



What does the projected job forecast for 2025 and 2026 look like for people in the electrical maintenance and automation trades?

The job forecast for electrical maintenance and industrial automation work in 2025–2026 is very strong, with faster-than-average growth, persistent labor shortages, and rising wages across most regions. ^{[1] [2] [3]}

Core outlook (2025–2026)

- Electricians and electrical maintenance techs are in a growth sector: U.S. employment for electricians is projected to grow about 9–11% over the decade, faster than the average for all occupations, with roughly 80,000 openings per year driven by both new demand and retirements. ^{[4] [1]}
- Industrial machinery mechanics and related maintenance workers, which includes many industrial electrical maintenance roles, are projected to grow about 13% over the decade, also much faster than average, with around 54,000 openings per year. ^[2]
- Industrial automation roles (controls techs, PLC programmers, automation/controls engineers) face “moderately difficult” hiring conditions for employers because talent supply is tight, with about 9 candidates per opening and tens of thousands of open jobs in the U.S., which strongly favors skilled workers through at least 2025. ^[3]

Drivers of demand

- Growth is being driven by modernization of manufacturing, expansion of automation and robotics, and major investment in infrastructure and energy (including renewables and grid upgrades), all of which require electrical and controls expertise to install and maintain. ^{[5] [1] [3]}
- Aging workforces in the skilled trades mean a large share of openings through 2026 come from retirements, which helps keep job prospects favorable even if the broader economy slows. ^{[6] [1] [2]}

Wages and job quality

- Median pay for electricians in 2024 was in the low \$60k range nationally, above the overall median for all occupations, and has been trending upward, especially in high-demand regions and union roles. ^{[1] [4]}
- Industrial machinery mechanics and similar maintenance techs see similar median pay in the low-to-mid \$60k range, with higher earnings common for technicians who can handle

complex automation, PLCs, and advanced diagnostics.^{[2] [6]}

- Automation and controls roles often command even higher salaries (roughly \$70k–\$110k ranges reported across automation engineers, controls engineers, PLC programmers, and related jobs), reflecting the premium on specialized skills.^[3]

2025–2026 conditions vs longer term

- Trade groups and training providers note an electrician shortage that is expected to worsen heading into 2026, implying that candidates who are licensed and willing to travel or work industrial/commercial projects should have multiple options.^{[7] [8]}
- For at least the mid-2020s, installation, maintenance, and repair occupations overall are projected to grow faster than average, with more than 600,000 openings per year across the category, suggesting continued stability for electrical maintenance and automation specialists.^[6]

Snapshot comparison

Area / role type	Forecast into 2026	Key pay signal (recent)
Electricians (construction / maintenance)	~9–11% decade growth, ~80k openings per year. ^{[1] [4]}	Median ≈ low \$60k, rising. ^{[1] [4]}
Industrial machinery & maintenance techs	~13% decade growth, ~54k openings per year. ^[2]	Median ≈ mid \$60k. ^{[2] [6]}
Industrial automation / controls roles	Strong demand; moderate employer hiring difficulty, tight candidate supply. ^[3]	Estimated typical range ≈ \$72k–\$114k. ^[3]

If you share your country/region and whether you lean more “plant maintenance” or “automation/controls,” more tailored insight on what 2025–2026 is likely to look like for you locally can be provided.

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1. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm>
2. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/installation-maintenance-and-repair/industrial-machinery-mechanics-and-maintenance-workers-and-millwrights.htm>
3. <https://set.kellyservices.us/resource-center/business-resources/the-2024-hiring-outlook-for-industrial-automation>
4. <https://www.prairieelectric.com/electrician-careers/electrician-job-outlook/>
5. <https://www.katoelectrical.com/blog-1/the-future-of-electricians-in-2025>
6. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/installation-maintenance-and-repair/>
7. <https://necaibew48.com/blog/2025-job-outlook-for-electricians/>
8. <https://sjelectricaltraining.com/2025/09/10/why-electricians-are-in-high-demand-heading-into-2026/>
9. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ronny-scimone_the-us-bureau-of-labor-statistics-bls-activity-7379890494987718656-Kdcd