

## What is a Registered Piano Technician (RPT)

The field of Piano technology is an unregulated trade. Therefore the Piano Technicians Guild has set its own standards of quality for piano technicians. The Guild has two types of members: Registered Piano Technicians and Associates. Associate membership is open to anyone with a "professional or avocational interest in piano technology." On the other hand, the title of "Registered Piano Technician" must be earned by passing a series of examinations.

The RPT examinations are in three parts. There is a written exam, testing basic knowledge of piano design, tuning theory, repair and general piano technology. Next, a technician takes a standardized tuning exam. At least three examiners, set up a "master tuning" by tuning a test piano until they are convinced as a group that every note is in the best possible place. This "master tuning" is then used as the standard against which the examinee is measured. Using sensitive electronic measuring equipment, the examinee's tuning is compared against the "master tuning." This system gives a fair and standardized test for all chapters of the Piano Technicians Guild. The next phase of the examinations is a "technical test." This test involves regulation of a grand action model and a vertical action model. On the test for the vertical action, the examinee is given a bag of parts, and must assemble it into an action model and make it function correctly. This method keeps the exam a reasonable length but still tests for the necessary skills. Then there is a repair test, covering all the basic in-home type repairs, such as broken strings, key repairs, and broken action parts.

The rating of RPT is not meant to be a rating for a rebuilder; it is meant to show that the technician is ready to handle normal piano service and repair. The Piano Technicians Guild has put a lot of time and effort into its examinations to establish a good set of standardized tests which will help insure quality service. The written test takes about 1 hour. The tuning and technical tests take about 4 hours each.

Only Registered Piano Technicians can advertise with that title. The Piano Technicians Guild does allow Associate members to advertise as "Associate" members, but these members have not yet passed the exams. They are encouraged to take advantage of PTG's educational offerings. When you are looking for service on your piano, look for a Registered Piano Technician. The logo above designates that the member is an RPT. Note the words Registered Piano Technician in the logo itself.

Here are our official descriptions of these categories :

A Registered Piano Technician (RPT) has passed a series of rigorous examinations on the maintenance, repair, and tuning of pianos. Only RPTs are authorized by The Piano Technicians Guild to display the logo containing the words "Registered Piano Technician".

An Associate is a member who has not passed the RPT examinations. Associates may be studying piano technology and working toward RPT status, or may be piano retailers, rebuilders, refinishers or other specialists.