

Railway Maintenance Engineering Technician - Distribution and Plant

Railway maintenance engineering technicians (distribution and plant) install, inspect and maintain the systems which keep power flowing and trains moving.

The Work

There are three areas:

- **Contact systems** – the overhead lines and tracks from which the train picks up electrical current
- **Distribution** – getting the power from the National Grid to the train
- **Plant** – the fixed trackside machinery which keeps the railway running.

You could be:

- inspecting and maintaining high and low voltage power supply equipment such as transformers, switchgear and cables
- identifying the cause of a fault and resolving it
- installing and maintaining electricity wiring for overhead lines or conductor rails
- measuring the current within a cable
- measuring the overhead line equipment (OLE) to make sure it is aligned properly
- isolating and earthing electrical equipment before starting engineering work to ensure workers' safety
- heating electrically operated points in winter so that they don't freeze
- checking and maintaining standby generators for back-up power for signalling equipment and control centres
- checking and maintaining track and tunnel drainage pumping systems.

Pay

Employment is with Network Rail. The first year salary for Network Rail Level 3 Engineering Apprentices as of 2025 is £19,838. Your salary will increase yearly.

Once you have completed the apprenticeship you can earn up to around £35,000 a year and more with further experience.

Conditions

- You would work outdoors in all weathers, day and night, and in lineside substations.
- You would work in a wide range of locations, including on the line, in signal boxes, in tunnels and on swing bridges.
- You would have to travel to different sites.
- You would have to work shifts, including evenings, nights, public holidays and weekends.
- You would sometimes be on call for emergencies and have to work overtime.
- You will have to wear protective clothing such as high visibility jacket, hard hat and safety boots.

Getting In

- Network Rail offers a three-year Level 3 Engineering Apprenticeship Scheme which trains Maintenance Engineering Technicians in areas such as: Signalling, Track, Distribution and Plant, Telecoms or Overhead Line.
- Entry requirements: 4 subjects at National 5 including English, Maths and a science or engineering subject.
- Check the [Network Rail website](#) for information on when applications open.
- To qualify you need to be 18 years of age or older by the time you start your training.
- If your online application is successful, you will then complete an online assessment, consisting of some tests and a video interview. If you pass these then you will attend the assessment centre and complete activities.
- You need a good level of physical fitness, and have to pass a medical examination, which includes sight and hearing tests.
- You will undergo regular drug and alcohol tests to make sure you are not under any influence during working hours – Network Rail have a zero tolerance policy.

Jobs are with Network Rail, which is responsible for maintaining around 3,000 miles of track and related infrastructure in Scotland.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- patience
- the ability to solve problems
- good manual skills
- good concentration
- awareness of health and safety regulations and practices
- a responsible approach
- an understanding of engineering and electrical principles.

You need to be able to:

- meet deadlines
- deal with emergencies quickly and calmly
- pay attention to detail
- work on your own as well as in a team
- work quickly and accurately.

Training

- Training is on the job combined with off the job training.
- All apprentice technicians must attend the Westwood training centre in the midlands region of England, for their first 23 weeks of training. Accommodation, meals, work clothing and safety equipment is provided. The remainder of training is based at a depot close to your home address.
- On completion of the apprenticeship you'll have two Level 3 Diplomas in Railway Engineering Technician

Knowledge & Competence, as well as leadership and management skills.

Getting On

- Once you have qualified, you may be able to do further study and gain more advanced qualifications in engineering.
- Network Rail offer a range of programmes at all levels from NVQ to postgraduate.
- With these advanced qualifications, you may be able to register as an Engineering Technician (EngTech) or as a professional engineer (IEng or CEng).

Whatever your specialism, there are opportunities to move on within the organisation and become a team leader.

Contacts

Network Rail

Tel: 020 7557 8000

Website: www.networkrail.co.uk

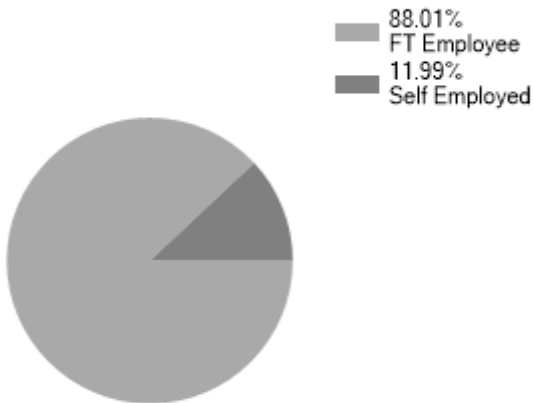
Website (2): www.networkrail.co.uk/careers

X: @networkrail

Facebook: www.facebook.com/networkrail

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.