



Do your parents have questions about your choice to enter a skilled trade? Here are a few facts about careers in construction that might help you when you're having "that" talk.

### **Why would you want to work in construction?**

- Canada's construction industry is one of the world's leaders in attracting talented people to help solve complex problems to move Canada forward.
- With an apprenticeship I can start working right out of high school and get my training at the same time, so I won't need to go into a lot of debt.
- In a few years I'll be certified and down the road I can even be my own boss and have employees of my own.
- It's interesting work – I won't be doing the same thing day in and day out; I'll always be learning new things – and the industry is looking for smart people like me to take on this work.

#### ***Fast facts***

- Around 1/4 of the construction workforce is expected to retire over the next 10 years. And right now, way fewer people are entering construction than those who are retiring. So companies are eagerly looking for more new talent.
  - o Find out what skilled trades employers are looking for in your area:  
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/map/trades-demand>
- Skilled trades are considered an "evergreen profession." That means they will always be needed.
- Construction is on the upswing. The demand for skilled workers has been increasing steadily for more than a decade, even during periods of economic decline. And there's no sign of it slowing down.
  - o See what big construction projects are going on in your region:  
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/map/hotspots>

## What are you going to do with a job in construction?

- It's not a job – it's a long-term career.
- It's a flexible career that I can take with me wherever I go. So whether I want to stay here or experience another part of Canada or live somewhere else completely different, I can find interesting work that pays well, no matter where I'm based.
- I'm looking forward to the challenges that a career in construction brings. It will allow me to use my hands and my mind to solve problems, work on teams with other tradespeople, and build something tangible and useful for society.

## Construction jobs don't pay well. How will you survive?

- Even starting out as an apprentice I'll get paid well from day one and have little to no debt. In just my first year as an apprentice, I'll earn anywhere from 30%-50% of what a fully qualified journeyman makes, and my wage will increase each year until I'm certified.
- Like other careers, my pay continues to increase with my experience throughout my career.
- Depending on what career path I choose, my pay can be on par with the salary of an accountant, engineer or many other traditional university-degreed careers.

### ***Did you know?***

- Construction workers earn more than the average Canadian, with an average annual salary of \$61,762 versus \$47,359 for all other industries (*Statistics Canada, 2013*).
- Earnings for those who work in construction jumped 6% in 2013 (*Canadian Business magazine*). That's nearly double the national average pay increase.
- In the Alberta oil sands, "salaries range from about \$90,000 to \$120,000 a year, not including overtime." (*The Globe and Mail*)
- "It isn't uncommon for highly experienced plumbers to earn well over \$100,000 per year." (*The Globe and Mail*)
- Tabitha Quintal, 29, is a second-year apprentice instrument technician, earning \$42 per hour. When she becomes a journeyman, she'll be making \$54 per hour. (*Edmonton Journal*)

## You're smart. Construction is for people who don't do well in school.

- Construction trades require strong math and science skills, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Depending on what career path I choose, I may take on new skills and responsibilities like project management, people management and business management, offering opportunities for ongoing training and new experiences.
- Becoming a skilled tradesperson requires thousands of hours of training and schooling, including a final exam to receive certification and the professional designation of journeyman.
- It's a career that requires life-long learning to hone my craft and keep up to date on the latest technology and equipment.

“Becoming a journey[person] takes, in some trades like electricians, 8,000 hours of on-the-job work... Tack on three years of classes, tests and certifications and you’re talking more than 15,000 hours of training and learning.”

– James Rubec, *Randstad Canada HR blog*

### **Construction is a dead-end job. You’ll be doing the same thing for the rest of your life.**

- A career in construction offers many opportunities. For example:
- I can work for a construction company, developing my skills and gaining new experiences with each new project, and even move into different areas such as training, or health and safety.
- I can advance into higher management positions – like foreman, superintendent, supervisor, project manager and construction manager – in established companies.
- Or I can run my own company, winning my own clients and managing the business side of things.
- Check out construction career paths here:  
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-paths>

### **You can’t build a good life for yourself with a construction job.**

- A career as a tradesperson provides a good quality of life. Like other careers, I’ll earn a competitive salary that continually increases with my experience, and I’ll get solid benefits.
- Every day I’ll get the opportunity to combine my training and talent – use my hands and my brain – to build something amazing. Something I can be proud of. Something you can be proud of.
- I’ll be working in an industry that is stable and in demand – here in Canada and around the world.
- I’ll work regular hours and have plenty of downtime to enjoy myself, have a family and build a life.
- Check out this video – her story is not uncommon:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOkFOIGLyWo>

### **Construction is hard, back-breaking work – you could get hurt.**

- There are some high-risk jobs in construction, but part of my training involves ensuring workplace safety standards are maintained for everyone on the site, including me.
- Modern equipment today is safer, easier to use and more technical. I need to have technical skills to operate today’s construction machinery. It’s not just manual labour any more.
- I’ll be helping families build homes, cities build infrastructure, businesses build skyscrapers. I’ll be contributing to my community and helping to strengthen Canada’s economy.

#### ***Did you know?***

All employers of tradespeople in Canada are obliged by law to provide a safe work environment for employees, and every employee must be trained in safe work practices. To find out more about safety in the industry and your rights as a construction worker, visit the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations website at [www.cfcsa.ca](http://www.cfcsa.ca).

## Construction isn't a respected job. You should pursue a "better" career.

- Canada has many innovative and successful construction and engineering firms, including Canadian-based global companies that are respected around the world for the work they do.
- Careers in construction are respected. Construction is a huge part of ensuring a healthy economy. It provides infrastructure, ensures we have power, clean water and telecommunications lines, creates the places where we work and live, and gives us parks, hospitals, libraries and schools.
- In today's economic environment, a university degree doesn't guarantee you a job once you graduate. In fact, many young people today are pursuing careers in construction AFTER they have earned their university degrees because certified tradespeople have better chances of finding work in their chosen careers.

## Construction won't make you happy.

- A career in construction gives me the opportunity to be creative, work with my mind and my hands, and focus on building something for the long term.
- I'll have flexibility – working outdoors and in, on different projects, and at different sites across the city, the province, and even across Canada and around the world.
- I'll be happy – doing meaningful, useful, creative, challenging work that requires craftsmanship and knowledge. And I'm eager to put in the time, study and effort to become truly great at my craft.

"The most compelling reason to consider the trades is that there is a basic human satisfaction to be had from taking a tool in hand, and seeing a direct effect of your actions in the world."

– Matthew B. Crawford, "What a Good Job Looks Like," Forbes.com

## What do I tell family or my friends about your career choice?

- I don't have to go into debt for my education. I get paid during my apprenticeship.
- These are VERY technical jobs – it's as complicated as engineering in many cases.
- There are jobs in this sector – other jobs are hard to get because everyone is trying to get the same ones.
- I'll have work – there's a talent shortage of skilled tradespeople.
- I'll build things that are important.
- The views about "good jobs" are shifting – this isn't a class issue. The smartest kids from the best families are going into this industry.
- Canada's economy is driven by our plentiful natural resource industry – we are known internationally for this – I want to be a part of that important industry.

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