors, and floors. Hospital or factory maintenance workers might install machines, systems, and fixtures. Some workers lay brick to repair foundations, walls, and chimneys. In Alaska, maintenance workers often have to deal with snow removal and problems caused by snow, ice and extreme cold temperatures. Arctic climates can cause a lot of extra wear and tear on buildings! Overall, maintenance workers have to enjoy doing a variety of things to keep buildings in good working order.

### Here's what Building Maintenance Workers do:

- Make repairs.
- Inspect the structure or equipment and diagnose the causes of problems.
- Take apart machines and fix them by cleaning, lubricating parts or replacing worn or broken parts.
- Reassemble machines and test them.
- Use a variety of hand and power tools like hammers, wrenches, and screwdrivers and use machine tools to repair and construct parts.
- Repair and maintain systems that control the temperature in buildings and even the lights.
- Keep track of work orders and the repair jobs.
- Document purchases and what items cost.
- Read blueprints, catalogs, and manuals.
- Check prices with suppliers and estimate costs of a job.
- Building maintenance workers in smaller buildings often do all the repairs themselves except for very difficult or large jobs. In larger buildings, they may work only in a particular area or do general maintenance.

### How much money can I make?

**Median Wage: \$19.45 per hour.**

In Alaska, the median wage for building maintenance workers is \$3,371 per month (\$19.45 per hour). Half of all building maintenance workers earn between \$2,441 and \$4,361 per month (\$14.08 and \$25.16 per hour). Nationally, the median wage for building maintenance workers is \$2,602 per month (\$15.01 per hour). Wages vary with the employer, duties, and skill of the worker. Government and hospital jobs tend to pay more and real estate and hotel or motel jobs provide lower pay. Union members often receive higher wages than non-union workers. Building maintenance workers who work full time usually receive benefits like sick leave, paid vacation, and health insurance.

## HELPFUL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

A high school degree is almost always required to work as a maintenance worker. You should take courses in high school that prepare you to earn a high school diploma. Below is a list of high school courses that will help prepare you. You don't have to take all of them, but you should consider them in planning for high school. Some of these courses are also available at colleges and technical schools.

### Construction Trades

- Construction Career Exploration
- Construction
- Carpentry, Woodworking
- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
- Plumbing
- Electricity
- Industrial Electricity
- Building Maintenance
- Construction Trades Work Experience

### Drafting

- Drafting, Technical and Mechanical
- Blueprint Reading

### Health and Safety Education

- Safety and First Aid

### Industrial and Technology Education

- Exploration of Careers
- General Industrial Arts
- Metal and Wood Technology
- Industrial Safety and First Aid
- Industrial and Technology Education Work Experience

### Mathematics

- General Math
- Applied Math

### Physical Education

- Physical Education
- Fitness and Conditioning Activities

## How long does it take to receive training?

To work as a building maintenance worker, you must have a high school diploma or GED, complete on-the-job training; and be in good physical condition. No formal training is required beyond high school but some building maintenance workers take courses at professional technical schools. They learn skills in trades such as plumbing and construction. Building maintenance workers often learn their skills by working with experienced construction workers. For example, you may work as a helper for a plumber, electrician, or carpenter. You begin by doing simple tasks such as fixing leaky faucets and changing light bulbs. Gradually you progress to more complex tasks, such as repairing machinery or creating parts. Most building maintenance workers receive training on the job from an experienced worker. You need between one and four years to be fully trained in this occupation. In large buildings that have maintenance crews, you may specialize in one craft area. In smaller buildings that have only one worker, you need all-around skills.

## When I'm ready to work, will there be job openings?

In Alaska, the outlook for job openings for building maintenance workers is excellent to 2014 with average growth projected. Nationally, the number of jobs for building maintenance workers is expected to grow at about an average rate.

***Please see the Training Programs section of this booklet to find out more about training in these career fields in Alaska.***

