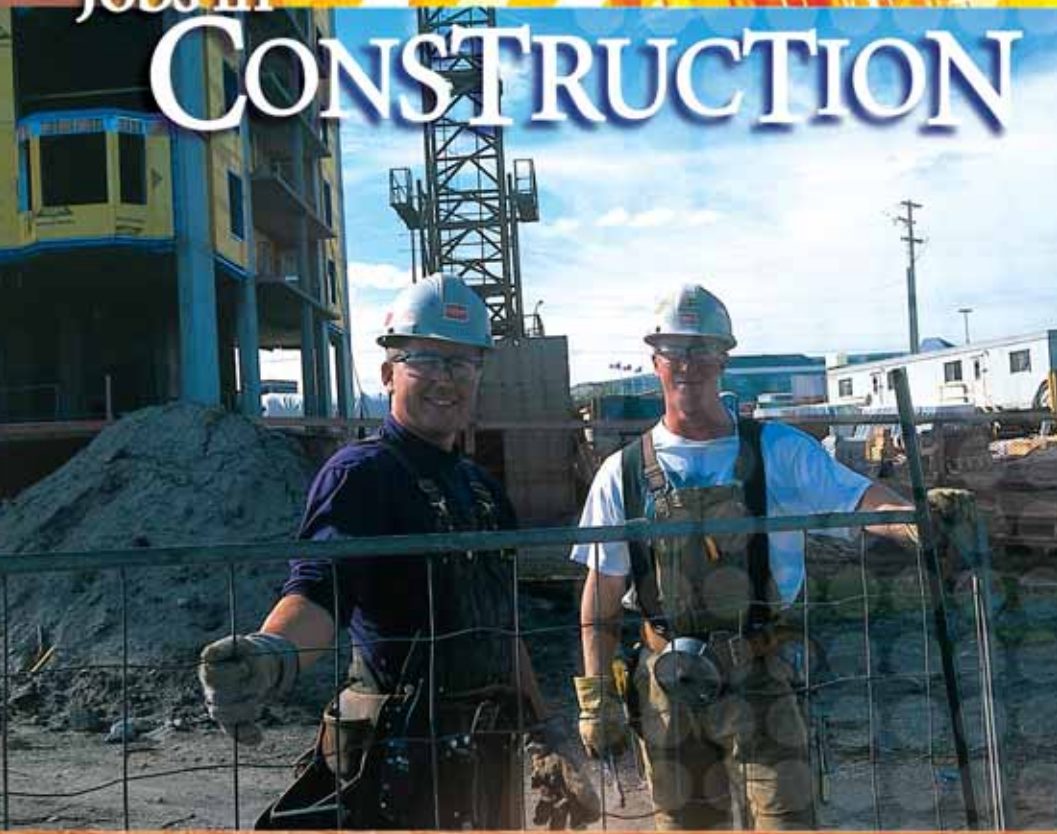


Jobs in

CONSTRUCTION



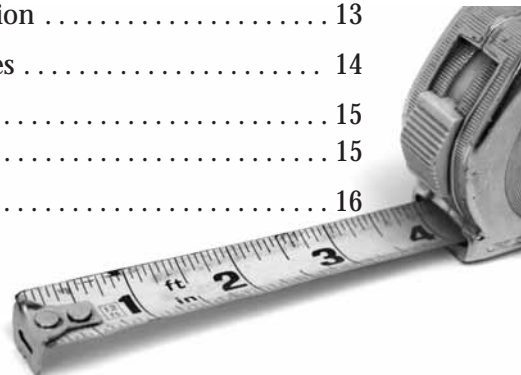
career opportunities series



Cette publication peut aussi être disponible en français sous le titre:
Emplois dans l'industrie de la construction

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JOBS IN CONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

We all need warm, safe places in which to live and work. Here in the North, this basic need is even more pressing because of our climate. And every year, our construction industry responds, creating efficient, well-designed and carefully built structures for us. It's no easy task. Our extreme winters and variable landscape bring challenges to the field that don't exist anywhere else in Canada.

You can see the signs of the construction industry all around us: an old house being renovated or demolished, new units being built and an office building going up. Because some communities and construction sites in the NWT are so far from suppliers, building in the North is generally left to the experts, who are familiar with the amount of supplies needed, their availability and shipping schedules. When the economy is an upswing, the construction industry is kept busy too, building projects needed by other industries. As long as there are people who live and work in the North there will be jobs in construction.

WHAT IS CONSTRUCTION?

