



Thinking of Becoming a Construction Manager?

Construction is rapidly becoming one of the most difficult and complex businesses to manage. Today's construction projects can require thousands of decisions and millions of individual components. As a result, there is an unfulfilled demand for construction professionals who can complete projects on time, within budget and without incurring liability.

Traditionally, people advanced to construction management positions after having substantial experience as construction craft workers – carpenters, masons, plumbers, or electricians, for example – or after having worked as construction supervisors or as owners of independent specialty contracting firms. However, as construction processes become increasingly complex, employers are placing more importance on specialized education after high school.

Today's construction managers are expected to coordinate and supervise the construction process from the conceptual development stage through final construction. They often work with owners, engineers, architects, and others who are involved in the construction process. Construction Managers are given the designs for buildings, roads, bridges, or other projects and expected to oversee the planning, scheduling, and implementation of those designs. This can include land clearing and earth moving; sewage systems; landscaping and road construction; building construction, including excavation and laying of foundations and erection of the structural framework, floors, walls, and roofs; and building systems, including fire-protection, electrical, plumbing, air-conditioning, and heating.

Construction managers oversee the delivery and use of materials, tools, and equipment; worker productivity and safety; and the quality of construction. They are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and licenses and, depending upon the contractual arrangements, direct or monitor compliance with building and safety codes, other regulations, and requirements set by the project's insurers.

Still thinking of becoming a construction manager? Here is the good news – excellent job opportunities are expected! The construction management field expects faster than average employment growth. Additionally, excellent job opportunities will exist as the number of job openings exceeds the number of qualified applicants.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of construction managers is projected to increase by 16 percent during the 2006-16 decade, faster than average for all occupations. More construction managers will be needed as the level of construction activity continues to grow. In September 2008, eight newly constructed schools opened in the Treasure Valley. Population and business growth will result in more construction of office buildings, shopping malls, hospitals, schools, restaurants, and other structures that require construction managers.

The increasing complexity of construction projects will also boost demand for specialized management-level personnel within the construction industry. Sophisticated technology and the proliferation of laws setting standards for buildings and construction materials, worker safety, energy efficiency, environmental protection, and the potential for adverse litigation have further complicated the construction process. Advances in building materials and construction methods; the need to replace portions of the Nation's infrastructure; and the growing number of multipurpose buildings and energy-efficient structures will further add to the demand for more construction managers.

Earnings of salaried construction managers and self-employed independent construction contractors vary depending upon the size and nature of the construction project, its geographic location, and economic conditions. In addition to typical benefits, many salaried construction managers receive bonuses and use of company motor vehicles. Median annual earnings of wage and salary construction managers in May 2006 were \$73,700. Top qualified construction managers can earn more than \$135,780 per year. (1)

In addition to job openings arising from employment growth, many additional openings should result annually from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force for other reasons. A substantial number of seasoned managers are also expected to retire over the next decade, likely resulting in a large number of openings. Related occupations that construction managers can move into include architects, civil engineers, cost estimators, landscape architects, and engineering and natural sciences managers.

Ready to become a construction manager? Register for the Boise State Center for Professional Development and Construction Management Department's Construction Management Certificate Program. For additional details go to:
<http://boisestate.edu/cm>

(1) The data for this article was provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Overview of Construction Management as a Career.