# How One Can Train As a Los Altos Electrical Apprentice by Tracy Narvaez

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Working with electricity is a potentially dangerous job, for both the person working with it and others in the vicinity. For this reason, those who intend to become Los Altos electrical technicians are required to complete training and certification processes. Electricians, once they are certified, work in a wide range of jobs in a number of different fields.

Apprenticeships are a bit old-fashioned, but they are still the way that most electricians get their start. The field is extremely hands-on and does not translate well to coursework, so apprenticeships and on-the-job training are still the way it is mostly done. Several different broad areas of the field exist, and most certified electricians are trained in one of these fields.

An apprenticeship as an electrical technician trainee lasts for an extremely variable amount of time. Nationally, the average is 3-5 years. This compares with getting a college degree, and thus can be seen as a similar commitment. During the training period, the trainee is required to work under the supervision of a certified electrical technician at all times.

Depending on the state, there are two-year degrees given in the field, which are usually combined with shorter apprenticeships. In California, electricians work under the supervision of a certified technician as part of an apprenticeship program approved by the state, or as registered trainees. Trainees must complete a given number of hours working with different types of electrical equipment.

To get started as a trainee, there is some coursework to complete. This is classwork like any other college course, which covers some of the required knowledge for working around the various systems. When the coursework portion of the trainee program is complete, the trainee moves on to hands-on work under the supervision of a certified technician. He or she remains here until the completion of the required hours and exam.

The certification exam for general electricians requires a minimum of 8,000 hours working under the supervision of a certified technician. Less is needed for voice data video, residential and fire/life/safety technician exams, and even less for non-residential lighting technicians. These professionals require the least hours of training, at 2,000 hours minimum. Trainees must be registered as such and working under certified electricians for the hours to count.

When the trainee has reached the required amount of hours or finished the approved apprenticeship program, there are certification exams to take. Each specialty has its own exam, and they range from 50-100 questions depending on the test. In the state of California, there is an option to take any exam in either English or Spanish.

Becoming a Los Altos electrical technician requires some commitment. The years of your life that will be dedicated to learning a trade are similar to the years that many people spend in college. Certification in the field opens up broad possibilities in where you can work, and the relative ease of finding a job is one reason why people pursue this type of program. If financial problems are an issue, there is both federal and state aid to apply for.

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