At its most obvious, construction means building new structures, such as homes and office towers. But it also includes renovating, repairing, maintaining and demolishing existing structures. Construction workers also build bridges, mines, docks, airports and less obvious structures, such as roads, pipelines and wells. Construction projects can be built for individuals, small or large businesses, government agencies and other parties.

Contracting is a common practice on large construction projects. When a project is too big for one company to build, a general contractor will hire other companies to complete parts of the larger job, such as supplying needed material, labour or services.

PLANNING

Surveyors, geologists and inspectors assess the building site, studying the underlying land. They determine if it is safe to build the proposed structure. They look for things that will prevent construction from taking place or make it difficult. Architects and engineers design a building to meet the needs of the owners and draw blueprints of the proposed project that show how it will fit together.

SITE PREPARATION

Before workers can start building, they have to prepare the site. Some of them cut down trees and brush, others operate machines that crush rocks and move them out of the way, and they level the site with bulldozers. When the site is in an undeveloped area, construction workers may need to build an access road and hook up water and power before work can get started on the actual structure. In remote areas, such as most mining or oil and gas camps, accommodation facilities have to be constructed for the workers to live in as the project unfolds.

CONSTRUCTION

People at work in different occupations are involved in the actual building process. Many of them work in trades. There are many kinds of projects, but in a house, for example, journeypersons, tradespeople and labourers lay the foundation, complete the framing and roofing, and install wiring and plumbing. Although trade certification is not necessary for all positions, journeypersons tend to make more money and have an easier time finding work.

FINISHING

Once the basic structure is completed, finishers will prepare it for its final use. This is very technical work, and in many cases requires finishers to do very precise tasks with their hands. In a house, for example, finishing work includes dry walling, panelling, flooring, painting and decorating, and installing windows, doors and staircases.

WILL THERE BE JOBS IN CONSTRUCTION?

There are more opportunities in construction as the economy goes through strong phases, and fewer when there's a downturn. Strong economies and increased activity in other industries, such as mining, lead to more construction projects. Weaker economies slow down the amount of construction work because other industries are not starting new projects. But even when no new major projects are underway, maintenance and renovations are ongoing. There will always a demand for skilled construction workers in the NWT.

WHAT JOBS WILL THERE BE IN CONSTRUCTION?

There are many different types of jobs associated with the construction industry and they all have different requirements. It's important to remember that more training and higher education most often lead to a higher level of job with better pay. Many skills learned in the construction industry are transferable to other occupations.

ENTRY LEVEL JOBS

These jobs require little or no experience but you should be willing to complete training on the job.

<i>Labourer</i>	Erects and dismantles scaffolding, prepares materials, cleans worksite, assists in demolishing buildings, and salvages material.
<i>Carpenter's Helper</i>	Assists certified tradesperson in construction activities.
<i>Material Handler</i>	Moves, loads and unloads material.
<i>Truck Driver</i>	Makes deliveries of supplies and equipment.
<i>Surveyor's Helper</i>	Assists in land surveying by holding and moving stakes and rods.

SKILLED JOBS

For these jobs, you need some previous experience or training and you should be willing to learn on the job.

<i>Bricklayer</i>	Lays bricks, blocks and stones in walls and other structures.
<i>Drywall Finisher</i>	Installs and finishes drywall sheets, plaster and ceiling systems.
<i>Concrete Finisher</i>	Places, pours, smoothes and finishes concrete and restores, repairs and replaces finished concrete.
<i>Tilesetter</i>	Covers walls, floors and ceilings with ceramic, marble and quarry tiles.

APPRENTICESHIP TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS

These jobs require that you be a journey person, tradesperson, or an apprentice.

<i>Carpenter</i>	Constructs, maintains and repairs buildings; some specialize in framing or finishing.
<i>Cabinetmaker</i>	Constructs and repairs wooden cabinets, fixtures, furniture, windows and doors, and other products.
<i>Communications Electrician</i>	Installs, repairs and maintains telecommunication systems.
<i>Electrician</i>	Installs, repairs and maintains electrical systems.
<i>Floorcovering Installer</i>	Installs carpet, wood, linoleum, ceramic and vinyl floor surfaces.

Continued...

