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## The New Power Jobs

by Heather Boerner, for Yahoo! HotJobs

White-hot [jobs](#) are opening up in the power sector.

"These aren't just hot jobs, they're sizzling jobs," said Christine Real de Azua, spokeswoman for the American Wind Energy Association. Wind energy grew by 45 percent last year. "We need every type of job candidate."

Indeed, with oil topping \$100 per barrel, expect power industry jobs to explode in the next 10 years -- and not just in petroleum or the electric company. Want to repair wind turbines, manage a nuclear reactor or install solar panels? The jobs await.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and energy leaders reveal what fields are expected to grow, and they are listed below with projected growth levels through 2016, [salary](#) data, and what you need to get a related job.

### Engineers

*11 percent projected growth*

\$44,790-\$145,600 annually, depending on specialty

"We're experiencing a comeback in 'dirty jobs,'" said Chris McCormick, partner and head of the energy division of venture capital firm Landmark Ventures. "While a few years ago, what we wanted were the 'clean' jobs in computer engineering, now we're back to the types of engineers who get their hands dirty with chemistry and broad-application engineering."

[Chemical engineers](#) who work with biofuels, [electrical engineers](#) who design power plants, mechanical engineers who find better ways to capture air and wind energy, and nuclear engineers who make plants run more efficiently will all be in high demand -- with salaries to match. While some engineers, like chemical engineers, may need a PhD to do their jobs, most others, like [environmental engineers](#), only require a bachelor's degree in physics or engineering, according to the BLS.

### Nuclear Power Reactor Operators

*11 percent projected growth*

\$35,590-\$75,240 annually

"When I got out of college, people told me, 'Go do other things.' The conventional wisdom was that nuclear power was going to go away," said Carol Berrigan, senior director for industry infrastructure at the Nuclear Energy Institute. "But now, with some regulatory changes, we have something like nine applications out there for 16 new nuclear power plants in the next few years."

Which jobs will grow fastest? Think Homer Simpson, but with more computer knowledge and less buffoonery. On top of the billions of dollars the industry is spending on new construction, the field's employees are aging: In the next 10 years, half of all nuclear reactor operators are expected to retire. You don't need to have an engineering degree for these jobs, but you should expect extensive on-the-job training and classroom instruction as well as licensing exams, according to the BLS.

### Industrial Machinery Mechanic

*9 percent projected growth*

\$42,350 median annual income

Someone's got to install the solar panels and repair wind turbines, and industrial machinery mechanics are often the ones who get the jobs. In solar, Tioga Energy's Executive Vice President Preston Roper said the biggest demand is for solar installers.

Both Roper and Real de Azua said local community colleges are the places to go to get the training necessary for the

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jobs. Many are offering specialized training in solar or wind repair work.

**Skilled Trade Workers**

*Electricians: 7 percent projected growth*  
\$44,780 median annual income

*Line Workers: 7 percent projected growth*  
\$52,570 median annual income

*Welders: 5 percent projected growth*  
\$32,270 median annual income

These workers repair the lines that bring power to your home and build and repair power plant structures. Want one of these jobs? Usually you don't need post-high school education, but you will need an apprenticeship through a union or other skilled trade group. The programs usually take about four years.

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