

A Great Time to Be an Electrician

Right now is a great time to be an electrician. That's because the number of construction projects is going up - and with it, the number of jobs. [Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) shows that construction jobs increased in 70% of American cities within the past year, and the trend is predicted to continue.

"For the foreseeable future, the job market is going to be hot," says Steve Telesz, General Superintendent for Bruce & Merrilees Electric Co.

However, many contractors are struggling to find enough qualified workers. Telesz says, "Over the next four to five years, we'll have people working here from out of town."

The benefits to being a union electrician are many, including immediate employment, good pay, solid benefits and perhaps most importantly, free training.

"You're basically getting a \$160,000 education for free," explains Telesz.

To become an apprentice electrician, candidates with a high school diploma or GED fill out an application with the local union hall. After that, candidates take an aptitude test and a drug test. If the candidate successfully passes both tests, they are placed in an apprenticeship with a union contracting firm. Apprentice electricians work side-by-side with journeymen electricians until they have completed five years of both on-the-job training and classroom courses, at which time they become a journeyman electrician.

Electricians earn from \$25-\$35 per hour, depending on whether they are a journeyman, foreman, or general foreman.

Though the job market may not always be hot, qualified electricians will always be in demand by dependable contractors.

"If you're lucky, you get in with a company like Bruce & Merrilees and, like me, you never miss a day," says Telesz. "I came here as a third-year apprentice, I became a journeyman here; I was a journeyman for two or three years and then I became a foreman, and then a general foreman, until eventually I became superintendent."

To learn more about becoming an electrician, visit [the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers \(IBEW\) website](#). To learn more about becoming an electrician with Bruce & Merrilees, [visit BruceandMerrilees.com](#).