



Suffolk Joint
Construction
Committee

Construction Operative

If you enjoy practical work and want a job outdoors, then working on a construction site could be for you.

THE ROLE

To be a construction operative or site labourer, you'll need a good level of fitness, a basic knowledge of building methods and materials, good practical skills and the ability to follow written and spoken instructions.

A good head for heights, good team working skills and an awareness of on-site health and safety issues are also helpful.

Typical employers include building companies and specialist subcontractors, central and local government departments and utility companies.

You may have to travel for some jobs, as has been the case with the 2012 Olympic Games' building projects. There may also be opportunities for overseas work.

With experience and further training, you could specialise in a construction trade, or progress to site supervision, estimating and construction management.

SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Starting salaries can be up to £15,000 a year

Experienced operatives can earn between £16,000 and £28,000

Operatives with extra supervisory responsibilities could earn up to £30,000 a year

Overtime and various allowances can increase income. Self-employed operatives set their own rates

CAREER PROGRESSION

OPERATIVE

SKILLED
OPERATIVE

GANGER

GENERAL
FOREMAN

Construction Operative

ENTRY ROUTE

Although there are no set entry requirements to become a construction operative, you may have an advantage if you have some on-site experience.

Some employers may ask for GCSEs in subjects like maths and English, or equivalent qualifications.

You may be able to get into this career after completing an apprenticeship with a construction company.

To work with construction plant machinery like excavators or dumper trucks, you will need to be 18 or over and have a driving licence.

TYPICAL TASKS FOR A CONSTRUCTION OPERATIVE:

At the start of a job, you would help to prepare the site, for example putting up site huts, unloading and storing building materials, and setting up ladders and scaffolding.

Once work gets underway, your duties could include:

- Groundworking: Marking out & digging shallow trenches for foundations & drains

- Formworking: Putting up or dismantling the shuttering that holds setting concrete in place
- Steel fixing: Bending & fixing the bars used to reinforce concrete structures
- Steel piling: Fixing steel sheets together to form temporary retaining walls for excavation work
- Concreting: Layering & smoothing concrete for foundations, floors & beams
- Road working: Concreting, laying kerbs, paving & re-surfacing

You would use various hand, power and machine tools and, with further training, you could operate construction plant equipment, such as dumper trucks or excavators.

For more information on becoming a construction operative visit:

**www.goconstruct.org
www.citb.co.uk
or talk to your local college**

Your career journey starts here!

