



The Work Environment

Working for the Great Outdoors Engineering Technician

Do you enjoy working in remote areas, being part of a team that makes things happen? Can you use tools and equipment safely and effectively? There may be a career for you as an engineering technician in the Forest Service!

As an engineering technician, you will work alongside professional engineers and other resource specialists protecting and maintaining nearly 200 million acres of forests, lakes, mountains, and grasslands while being responsive to the needs and desires of the public. You may be assigned to some of the most scenic places in the Nation – places set aside and managed not only for their natural resources, but for their natural beauty as well. Engineering technicians work with a wide range of tools and equipment – from simple hand-held calculators and plumb bobs to construction tools, vehicles, and highly sophisticated computers.

Operating on the Job

Our main engineering job is supporting the wise use of natural resources. We provide facilities for recreation, fish and wildlife, range, minerals, and timber management. The jobs of individual engineering technicians are varied, but most involve a stimulating mix of duties. You will provide on-the-ground expertise in support of engineering programs and projects that may include laying roads and trails and, in some cases, the actual construction of trails and low-volume roads. You may perform duties as an inspector, contracting officer's representative, or engineering representative on construction/maintenance projects

Activities may include assisting in the design of recreation facilities, district ranger stations, lookout towers, comfort stations, or water systems and waste-water facilities. Engineering technicians may be assigned to maintain and operate these buildings and systems. Engineering technicians may also assist in the management of vehicular fleets that could consist of anything from dirt bikes to large tractors or graders. Other engineering technicians may work on a survey crew and become proficient in the use of equipment such as

the satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS).

Engineering technicians assigned to one of the two technology and development centers may be involved with new and innovative technologies as they are developed, upgraded, and tested before being passed on to the users. One example is the development of a self-contained, transportable vehicle wash rack for use at fires and other locations. This device is used for the spraying down of vehicles to prevent the transport of invasive weed species off site.

Another is the satellite-based Global Positioning System used to locate either points or line segments on the ground in support of any resource or management activity. You may have the opportunity to be assigned to a team supporting one of these technologies, or one of the many other new and evolving technologies.

Being an engineering technician in the Forest Service is challenging, varied, stimulating, important, and satisfying. The Forest Service works hard to provide engineering technicians the up-to date training and experience they need to give the support that is vital to our operations.

Career Paths and Requirements

Of course, not all engineering technicians work at the same skill level or have the same level of knowledge. For this reason there are different entering points, all depending on your work experience (volunteer work included) and/or education. Entry level for most engineering technicians may be at grades GS-2 to GS-5. If you are hired at lower grades, promotions to the GS-4 or GS-5 levels occur when growth and development in responsibility has progressed to warrant promotion. Promotions above the GS-5 level are competitive, but there is substantial opportunity for advancement—over 800 of the more than 1,700 engineering technician positions are the GS-9 grade level.

You may qualify for different grade levels of work based on your work experience or education, as follows:

At the GS-5 level, you need to have either 1 year of experience that is directly related to the position OR a completion of a full 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree (a) with major study in an appropriate field of engineering, construction, or industrial technology; or (b) that included at least 24 semester hours in any combination of courses such as engineering, engineering or industrial technology, construction, physics, drafting, surveying, physical science, or mathematics.

For a GS-4 Position you will need either 6 months of experience directly related to the position and 6 months of any type of experience that would demonstrate your ability to perform the work of the position, OR successful completion of 2 years of post-high-school study that included 12 semester hours in any combination of courses such as those listed above.

At the GS-3 level you will need to have either 6 months of any type of experience that would demonstrate you ability to perform the work of the position, OR successful completion of 2 years of post-high-school study that included 12 semester hours in any combination of courses such as those listed above.

For a GS-2 position you will need either 3 months of any type of experience OR a high school diploma or equivalent.

In lieu of the above requirements, a combination of education and experience may be qualifying.



These qualification requirements have been summarized for convenience. Full details are available at www.USAJobs.gov or the www.opm.gov subject index under "Qualifications."

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