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T H E **J O B** C E N T E R

CARPENTER



Carpenters work primarily in the construction industry, building or repairing structures such as houses, buildings, and bridges.

Carpenters are the largest group of building trade workers. Using tools such as saws, hammers, drills, screwdrivers, and sanders, carpenters cut, fit, and assemble wood and other materials to construct buildings, bridges, boats, and many other structures.

Most carpenters work in construction. They build, remodel, or repair buildings and other structures. Carpenters employed by a general building contractor might frame walls and partitions, hang kitchen cabinets, and install paneling and tile ceilings.

Rough or outside carpenters set up scaffolds, ladders, platforms, and safety barricades at construction sites. Finish or inside carpenters install doors, trim, and molding. They also build stairs and lay floors. Some carpenters specialize in installing hardwood floors.

Maintenance carpenters keep buildings in good repair by replacing broken glass panes, ceiling tiles, and doors. They might build or install counters, benches, cabinets, and shelves. Other carpenters design, build, and repair desks, cabinets, tables, and furniture.

Dan Olin Carpentry Instructor

Q: How is being a carpenter different today than ten years ago?

A: Although the trade is basically the same, the technology, tools, and materials have all greatly improved. In general, power tools are being manufactured much more to the carpenter's needs rather than the manufacturer's needs. Also, today's prices are much more reasonable than the past.

Q: What is the future of carpentry, given these advances in technology?

A: The technology improves a carpenter's capability, but overall, the industry will always be strong. As long as people are living under roofs, the future of carpentry looks great!

Carpenters need to have good math skills in order to measure and mark building materials. They must also know how to read blueprints and be familiar with local building code requirements. They should know about the qualities of the different woods and materials they use.

In addition to wood, carpenters work with plastic, fiberglass, and drywall. They use nails, screws, staples, or adhesives to join the materials. They use plumb bobs, levels, rules, and framing squares to check their work.

Today, many carpenters may specialize in one or two activities. Some of these may include erecting scaffolding, installing exterior and interior trim, or performing concrete construction. However, it seems to be beneficial for a carpenter to acquire as many carpentry skills as possible, especially if they remodel homes.

Each carpentry task is somewhat different, but most involve the same fundamental steps. Carpenters have numerous job options offered by a variety of businesses. These companies range from small home builders and remodeling companies to large construction contractors and specialty contractors.

Q: What are employers looking for?

A: I meet with a great deal of employers and, overall, they want reliability. Obviously, the actual carpentry skills are a huge part of the job, but companies are looking for an employee who is honest, who shows up on time, and who is willing to learn.

Q: Looking at the work available in Florida, what kind of role does carpentry play?

A: Real estate affects the industry, but for our area, that should be changing within the year. Each day, new homes are built and new companies are formed. Even with the changes in the economy, we are constantly expanding.

SKILLS REQUIRED

Carpenters should have manual dexterity, excellent eye-hand coordination, and good math skills.

WHERE/HOW TO GET TRAINING

Schooling

Carpenters learn their trade through formal and informal training programs. To become a skilled carpenter usually takes between 3 and 4 years of both classroom and on-the-job training. While there are a number of different ways to obtain this training, in general, the more formalized the process, the more skilled you will become, and the more in demand by employers. This training can begin in a high school, where classes in English, algebra, geometry, physics, mechanical drawing, blueprint reading, and general shop are recommended. After high school, there are a number of different ways to obtain the necessary training. One of the ways is to begin a job with a contractor who will provide on-the-job training. Entry-level workers generally start as helpers, assisting more experienced workers. During this time, the carpenter's helper may elect to attend a technical school

or community college to receive further trade-related training. Some employers also offer employees formal apprenticeships. These programs combine on-the-job training with related classroom instruction. On the job, apprentices become familiar with common carpentry jobs and learn to use the tools, machines, equipment, and materials of the trade.

Financial Aid

Grants, scholarships, loans, and work/study programs are available for prospective students. For most of this aid, high school seniors must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is available from high school guidance offices and postsecondary financial aid offices.

For more information on federal financial aid programs, or to apply electronically, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov>.



For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4FEDAID

FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The need for carpenters is expected to grow as construction activity increases in response to demand for new housing, office and retail space, and

for modernizing and expanding schools and industrial plants. A strong home remodeling market also will create a large demand for carpenters.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Carpentry work is sometimes strenuous. Prolonged standing, climbing, bending, and kneeling often are necessary. Carpenters risk injury working with rough materials, using

power equipment, and working in situations where they might slip or fall. Although many carpenters work indoors, those that work outdoors are subject to variable weather conditions.

RESOURCES - HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

BOOK:

Measure Twice, Cut Once:
Lessons from a Master
Carpenter by Norm Abram

GENERAL:

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
101 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001
www.carpenters.org

ONLINE:

www.agc.org
(Associated General
Contractors of America)

LOCAL:

Career Counselor, Vickie Miller
941-751-7900 ext. 2016
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JOBS IN THIS FIELD

Job titles	Place of work	Kind of work	Average salary*
Carpenter (journeyworker)	Construction or building site	Builds different structures according to blueprints; measures materials and joins them using nails, screws, or adhesives.	\$13-25 (hourly)
Maintenance carpenter	Buildings, offices, schools, hotels, factories, etc.	Makes repairs to building; replaces glass panes, doors, etc.; builds cabinets, shelves, etc.	\$16-28 (hourly)
Interior systems carpenter	Buildings, offices, other public structures	Installs all sorts of modern equipment and material, such as acoustical ceilings, raised floors, and office furniture systems.	\$18-30 (hourly)

*Salaries may vary depending on region and experience. Sources: Chronicle Guidance Publications and Occupational Outlook Handbook.