

# LEVELING UP: WHY AN ALUMINUM JOB IS MAJOR CAREER GOALS

Aluminum is everywhere, every day, throughout modern society. It helps you fly, it's in your car, your luggage is made of it, and so is your phone. It is critical for renewable energy and space exploration. Plus, a career in aluminum? Super in-demand right now.

According to the popular online recruiting site Handshake, there are six things career newbies want:

1. Job stability and financial security
2. Opportunities to develop skills
3. In-person work with plenty of flexibility
4. Sustainable work-life balance
5. Values alignment
6. Competitive pay and salary transparency

A career in the aluminum industry checks all these boxes.

## Job stability and financial security

Numbers don't lie. The U.S. aluminum industry directly and indirectly employs more than 700,000 people. Between 2022 and 2024, jobs grew significantly in several segments including recycling. And according to Indeed.com, there are more than 6,000 jobs with keyword 'aluminum' up for grabs (August 2024). Aluminum demand is projected to grow 80% by 2050 globally to help build the green infrastructure of tomorrow.

*A 2024 Aluminum Association report breaks down what needs to happen to achieve net zero targets in North America by 2050, with pathways for state and federal infrastructure investment and greater access to affordable manufacturing technologies.*

## What's driving this demand?

Aluminum is essential for a clean energy future. The metal is used in solar panels, wind turbines, recyclable packaging and electric vehicles due to its light weight, strength and durability. And, average domestic industry emissions are down more than 50% since the 1990s. Aluminum is literally building a cleaner future.

So, if you want to work in an industry at the forefront of the clean energy transition, you might give aluminum a look. And, if you're looking to personally make an impact, innovating aluminum solutions with smaller and smaller carbon footprint is a long-term career opportunity. The government and industry itself is investing billions to boost decarbonization efforts across aluminum and other manufacturing industries.

Aluminum is used in everything from medical equipment to beverage packaging, to aerospace and electric vehicles, and body

## Aluminum Growth Areas

Secondary aluminum production/recycling (+12.5%)

Aluminum coatings (+9.6%)

Sheet/plate (+6.0%)



armor to battle tanks. Because of this, aluminum has been declared a critical mineral in the U.S. Making more aluminum here at home helps shore up domestic supply chains for these critical products, reducing our reliance on imports.

### **Opportunities to develop skills**

According to Handshake, 63% of undergrads say developing advanced skills in their field is essential to their definition of career success. In metallurgy alone—an engineering field focusing on metals—specializations include physical, extractive and mechanical processes with career paths in R&D, quality control and production management

Aluminum industry jobs range from engineering to operations with careers in welding, fabrication, extraction and line management also available. In the aluminum industry, engineers are often working as an interface between customers and manufacturing/R&D teams, providing cross-functional experience in business and market development. With experience and education, opportunities for new roles grow. Tenure can also lead to new opportunities in new functions within aluminum companies or expanded growth potential through a transition into higher education or consulting.

**86%**  
of aluminum  
companies offer  
apprenticeships  
or internships.

Source: 2023 Aluminum  
Association member survey

### **In-person work with plenty of flexibility and sustainable work-life balance**

Flexibility differs company by company and is role-dependent. All manufacturers, including aluminum companies, are continually looking for ways to increase work-life balance. For example, some aluminum companies offer remote work for administrative and select skilled technical roles. Other companies offer childcare benefits, job share or compressed work weeks.

There are a ton of workplace settings to explore. From laboratories and research facilities to modern manufacturing plants, boardrooms and classrooms. And depending on the role, a career in aluminum could mean splitting time in the office and out in the field.


*“There’s only one thing that can really help our planet and save our planet as long as we recycle—and that’s aluminum.”*

— Jason Mamoa,  
actor and activist

### **Values alignment**

Environmental sustainability drives career decisions, and environmental sustainability continues to be among Gen Zs’ and millennials’ top priorities (Handshake).

Working in the aluminum industry is personally meaningful because it helps make our planet more sustainable in two key ways. First, the metal is necessary for building a clean energy economy with windmills, electric vehicles and solar panels. Just as important, finding ways to produce aluminum with a smaller carbon footprint in the coming decades is a major industry priority ripe with opportunity for environmentally focused career pathways.



Because the aluminum industry develops technologies, its workers also help enable game-changing advancements in key sectors. For example, aluminum solutions help automakers design the most advanced vehicles on the road like the Tesla Model S and make space exploration possible.

### **Competitive pay and salary transparency**

Workers directly employed by the U.S. aluminum industry earn nearly \$14 billion in wages and benefits. In response to a 2023 survey conducted by the Aluminum Association, 75% of respondents indicated they are looking to fill engineering roles, particularly automation, chemical, mechanical, metallurgical and process engineers. Wondering about the average salary for engineers in aluminum processing? About \$100,000 a year. Not too bad, right?

For U.S. production and nonsupervisory workers, average hourly earnings range from \$20 to \$35. Gen Z has a ton of career options, and the aluminum industry is a standout choice with diverse paths to explore. Whether you're interested in an engineering, manufacturing, research or business role, when you choose an aluminum job, you choose a meaningful career that pays well and helps advance clean energy.

## **Six things career newbies want:**

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- ✓ **Opportunities to develop skills**
- ✓ **In-person work with plenty of flexibility**
- ✓ **Sustainable work-life balance**
- ✓ **Values alignment**
- ✓ **Competitive pay and salary transparency**