Carpenter – Fact Sheets



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.

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