GET PRODUCTION

GET MORE PRODUCTIVE HOURS FROM EVERY DAY

Your techs are probably not slow. The day is working against them.

FIND OUT WHERE THE DAY GOES

Pick one typical week and track a tech's day from clock-in to clock-out. Mark each block of time:

- Billable work on the job
- Driving between jobs
- Waiting for parts or supply house runs
- Waiting on the office for information or approval
- Paperwork and invoicing
- Shop time at the start and end of the day
- Rework and callbacks

Billable efficiency = billable hours ÷ total paid hours. Most owners guess high. Once you see the breakdown, the fixes are usually obvious. Note that every one of these hours is generally paid time, so the goal is to spend it better, not to stop counting it. Read cutting wage and hour risk.

CUT THE DRIVE TIME

- Group work by zone, and try to keep each tech in one area per day.
- Let the people booking the jobs see the day's route, so they offer times that fit.
- Dispatch from home when it makes sense, and when it fits your pay rules.
- Compare drive time across techs. Differences often point to dispatch habits.

Even small improvements add up. Twenty minutes saved per tech per day is about 87 hours per tech per year, assuming 260 working days. If you've got more work than you can run, that's real added capacity.

STOP THE SUPPLY HOUSE RUNS

Each parts run can take up an hour and interrupt a job. Reduce them by:

- Stocking trucks with a standard list, based on what's actually used
- Having parts delivered to the job or the shop overnight
- Using a shared restock process at the end of each week
- Recording what caused each run, then adding those parts to the truck list
- Keeping track of inventory, so a stocked truck doesn't turn into a cluttered one

GET THE RIGHT TECH TO THE RIGHT JOB

Sending your newest helper to a complicated repair wastes time and often results in a callback. Sending your best diagnostician to change a filter wastes talent. Tag jobs by skill and let your dispatcher see those tags. Give hard diagnostic calls to people who can solve them.

PREPARE BEFORE ARRIVAL

Good office notes save time on site. Booking calls should capture the equipment, the symptoms and what's been tried. Techs should be able to read the job's history and photos before they knock. Five minutes reading in the driveway can prevent an hour of guesswork.

FINISH THE JOB AT THE JOB

When paperwork waits until evening, details get lost and invoices go out late. Have techs close out each job on a phone or tablet before leaving: notes, photos, invoice, payment and next steps. It takes minutes, and it also gets you paid faster.

ATTACK CALLBACKS

A callback costs twice: a tech's unpaid time, and a slot you could have sold. Track callbacks by tech, job type and cause. Common causes are incomplete diagnosis, bad

parts, poor communication and rushing. Review each one without blaming anybody, then teach the lesson to the group.

GIVE THEM BETTER TOOLS

Add up what a tool costs compared with the hours it saves. A better vacuum pump, a good camera, a battery tool or a reliable tablet can pay for itself quickly. Ask your techs what wastes the most time, and buy accordingly.

PROTECT CAPACITY IN THE OFFICE

Technicians lose a surprising amount of time to the office: calling for addresses, approvals and part numbers. Every call a tech has to make is a sign the system's missing something. Keep a list for one week, and then fix the top three reasons. Also make sure your dispatch process supports the field instead of fighting it.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Don't try to fix everything. Pick the biggest time thief, and make one change at a time. Measure again after a month. A tech who gains an hour a day doesn't need to work any harder. They've just stopped losing the day to things that were never their fault.

Sources: Service ProCall program guidance.

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BEST PRACTICES: HIRING AND KEEPING GOOD TECHS

MAKE IT A HABIT

What good looks like

- You know your turnover rate and why people leave.
- Every new tech has a 90-day plan and a mentor.
- Pay, growth and recognition are clear and written down.

The habits

1. Hire for attitude and teach the trade, with a clear path from helper to lead.
2. Plan the first 90 days: ride-alongs, checklists and weekly check-ins.
3. Hold stay interviews with your best people before they think about leaving.
4. Make pay plans simple enough to explain on one page.
5. Use a fair scorecard, and coach before you correct.
6. Remove the frustrations that make techs quit, such as bad routes, missing parts and chaotic days.

Signs it's time to get help

- You lose more than one in five techs a year.
- New hires quit in the first few months.
- Techs complain about routes, callbacks or the office.

How one shop did it: Barron Heating AC Electrical & Plumbing (Ferndale, Washington). Built its own 15-week technician school with classroom, lab and field time, and takes six students per class. Nearly 40 graduates, retention above 90%, every graduate passing the NATE and EPA exams, and warranty callbacks reportedly cut in half. Contracting Business, July 15, 2026

Where we fit: We don't place techs. ProCall Field helps with what makes them stay: organized days, fair scorecards and training.

More on hiring and keeping good techs