<i>Gasfitter</i>	Installs, inspects, repairs and maintains gas lines and equipment.
<i>Glazier</i>	Cuts and installs glass materials in buildings and fixtures.
<i>Heavy Equipment Operator</i>	Operates earth moving and construction equipment.
<i>Housing Maintainer</i>	Maintains and repairs residences.
<i>Insulator</i>	Applies insulation materials to plumbing, heating and cooling systems, walls, floors and ceilings.
<i>Oil Burner Mechanic</i>	Installs, services and repairs oil burning systems.
<i>Painter/ Decorator</i>	Applies paint, wallpaper and other finishes.
<i>Roofer</i>	Installs, repairs and replaces roofs and roof coverings.
<i>Sheet Metal Worker</i>	Makes, installs and repairs sheet metal products for heating and ventilation.
<i>Steamfitter/ Pipfitter</i>	Installs and maintains piping systems for water, steam and fuel.
<i>Welder</i>	Joins or separates seams in metal components.
<i>Plumber</i>	Installs, repairs and maintains pipes, fixtures and appliances for water and sanitation.

ADMINISTRATIVE JOBS

For these jobs, you should have a high school diploma and relevant training or experience, or significant experience working in similar office positions.

Administrative Assistant

Creates and formats documents, manages information.

Clerk

Organizes the office environment; types and files documents.

Materials Clerk

Takes inventories and places orders for materials, equipment and stock.

Accounts Clerk

Prepares and processes bills, invoices, accounts payable and receivable and budgets.

TECHNICAL JOBS

For these jobs, you need a technical college diploma. Generally, these are one or two-year programs.

Home Inspector

Inspects homes for condition of roofs, structure, insulation and other components.

Planning Technician

Does project planning, estimating, measuring and scheduling of work.



SEMI-PROFESSIONAL

These jobs usually require you to have a college diploma, although experience and training will also be acceptable to some employers.

Contractor/ Supervisor

Supervises, coordinates and schedules activities or workers.

Project Manager

Manages construction project from start to finish according to schedule, specifications and budget.

Health and Safety Officer

Inspects buildings and work sites with regards to sanitation, pollution, hazardous goods and safety.

Building Inspector

Reviews permit applications and blueprints to ensure the job meets national safety codes.

PROFESSIONAL

These jobs require that you have a university degree or the equivalent.

Architect

Designs buildings or structures, prepares cost estimates and material specifications.

Civil Engineer

Designs, evaluates and manages larger scale projects.

Land Surveyor

Directs and conducts legal surveys to set property boundaries.

Project Manager

Plans, organizes, directs and controls all activities of company.

JOBS CONTRACTING TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

There are many opportunities available for people not directly employed by construction to work in this field. Many jobs within the construction industry are contracted to other companies. Construction companies advertise tenders in newspapers and on company websites, describing the contracts and requesting that interested companies submit a bid to provide a service. The general contractor then reviews the bids and awards the contract to the company that offers the most appropriate bid. You can create your own opportunities by contracting to the industry. Some examples of jobs and services related to the construction industry are:

- Supplying construction materials
- Surveying
- Making special clothing or equipment
- Camp construction
- Airplane passenger and freight handling
- Expediting
- Road and airstrip building and maintenance
- Supplying food
- Equipment rental
- Camp management
- Remote communications





WORKING CONDITIONS

Worker safety in the construction industry is very important. Companies actively seek to avoid lost time due to injuries and accidents. Employers are responsible for ensuring a minimum level of safety, but any safety training you have will make it easier for you to find work.

Construction projects take place year round, both indoors and outdoors. On construction projects in remote areas the crews often work 12 hours a day and live on site in camps. Construction takes place all over the NWT and sometimes workers are away from home for extended periods of time.

Much of the work in the construction industry is physically demanding, so workers must be in good shape. Work involves lifting heavy objects, and operating large equipment and power tools. Many jobs require manual dexterity for small, detailed work. Workers must be able to follow directions and work independently.

Wages for jobs in this industry are very competitive. For more information on current wage and demand see NWT Job Futures available at the NWT Career Centres or online at www.jobfutures.stats.gov.nt.ca and talk to people at work in the field.

WHERE TO GET TRAINING

AURORA COLLEGE

Aurora College offers pre-employment training courses for work in construction. These courses include Trades Access Programs, Trades Introduction, Natural Resources Technology, Office Administration, Management Studies and more. Student Services at Aurora College will be able to explain current course offerings. Depending on the trade, some graduates will be able to challenge the first year of an apprenticeship. Although these courses are a good introduction to many jobs in construction, most will require additional schooling or on-the-job training.

Call your local campus or visit www.auroracollege.nt.ca to find out about current programs and courses being offered.

SOUTHERN COLLEGES

Other courses available at colleges in the south could lead to jobs in construction. They include: Construction Technology, Engineering Technology, Resource Management and Drafting. Check with your regional Career Centre for college information, or look on the Internet for online calendars.

