

HVAC Technician Salary Guide: What You Should Be Making in 2026

Compensation benchmarks, certification premiums, and regional breakdowns — so you know exactly where you stand.



NATIONAL BENCHMARKS

2026 HVAC Compensation by Experience Level

Salaries vary significantly by region, specialty, and certification. The ranges below reflect US national data — your local market may run 10–25% higher or lower depending on cost of living and demand density.

Entry-Level / Helper

0–2 years, working toward EPA 608

\$36K–\$48K

\$17–\$23/hr

Apprentice / EPA 608 Certified

2–4 years, Universal EPA 608

\$48K–\$62K

\$23–\$30/hr

Journeyman Technician

4–8 years, EPA 608 + NATE preferred

\$62K–\$80K

\$30–\$38/hr

Senior / Lead Technician

8+ years, NATE certified

\$78K–\$96K

\$37–\$46/hr

Commercial HVAC / Controls Specialist

Building automation, chiller/AHU expertise

\$90K–\$120K+

\$43–\$58/hr

CERTIFICATION PREMIUMS

Certifications that add real dollars to your paycheck

In a competitive market, certifications are your leverage. These are the credentials employers consistently pay more for — and the ones we see separating candidates at the top of the range.

NATE Certification

+\$6K–\$12K/yr

The gold standard for HVAC — employers treat it as proof of competence

Building Automation / BAS

+\$10K–\$20K/yr

Controls experience commands the biggest premium in commercial HVAC

EPA 608 Universal

+\$3K–\$6K/yr

Required baseline — but universal vs. limited makes a real difference

Refrigeration Specialist

+\$8K–\$15K/yr

Industrial and commercial refrigeration is severely undersupplied



Think You're Being Underpaid? Let's Talk.

Bravo Talent Group places HVAC technicians with employers who pay for your certification level and experience — not just your zip code. No generic job boards. Just the right fit.

100%

Credential verified

48hr

Avg. placement

12+

Trades covered

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