

Laborer

Laborers range from unskilled to semi-skilled workers whose duties include but are not limited to handling the materials of bricklayers, cement masons, and carpenters. Laborers are generally needed on virtually all types of construction projects - highways, bridges, tunnels, large buildings, sanitation, residential, etc. - and they are usually employed on-site from the day the project begins until the day it is completed. A laborer must know how to work with his/her hands and with power tools run by gasoline, electricity, and compressed air. They may work with pavement breakers, reamers, pumps, compressors, lasers, and vibrators. Laborers clear timber and brush, place and vibrate concrete, landscape, install pipe, and do a variety of other jobs.

Working Conditions

Laborer work is performed both indoors and outdoors and may be done at a surface environment, at extreme heights, underground, or above or under water. All laborers should expect to do a considerable amount of lifting, carrying, climbing, kneeling, balancing, and even crawling. Thus, a certain amount of strength, dexterity, and alertness is required. Because laborers work in so many varied conditions, they must be very knowledgeable of the hazards and safety requirements of the job.

Aptitude and Interest

As a supporter of other skilled craftsmen, laborers' work requires that their skills be diversified. It is not enough to have a strong back and will to work. Laborers should master basic reading and math skills necessary to operate today's increasingly complex and highly technical tools, equipment, and instruments.

Training

To become a skilled productive laborer training is important. It can be acquired informally through "learning-by-working;" through vocational/technical schools; through unilaterally (management or labor) sponsored trainee programs; through registered, labor-management apprenticeship programs, or a combination of the above. It is generally accepted that the more formalized training programs give more comprehensive skill training. Recommended high school courses include English and basic math.