

EXPLORING CAREERS WITHOUT COLLEGE

VOCATIONAL CAREERS IN
CONSTRUCTION

by Cynthia Kennedy Henzel



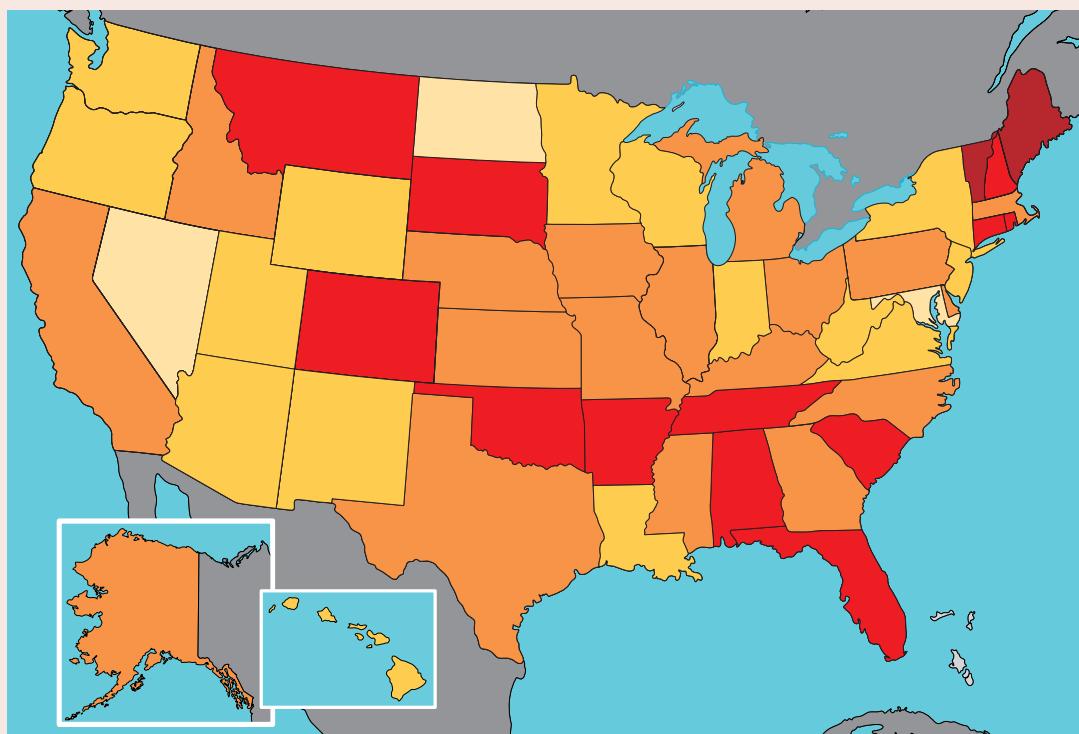
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THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AT A GLANCE

SELF-EMPLOYMENT RATES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, 2023



Legend:

- Less than 18% (Yellow)
- 18% to 21% (Orange)
- 22% to 24% (Light Orange)
- 25% to 29% (Red)
- 30% or higher (Dark Red)

Source: Natalia Siniavskia, "Construction Self-Employment Stable at 23%," National Association of Home Builders, February 18, 2025, www.eyeonhousing.org.

CARPENTER

Carpenters work with many types of materials. These include wood and plastic. They construct or repair buildings and furniture. Many build homes for people. Others work on larger projects. These might be office buildings or schools. The number of building jobs available often depends on how well the economy is doing.

Some carpenters specialize in the **framework** of buildings. They install rafters

Carpenters work with a variety of hand and power tools, such as hammers, drills, screwdrivers, and saws.



to support roofs and outside walls. Others finish the inside of a building. They put up interior walls. They install wood floors and put in cabinets.

Carpenters must pay attention to details. Accurate measurements are important.

Carpenter

Minimum Education: High school diploma

Personal Qualities: Physically strong, detail oriented, good communication skills

Certification and Licensing: Not required, but certifications can help advancement

Working Conditions: Carpentry is a physically demanding job, and workers may be inside or outside depending on the project.

