

Occupations and Workplaces

Construction Worker - General

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What does a construction worker do?

Construction is an industry that requires working at ever-changing locations and work environments. This profile refers to general construction workers. Others at a construction site include [electricians](#), [carpenters](#) and [plumbers](#).

Some of the main duties of a general construction worker are to:

- Install various commercial, industrial or residential systems.
- Ensure that projects conform to building codes and regulations.
- Use, clean and maintain various types of equipment.
- Supervise or apprentice other workers.

What are some health and safety issues for construction workers?

- Pain or injury from physical overexertion, [repetitive manual tasks](#), [prolonged standing](#), or working in [awkward positions](#).
- Exposure to [moulds, fungi](#) and [bird](#) or [rodent](#) droppings.
- Exposure to [lead](#), [wood dust](#), asbestos, paints, solvents, and other toxic [chemicals or material](#)
- Working in [extreme temperatures](#) and [UV radiation](#).

- Working in adverse weather conditions (such as [cold](#), [heat](#), [high winds](#), or [lightning](#)).
 - Working with [hand tools](#), [powered tools](#) and heavy powered equipment.
 - Excess [vibration](#) in the hands, arms or body from powered tools or equipment.
 - [Confined spaces](#).
 - [Noise](#).
 - [Working at heights](#).
 - Working with [portable ladders](#) and [fixed ladders](#).
 - [Electrical hazards](#).
 - [Hazardous energy control](#) including [lockout/tag out](#).
 - Working with cranes, hoists, and other [material handling equipment](#).
 - [Slips, trips and falls](#).
 - Respiratory hazards from wood dust.
 - Explosion and fire hazards from [combustible dusts](#).
 - [Stress](#).
 - [Shift work](#) or [extended work days](#).
 - [Working alone](#).
 - Struck by mobile equipment.
 - Maintaining [good housekeeping](#).
 - [Workplace violence and harrassment](#).
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What are some preventive measures for construction workers?

- Scan the workplace for existing and potential hazards before work begins and take appropriate controls. Be aware that conditions can change constantly.
- Inspect all equipment and machinery for any defects before work begins.
- Keep tools and equipment in good working order.
- Use correct [personal protective equipment](#) and apparel, including [safety footwear](#).
- Keep all work areas clear of clutter and equipment.
- Avoid awkward body positions or take frequent breaks.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.

- Have training before beginning any task, especially high-risk activities such as working at heights, hazardous energy control (lockout/tag out), or confined space entry.
 - Follow a recommended shiftwork pattern, and be aware of the associated hazards.
 - Be aware of seasonal hazards from working in extreme temperatures.
 - Know how to get help in an emergency for working alone situations.
 - Be aware of the emergency response plans before work begins.
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What are some good general safe work practices?

- Follow safety procedures for:
 - [Confined space](#) entry
 - Working at heights
 - [Electrical](#) safety
 - [Lockout/tagout](#) of machinery
 - Machinery and [safeguard](#)
 - [Ladders](#)
 - [Material handling](#)
 - Working with tools and equipment
 - [Working alone](#)
 - Extreme work temperatures
 - [Fire safety](#)
- Practice safe [lifting](#) techniques.
- Know how to [identify hazards](#)
- Follow company safety rules and safe operating procedures.
- Stay informed about chemical hazards and [WHMIS 2015](#).
- Know how to [report a hazard](#).
- Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.

Where can I get more information?

General information is available in OSH Answers or through the CCOHS person-to-person [Inquiries Service](#).

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