

# BuildND.org

## Carpenter

### Job Description

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 Conditions

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

### How to Become a Carpenter

Although most carpenters learn their trade through an apprenticeship, some learn on the job, starting as a helper. Apprentice carpenters learn by working with more experienced coworkers.

- **Education**

A high school diploma or equivalent is required. High school courses in English, mathematics, mechanical drawing, and shop are considered useful.

- **Training**

Most carpenters learn their trade through a 3- or 4-year apprenticeship. For each year of the program, apprentices must complete at least 144 hours of technical training and 2,000 hours of paid on-the-job training. In the technical training, apprentices learn carpentry basics, blueprint reading, mathematics, building code requirements, and safety and first-aid practices. They also may receive specialized training in concrete, rigging, welding, scaffold building, fall protection, confined workspaces, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10- and 30-hour safety courses. After finishing an apprenticeship, carpenters are considered to be journey workers and may perform tasks on their own.

- Several groups, including unions and contractor associations, sponsor apprenticeship programs. The basic qualifications for a person to enter an apprenticeship program are as follows:
  - Minimum age of 18
  - High school education or equivalent
  - Physically able to do the work
  - U.S. citizen or proof of legal residency
  - Pass substance abuse screening
- Some contractors have their own carpenter training program.
- Some training programs offer incentives for veterans.
- A number of 2-year technical schools offer carpentry degrees that are affiliated with unions or contractor organizations.



Associated General Contractors of North Dakota  
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- **Advancement**

Because they are exposed to the entire construction process, carpenters usually have more opportunities than other construction workers to become independent contractors or general construction supervisors.

## Important Qualities

- **Business skills**

Self-employed carpenters must be able to bid new jobs, track inventory, and plan work assignments.

- **Detail oriented**

Carpenters perform many tasks that are important in the overall building process. Making precise measurements, for example, may reduce gaps between windows and frames, limiting any leaks around the window.

- **Manual dexterity**

Carpenters use many tools and need hand-eye coordination to avoid injury. Striking the head of a nail, for example, is crucial to not damaging wood.

- **Math skills**

Because carpenters use basic math skills every day, they need to be able to calculate volume and measure materials to be cut.

- **Physical stamina**

Carpenters need physical endurance. They often lift heavy tools and materials while standing, climbing, or bending for long periods.

- **Physical strength**

Many of the tools and materials that carpenters use are heavy. For example, plywood sheets can weigh 50 to 100 pounds.

- **Problem-solving skills**

Because all construction jobs vary, carpenters must adjust project plans accordingly. For example, they may have to use wedges to level cabinets in homes that have settled and are sloping slightly.

## Wage Information:

The table below shows the estimated Employment Wage Statistics for individuals in North Dakota employed as Carpenters in 2013.

Rate Type	Entry level	Mean	Experienced
Annual Wage	\$29,100	\$38,020	\$42,490
Hourly Wage	\$13.99	\$18.28	\$20.43

For more information [click here](#).



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