Average Salary: \$59,310 (2024)

Number of Jobs: 923,100 (2023)

Future Job Outlook: 4 percent growth expected between 2023 and 2033



Carpenters must accurately measure to make sure parts fit together correctly.

Math skills are necessary. Carpenters must calculate how much material is needed for a job. They use hand tools and power tools for different tasks. They must lift heavy materials. Carpenters need to be in good physical shape.

Strong communication skills are important, too. Carpenters communicate with coworkers and workers in different fields. This helps keep projects on schedule.

FIND OUT MORE

Explore the Trades: How to Become an Electrician

[https://explorethetrades.org
/what-we-do/education/electrician
/how-to-become-an-electrician](https://explorethetrades.org/what-we-do/education/electrician/how-to-become-an-electrician)

This page on the Explore the Trades website provides information on how people can become electricians. The site includes step-by-step guides and answers questions about the industry.

National Electrical Contractors Association

www.necanet.org

The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) is an electrical organization that provides services to buildings and housing across the United States. The NECA site has news about the industry and links to chapter associations in different states.

OTHER JOBS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

HVAC Technician

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) technicians work on heating and cooling systems. They inspect systems for problems. They also install new systems. Part of their job is to explain problems to customers. HVAC technicians often make suggestions to help systems work better. Or they may have a contract to regularly maintain a system. Most HVAC techs attend a trade school. This takes between 6 months and 2 years. HVAC techs can work with a professional in the field for hands-on training.



Wind Turbine Technician

Wind turbine technicians maintain and repair wind turbines. These convert wind into electricity. Technicians climb turbines to inspect and repair the towers and blades. They test the different parts of the turbine that generate power. Then they repair or replace parts as needed. In addition, technicians collect data for research. Wind turbine technician is one of the fastest-growing occupations. Demand is expected to increase by 60 percent between 2023 and 2033.



GLOSSARY

conduct

to transfer heat or electricity

contractors

people or companies hired to oversee construction projects

drywall

a type of board made from plaster used to create walls inside a building

foreman

a supervisor who oversees a group of workers to ensure work is done safely and efficiently

framework

the part of a building that supports a structure

meticulous

giving a lot of attention to details by being careful and precise

precise

accurate or exact

unions

associations formed by people with common interests, often to advance trades

SOURCE NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: CARPENTER

1. Robert Kohn, “What Does It Take to Become a Carpenter? Robert’s Answer,” *CareerVillage.org*, June 13, 2023. www.careervillage.org.
2. Dan Champagne, “What Does It Take to Become a Carpenter? Dan’s Answer,” *CareerVillage.org*, March 8, 2024. www.careervillage.org.

CHAPTER TWO: TILE SETTER

3. Quoted in Lesley Goddin, “Women in Tile 2022,” *TileLetter*, March 1, 2022. www.tileletter.com.
4. Quoted in “A Good Tile Installer Is King . . . & Other Revelations You’ve Never Thought About,” *Hamilton Tile*, October 29, 2017. www.hamiltontilega.com.
5. Joshua Nordstrom, “NTCA Tile Setter Craftsperson of the Year, Residential,” *TileLetter*, May 1, 2024. www.tileletter.com.

CHAPTER THREE: PLUMBER

6. Quoted in Tammy Sofranic, “A Day in the Life of . . . a Plumber,” *Skillsroad*, n.d. <https://skillsroad.com.au>.
7. Quoted in “An Eye-Opening Day in the Life of a Professional Plumber,” *Bears Home Solutions*, n.d. <https://bearshomesolutions.com>.

CHAPTER FOUR: ELECTRICIAN

8. Phil Remster, “A Day in the Life of an Electrician—an Insider’s Look at This Rewarding Profession,” *SJ Technical Training*, March 28, 2024. <https://sjelectricaltraining.com>.
9. Quoted in Tonia Nifong, “A Day in the Life of an Electrician: Michael Lucas,” *Berwick Electric Co.*, October 16, 2013. www.berwickelectric.com.

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