

Air Conditioning Technician interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Air Conditioning Technician roles mix on-the-tools technical checks with questions about safety compliance and customer handling, since the job involves both refrigeration work and direct contact with clients on-site.

- **Process:** Questions asking you to walk through how you'd carry out a standard job, such as an installation or a service, from start to finish.
- **Technical:** Questions testing your diagnostic reasoning with tools like pressure gauges, multimeters and thermal imaging cameras.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions on refrigerant handling, ARCTick requirements and working safely around electrical and pressurised systems.
- **Scenario:** Judgement-based questions about handling a difficult or ambiguous fault under time pressure, often on an emergency callout.
- **Behavioural:** Past-experience questions about dealing with customers, deadlines or problems on previous jobs.

Most interviews open with a general chat about your licensing and trade background, move into technical and process questions to check your practical knowledge, then move into a scenario question to see how you think on the spot, and close with a behavioural question about customer interactions before you get a chance to ask questions of your own.

1. Walk me through how you'd approach installing a split system air conditioner in a new build, from delivery to handover.

Why they ask

Checks that you understand the full installation sequence, including reading plans and specifications, not just the mechanical steps.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a step-by-step walkthrough in the order the work actually happens, noting where you check specifications and where you'd flag issues to a supervisor.

Example answer

"I start by checking the plans and specifications against what's been delivered to site, making sure the unit and ductwork match the design. I then position and secure the indoor and outdoor units, run and insulate the refrigerant lines, and install the ductwork to the specified layout. Once everything's connected, I pressure test the lines, evacuate the system, and charge it with refrigerant to the manufacturer's spec. Before handover I test airflow, temperature and humidity to confirm the system's performing as designed, then walk the customer through basic operation and maintenance."

2. How do you diagnose a system that's not cooling properly?

Why they ask

Tests your practical fault-finding process and familiarity with diagnostic tools like pressure gauges and thermal imaging.

How to structure your answer

Explain your diagnostic reasoning in a logical sequence, from simple checks through to more involved testing, showing you rule things out systematically rather than guessing.

Example answer

"I start with the basics: filters, airflow and thermostat settings, since a lot of cooling complaints come down to something simple. If that checks out, I use a pressure gauge set to check refrigerant levels and system pressures, and a multimeter to test electrical components like the compressor and capacitors. A thermal imaging camera helps me spot restrictions or uneven cooling in the circuit that aren't obvious otherwise. I work through it methodically so I'm confident in the fault before I start replacing parts."

3. What's your process for handling refrigerant safely and staying compliant with ARCtick requirements?

Why they ask

Refrigerant handling is tightly regulated in Australia, and employers need to know you'll keep the business compliant, not just get the job done.

How to structure your answer

Give a clear explanation of your compliance practice, covering both the technical safety steps and the record-keeping side.

Example answer

"I hold my ARCtick licence and always recover refrigerant properly with a recovery machine rather than venting it, since that's both a legal requirement and better practice for the environment. I log refrigerant quantities used and recovered for each job so there's a clear record if it's ever needed. I also check equipment for leaks before and after work, and I keep my PPE on when handling refrigerant or working near pressurised lines."

4. You arrive at an emergency callout in summer and the fault isn't obvious. The system's in a nursing home and there's no aircon running. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement under pressure and how you prioritise when there's both a technical puzzle and a vulnerable client group involved.

How to structure your answer

Answer by explaining your immediate priorities first, then how you'd work through the technical problem without losing sight of the urgency.

Example answer

"My first priority is understanding how urgent the situation is for the residents, so I'd talk to staff about whether any temporary cooling, like portable units or fans, can help while I work. Then I'd move through my usual diagnostic process: checking power supply, airflow, refrigerant pressures and electrical components in that order, working quickly but not skipping steps just because there's pressure. If I can't resolve it on-site straight away, I'd be upfront with staff about timeframes and what's needed, rather than guessing at a fix that might fail again that night."

5. Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult or frustrated customer during a callout.

Why they ask

Technicians deal directly with clients, often when something's broken and they're already annoyed, so employers want to see you can keep things professional.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"I was called to a commercial kitchen where the aircon had failed on a hot day and the manager was frustrated about the impact on staff and customers. My task was to fix the system while keeping the

manager informed rather than leaving them in the dark. I explained what I was checking and roughly how long it would take, and let them know as soon as I'd identified a failed capacitor. Once I'd replaced it and confirmed the system was cooling properly, the manager was a lot calmer, mainly because they'd been kept in the loop rather than left waiting without answers."

6. How do you explain a costly repair to a customer who's expecting something simple?

Why they ask

Tests communication skills and honesty when the technical reality doesn't match the customer's expectations, which comes up often in this trade.

How to structure your answer

Describe your communication approach directly, focusing on how you build trust rather than just deliver bad news.

Example answer

"I explain what I found in plain terms, without jargon, and show them the failed part where I can. I'll usually walk them through why the cheaper fix they were expecting wouldn't actually solve the problem, and give them the options that are realistic, including repair versus replacement if the unit's old. Being upfront about cost early, rather than surprising them at the end, generally gets a better reaction even when the news isn't great."