

This has been tough. In the almost 400 titles I have in my professional library, I have tried to get down to the “ones you must have” as a beginning for your personal or business library. I got down to about 150 in the first pass and it’s gotten a lot more difficult from there. The second pass got down to 84. The third pass got down to 60. Then 58. Like EQ’ing a system, you need to know when you’re done.

Worse, some of these “must haves” are out-of-print, unavailable or someone is asking ridiculous money for a used copy. However, keep in mind, I started building this library 30 years ago. You have to start somewhere.

Some of these references get expensive, so sometimes I’ve bought previous editions. I’ve looked at alternative vendors, at times ordering directly from the publisher as I found it was less expensive. There will be later editions of some of the ones I’ve listed. On occasion, I’ve found “fun” books at yard sales as was the case this past weekend. I found the Encyclopedia of Physics, 2nd Edition and the Mechanical Engineer’s Reference Book, each for \$0.50. What am I going to do with the Mechanical Engineer’s Reference Book? I don’t know, but for \$0.50, I’m willing to find out.

I would start with Handbook for Sound Engineers and build from there.

Used physics and science text books can often be found at used bookstores and yard sales. A used bookstore in a college town can yield some great finds. I’ve been known to troll a college campus’ bookstore and taken photos of currently required texts for later research.

Even as an audiovisual practitioner or “low voltage” contractor, you should understand electrical theory, grounding and have a working knowledge of the National Electrical Code (NEC). Not only so you can properly specify the infrastructure needed to support the AV system but it also helps you to understand what’s happening in a misbehaving system so you can more properly troubleshoot.

Mike Holt has quality NEC resources and you will find them on sale on occasion. Also sign up for his free newsletter and check out his many YouTube videos. <https://www.mikeholt.com/>

Jim Brown was an audiovisual consultant in the Chicago area for many years. He has a ton of papers on his website. Look under “Publications”. <http://www.audiosystemsgroup.com/>

Some of the absolute most valuable audio training comes from Synergetic Audio Concepts or just SynAudCon and even SAC for short. Pat Brown’s in-person classes are known to be the finest available but he also has online offerings as well. Some of the smartest cats in the audio world can be found on the SynAudCon forum and access to the forum is a ridiculously low \$30.00 per year. Join the He(a)rd. I wish our industry had a video counterpart like SynAudCon. <https://www.prosoundtraining.com/>

The late Ray Rayburn wrote many articles during his lifetime. Many will be appropriate for those just starting out. <http://www.soundfirst.com/technical.html>

For those doing church audio, Curt Taipale’s Church Sound Check forum and training is a great resource. <https://www.churchsoundcheck.com/>

You may have other references or books that you favor that you don’t see here. Let me know. I’m always ready to look at new resources.

Lastly, I remember back when I bought Sound System Engineering, 2nd Edition and I hardly understood any of it. Give yourself time. You're not going to get everything at once. Read, experiment and get your hands dirty on-site. Growth comes with time and practice. One of the saddest things I've seen over the years is an integrator with a pool of test and measurement equipment that's never utilized because no one knows how it works or understands how to use it. Dust it off and see what it can do for you to make your life easier and give your client a better system.

Tom Kehr