

# What is a Building Engineer?

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Building engineers operate the building – and maintain and repair its major systems, including:

- **Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning**
- **Lighting**
- **Electrical distribution**
- **Plumbing**
- **Life safety systems (including fire alarms and fire sprinkler systems)**

In today's highly competitive business environment, building engineers optimize building operations to keep tenants happy – while ensuring the property operates as efficiently as possible. Not only does efficiency help the tenant but reducing expenses also helps to improve the building owner's financial performance.

## How much does a building engineer make?

Most building engineering team members are paid on an hourly basis. While there are a number of factors that go into compensation, here are some general pay guidelines for the various positions identified above:

- **Maintenance Helper** – \$10 to \$15 per hour
- **Maintenance Technician** – \$15 to \$25 per hour
- **Building Engineer** – \$25 to \$40 per hour
- **Lead Building Engineer** – \$30 to \$45 per hour
- **Chief Engineer** – \$45 to \$60 per hour
- **Senior Chief Engineer** – \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year

## What is the career path for a building engineer?

While the titles might change from company to company, building engineers tend to be grouped by their skillset. Common titles include:

- **Maintenance Helper** (or Porter) – an entry-level position for a person with very limited engineering skills and experience
- **Maintenance Technician** (or Maintenance Mechanic) – an entry-level position for a person with limited engineering skills and experience
- **Building Engineer** – a mid-level position for a person with solid engineering skills and several years of experience
- **Lead Building Engineer** – a mid-level position for a person who wants to supervise other building engineers or for someone with strong engineering skills
- **Chief Engineer** – an upper-level leadership position for a senior building engineer
- **Senior Chief Engineer** – an upper-level leadership position for experienced chief engineers – senior chief engineers serve as executive leaders, and they often manage the engineering staff for a larger portfolio of buildings

- **Vice President of Engineering** – often the executive leader of a company or a region within a national/international company

In most cases, the building engineer is a “**jack of all trades**” – responsible for all operational issues at a property. For these building engineers, there is no “typical” day – and that is one of the biggest draws for many people who gravitate to this career path.

