

Carpentry

Carpenters construct and repair building frameworks and structures—such as stairways, doorframes, partitions, and rafters made from wood and other materials. They also may install kitchen cabinets, siding, and drywall.

Work Environment

Because carpenters are involved in many types of construction, from building highways and bridges to installing kitchen cabinets, they may work both indoors and out. The work is sometimes strenuous, and carpenters experience a higher than average rate of injuries and illnesses.

Carpenters may work in cramped spaces, and constant lifting, standing, and kneeling can be tiring. Those who work outdoors are subject to variable weather conditions.

Many Carpenters are usually self employed, in the United states for example in 2010 40% of carpenters fell in the category of self employed.

How to get Qualified

Although most carpenters learn their trade through a formal apprenticeship, some learn on the job, starting as a helper. There are now formal programmes available and certification is required for persons to practice as carpenters.

Job Outlook

Employment of carpenters is projected to grow 20 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations. Job prospects for carpenters should improve over the decade as construction activity rebounds from the recent recession

The need to repair and replace roads and bridges also will spur some employment growth for carpenters. Much of this growth, however, depends on spending by governments as they attempt to upgrade existing infrastructure.

Offsetting growth, however, will be the increasing use of modular and prefabricated components. Roof assemblies, walls, stairs, and complete bathrooms are just a few of the prefabricated components that can be manufactured in a separate plant and then assembled onsite by carpenters. The prefabricated components replace the most labor intensive and time consuming onsite building activities.

Job Prospects

Overall job prospects for carpenters should improve over the coming decade as construction activity rebounds from the recent recession.

The number of openings is expected to vary by geographic area. Because construction activity parallels the movement of people and businesses, areas of the country with the largest population increases will require the most carpenters.

Employment of carpenters, like that of many other construction workers, is sensitive to fluctuations in the economy. On the one hand, workers in these trades may experience periods of unemployment when the overall level of construction falls. On the other hand, peak periods of building activity may produce shortages of carpenters. Experienced and certified carpenters should have the best job opportunities.