



Master the World of Media as a Sound Engineering Technician

Modern media is more than just what happens in from of the camera or microphone. In television, radio, film and the now expanding fields of internet and video game production, the need for qualified sound engineering technicians is expanding daily. Knowing how to handle complex technical electronics, especially in the upcoming conversion to all digital signals at the end of the decade, means that skilled professionals with the right training can find the perfect career, whether in a smaller local station, or in the bright lights and big media markets of New York, Los Angeles or Washington DC.



Are you tech savvy and looking for a career in Broadcasting? Becoming a sound [engineering technician](#) may be your ticket to an exciting media career in New York, Los Angeles—or even Hollywood!

An Exciting Life behind the Microphones!

Right behind the glamorous [TV](#) or radio anchor stands another important figure—a sound engineering [technician](#) who makes sure that the signals get on the air and the message gets heard around the world. The life of a sound engineering technician may revolve around a studio, dealing with complex computer-driven sound equipment and its associated hardware, or his job may take him/her out into the field where the action is.

Sound engineering technicians use their skills to record, synchronize, mix, or reproduce music, voices, or sound effects in recording studios, sporting arenas, theater productions, or movie and video productions. In radio, they make sure that the elements of radio shows come together with sound effects, music tracks and voice-overs, especially in on-air commercials and sound clips. In movies and film, they're the guys who make audio merge with video, often creating the unique soundtracks that bring films to life (for example, Star Wars' Ben Burrt is an Oscar winning sound engineer). In video games and internet productions, sound engineering technicians create all the audio that holds the game together; they sometimes also direct voice actors and create special effects as well.

Employment Outlook

As of 2006, there were an estimated 105,000 broadcast and sound engineering technicians and radio operators. Roughly 30% were engaged in non-internet based broadcasting, with another 17-18% working in motion picture, TV, video, sound recording and video game recording areas. The remaining 13% of all sound engineering technicians were self-employed.

Job growth is expected expand faster (17% per annum) than the national average through 2016, with competition for entry level positions being strongest in major metro areas. With greater consolidation of media markets and automated programming, there may be a corresponding slowdown in opportunities in radio markets; however, an overall growth rate for sound engineering technicians is forecast to be as high as 24%. And while there is a growing use of sound engineering technicians in video game and internet work, the glamorous nature of these jobs means the competition will be high.

Locating the Jobs

With TV stations tending to employ more sound engineering technicians than radio stations, it makes sense to look for positions in this area. While TV jobs can be found in all cities, the most desirable ones are obviously concentrated in entertainment hubs such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC. Motion picture and film jobs tend to be clustered in Los Angeles, while there are growing job pools for video game sound engineering technicians in the Seattle and San Francisco areas. Because of the level of specialized training required, sound engineering technician jobs are usually advertised via industry and professional job boards in the specific industries (film, TV, games, etc).



Salaries

As of 2006, median yearly salaries for sound engineering technicians were at \$43,010. The midrange 50% came in at between \$29,270 and \$65,590. By contrast, the median annual salary of radio operators in the same period was \$37,890.

Qualifications

Although many of their skills can be picked up on the job, sound engineering technicians should expect to receive some kind of formal [training](#) prior to seeking work. Skills in broadcast technology, electronics, computers or computer networks can



Radio Career Feature

be gained through community or 4 year college training, or through technical school training. Broadcast sound engineering technicians often opt to gain skills through one year vocational programs; in all cases, high school level courses in math, physics and electronics are very important. Expect that as a beginner, you will have to start at a small station, as larger stations want applicants with more extensive experience. Licensing is not required for sound engineering technicians, but certification by the Society of Broadcast Engineers is a mark of one's capabilities and will help in any job search.

Conclusion

If you're looking for a career that puts your technical skills to work, yet offers some glamour and excitement, the career of a sound engineering technician may be the right choice for you. With expanding job options in radio, TV, movies and now videogame production, there's a lot of room for a creative, ambitious tech-head to make their mark!

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