

Drafters

SOC: 17-3011 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$65,380

Median Salary

192,100

Employment

+0.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Associate's degree

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 17.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

7.2/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.2/10	Investigative	8.8/10
Artistic	6.4/10	Social	5.2/10
Enterprising	5.8/10	Conventional	6.6/10

■ Top Skills Required

Creativity, Detail oriented, Interpersonal skills, Math skills, Technical skills, Time-management skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Drafters are technical professionals who create **detailed technical drawings and plans** used to guide the construction and manufacturing of buildings, products, and systems. Working closely with engineers, architects, and designers, drafters translate concepts, calculations, and specifications into precise visual documents that ensure projects are built accurately and safely. Their work forms the blueprint for everything from homes and bridges to machines and electronic components.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy technical detail, visual problem-solving, and using design software to bring ideas into exact form.

What Do Drafters Do?

Drafters produce and revise drawings that communicate how something should be built or manufactured. Their responsibilities focus on accuracy, clarity, and adherence to standards.

Common responsibilities include:

- Creating detailed drawings using CAD and drafting software
- Converting rough sketches and designs into precise plans
- Annotating drawings with dimensions, materials, and notes
- Reviewing and updating drawings based on design changes
- Ensuring drawings comply with technical standards and codes
- Coordinating with engineers, architects, and project teams
- Organizing and managing drawing files and documentation

Types of Drafters

Drafters often specialize by industry or technical discipline:

- Architectural Drafters: Prepare plans for buildings and structures.
- Civil Drafters: Create drawings for infrastructure such as roads and bridges.
- Mechanical Drafters: Design parts and assemblies for machinery and equipment.
- Electrical and Electronics Drafters: Draft wiring diagrams and control systems.
- Structural Drafters: Detail load-bearing components and frameworks.
- CAD Technicians: Focus on digital drafting and modeling tasks.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Drafters combine technical accuracy with spatial visualization skills.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Most drafters enter the field through technical education and practical training:

- Associate Degree or Technical Certificate: Commonly in drafting, CAD, or a related field
- Software Training: Proficiency in industry-standard drafting tools
- On-the-Job Training: Learning company-specific standards and workflows
- Continuing Education: Updating skills as software and design standards evolve

Some drafters advance by specializing or transitioning into engineering or design roles.

Where Do Drafters Work?

Drafters are employed across many technical and design-focused industries:

- Engineering and Architectural Firms

- Construction and Infrastructure Companies
- Manufacturing and Industrial Organizations
- Energy, Utilities, and Transportation Firms
- Government Agencies and Public Works Departments
- Design and Consulting Firms

Most roles are office-based, with occasional site coordination.

How Much Do Drafters Earn?

Earnings vary based on experience, specialization, and industry:

- Entry-Level Drafters: Typically earn professional starting wages
- Experienced or Specialized Drafters: Often earn higher pay with advanced skills
- Senior Drafters or CAD Leads: May earn more with responsibility for standards and quality

Compensation depends on location and technical discipline.

Is This Career Difficult?

Drafting is detail-intensive and requires sustained concentration. Small errors can have significant downstream impacts, making accuracy critical. The challenge lies in balancing speed, precision, and frequent revisions while meeting project deadlines.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Drafter?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy technical drawing and visual detail
- Like working with structured specifications
- Are comfortable using design software
- Prefer precise, behind-the-scenes technical roles
- Want a technical career without full engineering licensure

How to Prepare Early

- Take drafting, CAD, or technical drawing courses
- Develop strong math and geometry skills
- Practice attention to detail and accuracy
- Learn industry-standard design software early
- Explore internships or junior drafting roles

Drafters transform ideas and calculations into precise technical drawings, providing the essential link between design concepts and real-world construction or manufacturing.