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

For professional jobs in construction, you need a university degree. There are many Canadian universities that offer professional programs in fields of study such as engineering, architecture, geology, geography and urban and regional planning.

Universities also offer academic programs for professions that are common to most large businesses, such as human resources, industrial and labour relations, business management and accounting. Programs such as these could also lead to employment in construction. Check with your regional Career Centre for information on universities, or look on the Internet for online calendars.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING & OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Apprenticeships are generally three to four year programs during which you formal training for part of the year and get paid to train on the job. When you're finished, you become certified in that trade. With certification, you can make more money, work on your own, train others, and find jobs more easily.

To start an apprenticeship you must pass the Trades Entrance Exam, and either find an employer to hire you or take a pre-employment trades program through Aurora College. There is no set level of education you need to take an apprenticeship, but many employers want apprentices to have a high school diploma and the more education you have, the greater your chance is of passing the exam and being successful in your apprenticeship.

Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) is a program that allows students to begin apprenticeships while continuing their high school courses. By graduation from high school the student may be several months into their apprenticeship.

Nearly 20 occupations are certifiable in the NWT. Several of these may be applicable to the construction industry or its service industries. Certification is administered through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and is recognized across the NWT. Certification requires a minimum number of work hours, on-the-job training, an examination and a demonstration of skills.

Your regional Career Centre can give you more information or help you start an apprenticeship or occupational certification.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

To find out if you qualify for financial help while you study, contact:

NWT Student Financial Assistance

Department of Education Culture and Employment, GNWT

P.O. Box 1320 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

24-Hour Information Line - Tel: (867) 873-7190

24-Hour Toll-Free Line - Tel: 1-800-661-0793

www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca

HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB IN CONSTRUCTION

Send your resume and a cover letter to all of the companies or organizations where you would like to work. Make sure to indicate which job or jobs you are interested in and why you think you are qualified for those jobs. The Career Centres can help you to prepare for your job search. The NWT Construction Association can also help provide information on current trends and available job and training opportunities within the construction industry.

Look for advertised construction jobs in the newspapers, on the company websites, or on www.jobsnorth.ca.

For more information, contact:

NWT Construction Association

5103-47 Street

Yellowknife, NT X1A 1M3

Tel: (867) 873-3949

Fax: (867) 873-8366

Email: nwtca@theedge.ca



WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers and workers have responsibilities to each other. The *Labour Standards Act* sets out the general rules, minimum requirements, and principles of employment standards in the Northwest Territories. The *Act* covers such areas as hours of work, minimum wage, termination of employment, annual vacation and general holidays, and pregnancy and parental leave. It is up to you to know what rights you have as an employee and also your responsibilities.

For more information, contact Labour Services at 1(867) 873-7486 or toll free at 1 (888) 700-5707.

CAREER PLANNING

Career planning is an ongoing process that starts in your youth and extends throughout adulthood. When you think about affecting change in your working life, you should try to make decisions based on your personality, passions, aptitudes and skills. You should also consider what training and education you want to pursue and what opportunities are available to you. By finding the best fit between your interests, skills and values and available jobs, you'll have more control over your life and you'll find greater satisfaction in your work.

For more information or assistance with career planning and decision-making, contact your local Career Centre, adult educator, or school counsellor.

You'll need to put a lot of effort into your career today in order to make the most of your work and to continue creating new opportunities for yourself in the future.

NWT CAREER CENTRES

Your regional Career Centre will be able to help you learn about:

- Your skills, interests and values
- Where to find information
- How to search for jobs
- How to write resumes
- How to apply for jobs
- How to do a job interview
- How to do your own career planning

The six regional career centres are located at:

Fort Simpson	Deh Cho Hall	(867) 695-7335
Fort Smith	Sweetgrass Building	(867) 872-7425
Hay River	Courthouse Building	(867) 874-9200
Inuvik	Perry Building	(867) 777-7365
Norman Wells	Town Square	(867) 587-7120
Yellowknife	Greenstone Building	(867) 766-5100

Other booklets in the Career Opportunities Series include:

- Jobs in Mining
- Jobs in Oil and Gas
- Jobs in Tourism
- Jobs in Health Services
- Jobs in Aviation
- Jobs in Community Government
- Jobs in Diamond Manufacturing
- Jobs in Social Sciences
- Jobs in the Service Sector
- Jobs in Information Technology
- Jobs in Arts, Culture and Heritage

