

Occupations and Workplaces

Carpenter

On this page

[What does a carpenter do?](#)

[What are some health and safety issues for carpenters?](#)

[What are some preventive measures for carpenters?](#)

[What are some good general safe work practices?](#)

What does a carpenter do?

A carpenter builds or repairs various structures, working primarily with wood. Some of a carpenter's main duties are to:

- Move, measure, cut, shape, assemble and join materials.
- Read, prepare and interpret blueprints and drawings.
- Prepare cost estimates and documentation for clients.
- Conform to building codes and other regulations.
- Use, clean and maintain various equipment and tools.
- Supervise apprentices or other workers.

What are some health and safety issues for carpenters?

Carpenters face their own unique set of occupational hazards. These include the following:

- Use of various machinery and tools.
- Exposure to loud noise from machinery and tools.
- [Moulds, fungi](#) and bacteria.
- Chemicals, solvents, paints, stains, and other materials which may result in [dermatitis](#), [allergic reactions](#), or [respiratory](#) problems.
- [Cancer risk](#) from certain wood dusts.

- [Flammable materials](#), including wood dust. [Combustible dust](#) may also be a concern.
- Risk of pain or injury from working in [awkward positions](#), performing [repetitive tasks](#), or [lifting](#).
- Risk of cuts, abrasions, and other injuries from handling workpieces and using tools or equipment.
- Risk of entanglement of body parts into rotating parts or machinery.
- [Extreme temperatures](#) when working outdoors.
- Risk of eye injury from flying particles.
- [Working at heights](#).
- [Stress](#).
- [Shift work](#) or [extended work days](#).
- [Working alone](#).

Additional hazards may be present due to the nature of the worksite. Always be aware of your surroundings.

What are some preventive measures for carpenters?

- Inspect work area, tools, and equipment before work starts for possible hazards.
- Select [tools](#) and equipment that allow work to be done using good ergonomic procedures.. When there is a choice, select a tool of low weight.
- Keep tools and equipment in good working order.
- Know when to replace accessories on woodworking machines.
- Clean up wood dust regularly and maintain good housekeeping practices.
- Keep work areas clear of clutter and equipment.
- Disconnect the power to any machine when you have to fix an issue or change parts. Use [lock-out/tag out](#) procedures and/or maintain control of the power while working on the machine to prevent accidental start-up.
- Never operate machinery without all guards in place.
- Wear appropriate [eye protection](#), hearing protection, [footwear](#), and other [protective equipment](#) for the task.
- Know about the products you are working with, including type of wood, chemicals, paints, stains, etc.
- Learn safe [lifting](#) techniques.

- Avoid awkward postures or repetitive tasks, or take frequent breaks.
 - Be sure to stand in the correct position - always allow for [kick back](#).
 - Never use your hands to run lumber through the blade or to clean off sawdust. Use a push stick and a brush.
 - Do not wear loose clothing around rotating parts or machinery.
 - Follow a recommended shift work pattern, and know the associated hazards.
 - Install and maintain appropriate ventilation.
-

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Work safely with all equipment:
 - [Woodworking machines](#)
 - [Hand tools](#)
 - [Powered hand tools](#)
 - Follow correct procedures for:
 - [Electrical safety](#)
 - Working at heights and [fall protection](#)
 - Working with [ladders](#)
 - [Fire safety](#)
 - Use, maintain and store [personal protective equipment](#) as recommended by the manufacturer.
 - Follow safe [lifting](#) techniques.
 - Follow company safety rules.
 - Know first aid procedures.
 - Learn about chemical hazards, [WHMIS](#) and [MSDSs](#).
 - Know how to [report a hazard](#).
 - Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.
-

Fact sheet last revised: 2021-01-07

Disclaimer

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of the information, CCOHS does not guarantee, warrant, represent or undertake that the information provided is correct, accurate or current. CCOHS is not liable for any loss, claim, or demand arising directly or indirectly from any use or reliance upon the information.