



International Training Institute
For the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Industry

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



FAQs

Do you need guidance in thinking about what to do after completing high school? College is certainly one option. However, you and they should also consider an apprenticeship and career in the sheet metal industry. Here's why. The sheet metal industry offers outstanding:

- Training
- Education
- Income
- Benefits
- Insurance

Apprentices in the sheet metal industry

- Earn a good salary while learning the sheet metal trade – a salary that increases as their skills and knowledge increase
- Pay no tuition costs
- Pay nothing for books or other educational materials
- Learn from instructors who have hands-on experience in the sheet metal industry
- Put everything they learn to work right away—their career begins with their apprenticeship
- Start their careers free from student loans

We've put together a list of questions and concerns you may have. If you need more information or don't see your question, please feel free to contact us.

1. Is sheet metal work dangerous?

Some workers perform their tasks on ladders, roofs, or bridges. Workers who respond to emergency repair situations may have to work in extreme weather conditions. So there is a certain element of risk for some jobs. However, many jobs in this industry involve no more danger than most jobs. You should know that the sheet metal industry places great emphasis on safety. Apprentices learn how to safely and responsibly handle tools, materials, and themselves through both classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Workers are reminded to focus on safety every day.

2. Why doesn't this training and education cost me anything? This seems too good to be true.

Having a steady supply of well-trained, well-educated workers is extremely valuable to the sheet metal industry. Therefore, our contractor members fund the training and education to ensure that no one who wants to work in this industry is prevented because of finances.

3. Are there good opportunities for women in this field?

Absolutely. As with most construction-related jobs, jobs in the sheet metal industry have traditionally been held by men. But that's changing as women move into this field in increasing numbers. They are attracted by the same things that attract men – a good income, limitless opportunities for advancement, and the pride that comes with creating something that is long-lasting and benefits the lives of many.

4. Isn't it better to have a college degree?

The type of education people get depends on where they want to go in life. Many of the courses offered by ITI are college credited. Our apprentices can use those credits and their earnings to pursue a college degree as well if they wish. Some JATCs have articulation agreements that offer a college degree. ITI curricula has been evaluated for college credit by A.C.E.

5. Why do I have to join the union?

The union negotiates funding for training and education in the sheet metal industry. Beyond that, being part of a union delivers a wealth of benefits to members. The union negotiates on behalf of its members for better pay, benefits, and working conditions. The union gives workers an important, and powerful, say in their workplace.

6. What can a career in sheet metal lead to?

Sheet metal workers can choose to work in general construction, become certified in a specialty area, work for a company or general contractor, or start their own business. In addition, sheet metal workers can hold union office, work for their trade association, teach classes, or write the standards and manuals that guide this industry. Opportunities in this field for personal growth and achievement truly are limitless.

7. Can I visit the training center in my area?

Certainly. A site visit is a good way for you to see, first-hand, our state-of-the-art facilities. Locate your local training center to arrange a visit.

8. What if I start an apprenticeship and then decide this was a mistake?

We do a lot of up-front work to help ensure that working in this industry is a good fit for an apprentice candidate. Many JATCs offer jobs pre-apprentices to allow you to determine if you like the industry.

9. What skills is the sheet metal industry looking for?

We want candidates who like to work with their hands, like to solve problems and be creative, take pride in their work, work well in a team-oriented environment, and enjoy taking on challenges. In addition, a solid understanding of math is important to many jobs in this industry.

10. I've heard that most sheet metal jobs involve hanging ductwork. Is that so?

Installing ductwork is an important part of this industry. Ductwork carries clean, heated or cooled air and makes living and working in schools, hospitals, offices, manufacturing plants, and other buildings safe and comfortable. There are, of course, other types of jobs in this industry. Signs, bridges, buildings, roofs, commercial kitchens, refrigeration units, ships, vehicles – wherever metals or plastics are shaped and fabricated for specific applications, you'll find sheet metal workers creating the forms that make life better and safer. This field also offers opportunities for estimators, project managers, and detailers (workers who produce computer-generated plans and designs).