

## Radiation Therapy Technologist

### ■ Job Description

Radiation therapy technologists, also known as radiation therapists, assist in the treatment of disease by administering carefully prescribed doses of x-ray or other forms of ionizing radiation under the supervision of a physician. The radiation therapy technologist administers the treatment, observes the patient during treatment, and maintains records of the treatment. Other duties may include tumor localization, dosimetry, patient follow-up, and patient education.

### ■ Job Settings

Hospitals, cancer centers, and private physician offices

### ■ Projected Need

Prospects for radiation therapy technologists should continue to be good through 2010. However, it is important to keep in mind this is a very small occupation, where turnover (workers moving to other jobs) and replacement needs may be low.

Growth in this occupation will be due in part to an increasing number of older people. This population is more likely to require treatment for cancer. Only a small number of new jobs will be in hospitals. As radiation therapy becomes safer, it is more likely to be performed at doctors' offices and out-patient clinics.

In Illinois, about 350 people were employed in this very small occupation in 2000.

### ■ Salaries

Salaries vary by employer and area of the country. The therapist's level of experience, training, and responsibility also affect wages.

Nationally, the median wage for radiation therapists is \$23.57 per hour. Half of all radiation therapists earn between \$19.52 and \$28.39 per hour.

In Illinois, wages range from \$17.16 per hour for entry-level therapists to \$27.86 per hour for experienced workers. The median wage for radiation therapists is \$23.74 per hour.

### ■ Related Careers

Radiologic technologist, nuclear medicine technologist, sonographer, EKG and EEG technicians, respiratory therapist, dialysis technician, cardiopulmonary technician, and medical laboratory technician

### ■ Differences in Training

Training usually takes one to two years depending on previous education and experience or a bachelor's degree. Applicants to one-year programs must have graduated from an accredited program in radiologic technology or a related allied health field. Two-year programs require a high school diploma or equivalent with an educational background in science and mathematics. Training covers medical terminology, human anatomy and physiology, radiation physics, dosimetry, chemistry and oncology techniques, and related areas of patient care, safety and quality control.

### ■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

*The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.*

### [Radiation Therapy](#)

#### ■ Credentials

Graduates of accredited programs are eligible to take the national exam for certification given by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT).

In Illinois, radiation therapy technologists must be accredited by the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety. Accreditation requirements include completion of an approved program and the passing of an exam.

#### ■ Resources

American Society of Radiologic Technologists  
15000 Central Avenue, SE

Albuquerque, NM 87123-3917  
Phone: 800.444.2778  
E-mail: [communication@asrt.org](mailto:communication@asrt.org)  
<http://www.asrt.org>  
Select "Patients & the Public" then "Who Are RTs?"

The society offers two \$5,000 scholarships to undergraduate or certificate students enrolled in a radiation therapy program. Applicants must demonstrate financial need.

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists  
1255 Northland Drive  
St. Paul, MN 55120-1155  
Phone: 651.687.0048  
<http://www.arrt.org>