

## Employability Skills Profile: Entry Level/Apprentice Automotive Technician

### Noteworthy Findings

Employers and supervisors are reporting recent graduates from many automotive programs erroneously expect to be employable as C-Techs, B-Techs, and A-Techs. They further explain that C-Techs, the least skilled of the three, typically require 2 to 5 years work experience before that worker will be allowed to touch an engine. "The [inexperienced] worker must do their time as an apprentice or entry-level automotive tech and prove that they can fit in. They must come prepared to work with a wrench in one hand, and a shovel in the other" says one employer.

Typical jobs an inexperienced worker likely will attain in express lube shops are lube technician/hood technician or in vehicle service shops is entry-level (or apprentice) technician. The panel expressed that new workers must expect to do entry-level work, spanning mopping floors to changing oil. The worker described by these employers will not make many work decisions on his own. This worker is expected to follow directions as given, and complete work as assigned. The ability of this worker to ask questions is highly valued. Many new graduates are finding these positions, and the work associated with these positions to be too menial—this mismatch in expectation is a large factor in why many workers choose different occupations within their first year. Employers reported that other workers were leaving the field within the first year, in part, to work demands not being what the worker expected. The company costs associated with training new workers is significant, and increases with each level of training. This coupled with high turnover of inexperienced employees, causes employers to be very selective in their selection of which employees are good candidates for investment. Each employer indicated that a trial period exists for new workers. During this period, the employers and supervisors are looking primarily at the worker's attitude, willingness to learn, and commitment (both to the profession and the company) to determine whether the employee is worthy of their investment. These trial periods can last anywhere from 3 months to a year.

### Educational Programs

All panelist expressed frustration with current educational programs offered by proprietary schools like UTI and Lincoln Tech. These employers and supervisors say graduates are not emerging with reasonable expectations of the work they will be performing, or appropriate attitudes necessary for performing that work. They go on to say that the skills being taught have little relevance to the work the worker will perform, nor that the worker can competently complete those work tasks. Successful completion of these programs in no way indicates the worker will be a good worker. One member expressed that "no educational programs exist that we can believe in." The employer/supervisor panel indicated that they would like to see more hands-on experience built into automotive programs; and that they would like to see courses taught by "real-world service professionals". All panelists indicated a strong interest in hosting students ready for externship opportunities.

**Note:** Panelists did express a need for ASE test prep courses for their more experienced employees seeking certification training. Several of them indicated frustration at having to help workers navigate testing requirements and at finding test-taking training and resources. Said one employer, "Give me that class, and I will pay to fill it with students."

### Female Automotive Technicians

Women do not tend to apply for positions as Apprentice Automotive Technicians, and as a result represent only a tiny portion of the workforce. A couple panelists admitted they would have concerns about the work environment for female automotive technicians, one stating that it would mean a culture shift for his current team.

### Reasons for Dismissal

Dishonesty, poor attendance, poor driving records, an unwillingness to learn, an unwillingness to follow directions, problems with drugs/alcohol, poor work quality, laziness, poor hygiene, and inattention to detail were all reasons given when employers were asked about why entry-techs lose their jobs. Conversely, workers who showed initiative, a good attitude, responsibility for their own errors, and were willing to learn from their mistakes were allowed to keep their jobs despite deficiencies in their work.

### Future Trends & Concerns

- Dealerships and businesses are trending towards a split, and merging of skill levels: B-level and C-level technicians are disappearing, to be replaced by teams of entry-level and A-level technicians.
- Job is becoming increasingly technical
- People skills in new workers are "awful"
- Young workers exhibit an entitlement mentality: (One member communicated this as the "Why Generation" as in "Why must I do this?" "Why must I do that?")
- Employers aren't putting new workers on the "line" immediately, and workers are having the worker work their way up
- Newer cars are being designed to need less maintenance
- Use of fossil fuels is diminishing— some vehicles require no gasoline or lubricant
- Electric and hybrid cars are becoming more common place
- Heavy electrical [car] skills needed
- A high-level of technical skill & knowledge is becoming the norm— many places utilize laptops as a tool for servicing vehicles

### Certifications

**Mandatory:** None

#### Helpful:

Evidence of commitment to profession, i.e., ASE certification or educational credential.

#### Degrees vs. Certificates:

When making hiring decisions, employers find little value in either degrees or certificates, and merely view them as an indicator of commitment. All panelists faced with decision of who to hire, value attitude over education. (See **Noteworthy Findings : Educational Programs** for more details.)

**\*note:** Successful completion of ASE certification requires candidates pass a written exam, and provide proof of 2-years of infield training.

### Hiring Requirements

- Drivers license
- U.S. Citizen / e-verify
- Drug-free
- Clean driving record (<3 points-all states)

### Hiring Barriers

- Not prepared for interview (see **Appearance: Interview** section for more details.)
- Failed drug test.
- Criminal Record
- Poor driving record (3+ points all states)
- Looking unprofessional (see **Appearance** section for more details.)

