

Sheet Metal Worker

Sheet metal workers use thin sheet metal to make a range of items such as vehicle panels, aircraft parts, pipes, cylinders, containers and ducting. (Those who work with heavy sheet metal are called [Fabricators or Platers](#)).

The Work

You could be:

- working with flat metal, such as aluminium and stainless steel, up to 3 millimetres thick
- following engineering drawings to mark out precise shapes on the metal in preparation for cutting
- cutting out the metal shapes using a hand saw, machine saw, laser cutter or guillotine
- shaping the metal using a variety of other tools, including small presses, roller machines and hammers
- finishing the product using tools like grinders and polishers to smooth the surface
- assembling the parts by welding, bolting or riveting them together, or preparing the parts for a welder to assemble
- inspecting and testing components produced to make sure they meet quality requirements
- carrying out basic maintenance on tools and equipment and reporting faults
- completing records of production.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

A Modern Apprentice may start on the National Minimum Wage (NMW). The apprentice rate, for those aged under 19 or aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship, is £8.00 an hour (1 April 2026). Some employers may pay their apprentices more.

Starting salaries for sheet metal workers are normally in the range of £10.00 to £15.00 an hour. Experienced workers can earn up to £25.00 an hour. Bonuses and extra pay for shift work are common.

Conditions

- You would normally work at a bench in a factory or workshop.
- The work environment may be noisy and dirty.
- You would have to take great care to avoid accidental injury from machinery.
- You would have to wear protective clothing, such as boiler suits, ear protectors, goggles, gloves and hard hat.
- Most firms have a shift work system and there may be opportunities for overtime.

Getting In

- You could complete the Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) (SCQF Level 6), while in S5 or S6 at school. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually need 3 subjects at National 5 including English and Maths. Some colleges also ask for Physics.
- You would normally enter through a Modern Apprenticeship.
- Employers' requirements vary, but most expect applicants to have some subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and science or technological subjects.
- You may also have to sit an entry test to see how suitable you are for this type of work.
- Good eyesight and general fitness are necessary for this job. Your colour vision may be tested.
- For some jobs you might need a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card or CCNSG (Client Contractor National Safety Group) Safety Passport.

Sheet metal workers work in a variety of industries. These include civil engineering, shipbuilding, aerospace, coach building, agricultural machinery and packaging.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- reliable and safety conscious
- good with your hands
- able to understand technical drawings
- able to picture how a finished product will look.

You need to have:

- excellent attention to detail
- good organisation and communication skills
- practical and technical ability
- maths skills for measuring and calculating
- good concentration skills
- an understanding of health and safety procedures.

Training

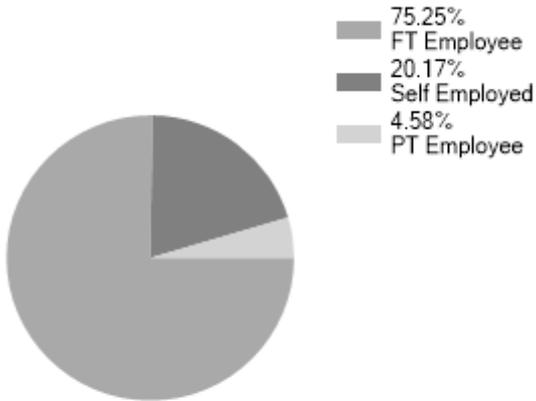
- A Modern Apprenticeship combines on the job and off the job training and leads to an SVQ at SCQF Level 6. Relevant SVQs include Fabrication and Welding Engineering at SCQF Level 6.
- This normally begins with full time off the job training and is then combined with day release classes at college.
- For some jobs, you may have to do further specialist training.

Getting On

After gaining experience, you may be able to gain promotion to jobs such as foreman or forewoman, trainer, inspector and manager.

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.