

# Profession Profile: Phlebotomy Technician



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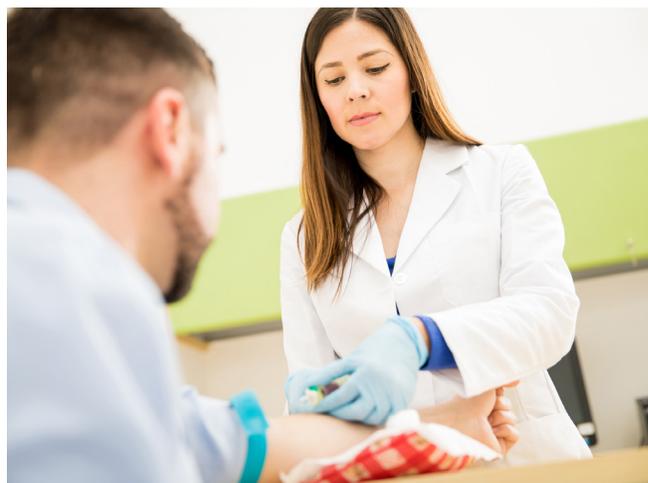
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A phlebotomy technician (phlebotomist) is an integral member of the medical laboratory team whose primary function is the collection of blood samples from patients by venipuncture or microtechniques. The phlebotomy technician facilitates the collection and transportation of laboratory specimens and is often the patient's only contact with the medical laboratory. The need to assure quality and patient safety means there are strict professional behavior and standards of practice for phlebotomists.

## Duties

The primary function of a phlebotomy technician is to obtain patient blood specimens by venipuncture or microtechniques. The phlebotomy technician aids in the collection and transportation of other laboratory specimens, and may be involved with patient data entry. A phlebotomy technician also draws blood for transfusions, donations and research. Phlebotomists work mainly in hospitals, medical and diagnostic laboratories and blood donor centers. Duties differ by doctor office, hospital and laboratory but may include:

- Draw blood from patients and blood donors
- Talk with patients and donors to help them feel less nervous about having their blood drawn
- Verify a patient's or donor's identity to ensure proper labeling of the blood
- Label the drawn blood for testing or processing
- Enter patient information into a database
- Assemble and maintain medical instruments such as needles, test tubes and blood vials



## Education and Training

A phlebotomy technician must have a high school diploma or G.E.D. with acceptable training. Phlebotomists typically enter the occupation with a postsecondary nondegree award from a phlebotomy program. Phlebotomy technician programs are available at many accredited colleges and career schools. Phlebotomy training courses at colleges or career schools vary in length and usually lead to a certificate of completion and in some cases a diploma. Almost all employers look for phlebotomists who have earned professional certification.

## Choosing an Accredited Program

**Certification/Licensure:** Each individual state decides licensing requirements, but most states do not require licensing at this time. California requires all phlebotomy technicians to be certified and to have a state license. Employers prefer to hire experienced workers and may prefer certified applicants who have passed a national examination, indicating that the phlebotomy technician meets certain standards of competence.

## Is It Right For You?

Phlebotomy technicians must like challenge and responsibility. They must be accurate, work well under pressure and communicate effectively. They must be able to deal with patients and be able to calm patients. Safety is key and all safety precautions must be taken to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases.

## Employment

Phlebotomy technicians are in high-demand. Vacancies have increased significantly as many places need to hire three shifts of technicians. Employment of phlebotomists is projected to grow 25 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. Hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, blood donor centers and other locations will need phlebotomists to perform blood work.

## Salary

Earnings for phlebotomists vary depending on experience, education and skill level. Phlebotomy technicians are typically paid hourly and it varies by state, shift, schooling and experience. The median annual wage for phlebotomists was \$32,710 in May 2016, or about \$15.72 per hour.

## Want To Learn More?

Visit the US Bureau of Labor Statistics:

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/phlebotomists.htm>