### Worker Traits

- Flexible work schedule
- Follows procedures correctly 1
- Wants to learn
- Overcomes obstacles
- Persistent
- Self-controlled ("can't be a thrower")
- Problem solving skills
- Mechanical Ability
- Understands limits of own knowledge
- Motivated 2
- Willing
- Doesn't text at work
- Honest 5
- Manually dexterous
- Accepts feedback
- Common Sense 4
- Good communicator 2
- Loyal to company
- Not negative 2
- Takes pride in work
- Punctual 1 2
- Willing to learn 4
- Possesses people skills 1
- Asks questions 1
- Good listener 1

### Appearance

- Clean-cut, no jewelry/piercings.
- Dress professionally, pants riding at waist.
- Clothing free of tears
- Neat

### Interview:

- Nice shirt, khakis, close-toed shoes
- Come prepared
- Arrive early

### Physical Attributes

- Must be able to lift 50lbs.
- Must be able to work long periods in the heat (many shops are not climate controlled)
- Endurance (physically & mentally)

### Attendance

Termination of employment standard if worker:

- Fails to show up on first day
- Fails to call in when absent

Employers indicated that they begin looking for a new person the moment attendance problems become evident.

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: Entry Tech (Apprentice Automotive Technician)

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# Employability Skills for Entry Tech (Apprentice Automotive Technician)

## High Performing - Entry Level

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### Duties

<b>A</b> Demonstrate Personal Integrity	A1 Protect confidential information	A2 Report wrongdoing	A3 Protect company assets	A4 Accept responsibility for actions	A5	A6
	2	1 1	3 2	1		
<b>B</b> Demonstrate Dependability	B1 Report to work as scheduled	B2 Complete tasks with supervision	B3 Complete tasks with consistent high-quality	B4	B5	B6
	5	1	1			
<b>C</b> Exhibit Work Dedication	C1 Demonstrate desire for job advancement	C2 Work efficiently	C3 Promote efficiency	C4 Work beyond scope of duties when asked	C5 Participate in on-the-job training	C6
	1	4	3		1	
<b>D</b> Demonstrate Adaptability/Flexibility	D1 Accept change willingly	D2 Adapt to customer needs	D3 Accept increased responsibility willingly	D4 Pursue continuing education	D5	D6
	3		1 2	1		
<b>E</b> Demonstrate Punctuality	E1 Meet work schedules (e.g., on time arriving, returning from breaks, lunch)	E2	E3	E4	E5	D6
	2	1 4				
<b>F</b> Demonstrate Responsibility	F1 Follow through with tasks	F2 Request work tasks	F3 Be work-ready	F4 Work diligently while on the clock	F5	D6
	3	1 1 1	3			
<b>G</b> Demonstrate Basic Education Skills	G1 Complete secondary education	G2 Perform basic written communication skills	G3 Perform basic reading communication skills	G4 Perform basic technology skills	G5 Perform basic oral communication skills	G6 Perform basic math skills (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, make change)
	1	1 2	2	1		1
<b>H</b> Demonstrate Entry Level Skills	H1 Conduct preventative maintenance	H2 Demonstrate time management skills (e.g. complete work tasks in an order that maximizes efficiency)	H3	H4	H5	H6
	1	1 3				
<b>I</b> Demonstrate People Skills	I1 Respect personal space	I2 Work well with others	I3 Respect others people	I4 Use appropriate body language	I5 Accept constructive criticism	I6 Demonstrate appropriate greeting skills
	1	1 5	2 1 3		1 1 1	
<b>J</b> Demonstrate Problem Solving/Analyzing Skills	J1 Identify problems	J2 Learn from mistakes	J3 See big picture (e.g. understand importance of work performed, and its importance to others.)	J4 Ask for help when needed	J5	J6
	4	1	1	1		
<b>K</b> Exhibit Presentable Personal Appearance	K1 Practice good hygiene	K2 Wear job appropriate attire	K3 Exhibit alert appearance	K4 Project positive persona	K5	K6
	1	1	1 1 2			
<b>L</b> Demonstrate Workplace Safety	L1 Follow safety procedures	L2 Be mentally alert	L3 Able to think ahead	L4 Aware of surroundings (e.g., size up scene)	L5 Demonstrate knowledge of equipment	L6 Demonstrate common sense
	3	2 1	1 3	1 1	1	2 1

### Tasks

A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13
B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13
C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13
D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13
E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12	E13
F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
G7 Demonstrate ability to follow directions/instructions (e.g., written, verbal)	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	G13
H7	H8	H9	H10	H11	H12	H13
I7 Avoid inappropriate behavior (i.e., sexual harassment)	I8	I9	I10	I11	I12	I13
J7	J8	J9	J10	J11	<b>Legend</b> <span style="color:red">6</span> .....Critical Duty <span style="color:blue">6</span> .....Critical Task <span style="color:green">6</span> .....Training required by New Workers <span style="color:yellow">6</span> .....Training required by Veteran workers  Note: Numbers represent total votes from 6 panel members.	
K7	K8	K9	K10	K11		
L7 Maintain work equipment	L8 Report safety problems	L9 Drug Free	L10 Alcohol free at work	L11		
		1	1	1		