

Auto Electrician interview questions

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What to expect

Auto Electrician interviews mix hands-on technical questioning with practical judgement checks, since employers need to know you can find a fault correctly the first time and work safely around live electrical systems. Expect a fair amount of detail-probing on your diagnostic process: what you fixed and how you got there.

- **Process:** Questions asking you to walk through your actual diagnostic method, step by step, for a given fault type.
- **Behavioural:** Past-experience questions about tricky faults, mistakes, or working under time pressure.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations testing judgement, particularly around safety and compliance decisions.
- **Technical knowledge:** Direct questions on tools, components and standards to confirm depth of trade knowledge.
- **Client-facing:** How you'd explain a technical fault or cost to a customer who isn't mechanically minded.

Most interviews start with a short chat about your trade background and ticket or apprenticeship history, move into technical and process questions (sometimes with a practical bench test or fault-finding exercise on-site), then cover safety and compliance scenarios, and finish with questions about availability, mobile work or dealership rostering depending on the employer.

1. Walk me through how you'd diagnose an intermittent electrical fault, say a dashboard warning light that comes and goes.

Why they ask

This checks whether you have a repeatable diagnostic method rather than guessing or swapping parts.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step walkthrough: start with initial checks, move through tools used at each stage, explain how you narrow down the cause, and end with how you confirm the fix.

Example answer

"First I'd talk to the driver about when the light appears, whether it's linked to vibration, weather or a specific action like braking. Then I'd connect the OBD-II scanner to pull any stored fault codes and freeze-frame data. If nothing's conclusive, I'd use a multimeter to check voltage at the relevant connectors and wiggle-test the harness while watching for voltage drops, since intermittent faults are often a loose or corroded connection rather than a failed component. Once I isolate the point of failure, I'd repair or replace it, clear the codes, and road test to confirm the fault doesn't return."

2. Tell me about a time you found a fault that other technicians had missed.

Why they ask

Employers want evidence of methodical troubleshooting and persistence, particularly since misdiagnosis wastes customer time and workshop resources.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"A vehicle came into the workshop after two prior attempts elsewhere to fix a no-start issue, with a starter motor already replaced unnecessarily. My task was to find the actual cause. I went back to basics, checked the wiring diagram, and traced voltage drop through the ignition switch circuit rather than assuming the starter was still at fault. I found a corroded earth connection near the chassis that was starving the circuit of proper voltage. Once I cleaned and resealed the connection, the car started reliably, and the customer avoided another unnecessary part replacement."

3. A customer's vehicle comes in for a routine service, and during your checks you notice wiring insulation that's melted near the battery terminal, suggesting a fire risk. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests safety judgement and whether you'll prioritise vehicle and customer safety over convenience or speed.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: state the immediate safety action, then the follow-up steps and communication with the customer.

Example answer

"I'd stop work on anything else and isolate the battery immediately to remove the risk. Then I'd inspect the full extent of the damage before touching anything further, since melted insulation can indicate a short elsewhere in the loom, not just a local issue. I'd explain to the customer straightaway that the vehicle isn't safe to drive until it's repaired, give them a clear explanation of what caused it and what the repair involves, and get sign-off before proceeding rather than assuming they'll accept the extra cost."

4. What's the difference between using a wiring diagram and relying on a diagnostic scanner, and when would you use each?

Why they ask

Checks genuine technical understanding rather than over-reliance on scan tools, since scanners don't always point to the actual root cause.

How to structure your answer

Direct technical explanation with a practical example.

Example answer

"A scanner tells you what the vehicle's computer thinks is wrong, based on stored fault codes and live data, but it won't always tell you the physical cause. A wiring diagram lets me trace the actual circuit path to find things like a broken wire, bad earth or corroded connector that a scanner might just flag as a generic sensor fault. I use the scanner first to narrow down which system or circuit is affected, then the wiring diagram to physically locate and fix the real problem."

5. How do you make sure your electrical repairs meet Australian vehicle safety standards before signing off?

Why they ask

Confirms awareness of compliance obligations and roadworthy requirements, which matter given the legal weight of a compliance sign-off.

How to structure your answer

Process explanation focused on compliance steps.

Example answer

"After any repair I retest the circuit for correct voltage and function against manufacturer specification, check that wiring runs are properly secured and insulated, and confirm nothing I've done affects other systems like airbags or ABS wiring. For a roadworthy or compliance check, I go through the relevant

checklist for that state, document what was tested, and only sign off once I'm satisfied the vehicle meets the required standard, not just that the original fault is fixed."

6. How would you explain a costly electrical repair to a customer who doesn't understand cars?

Why they ask

Client-facing skills matter in dealership and workshop settings where technicians often deal with customers directly.

How to structure your answer

Practical example showing plain-language communication.

Example answer

"I'd avoid jargon and use an analogy they can relate to, like comparing a wiring harness to the nervous system of the car rather than throwing around terms like 'CAN bus' or 'earth fault'. I'd explain what's actually broken, why it's affecting the car the way it is, and what happens if it's left unrepaired, then give them a clear cost breakdown so they understand what they're paying for rather than just seeing a total on an invoice."