

What does a residential carpenter do?

Residential carpenters are all-around carpenters who have experience in just about every aspect of residential construction. They assemble and erect the framework of residences. They build interior walls, install windows and floors and complete most of the finishing work inside the structure. They know their way around a toolbox, power tools, and machinery. They also know that working safely is the top priority all day, every day.



What are the hours?

Residential carpenters are definitely "morning people." An 8-hour work day usually starts around 7 a.m., but sometimes if a project is fast-tracked, alternative shifts are needed to get the job done.

How do I get started?

Your first step is entering an apprenticeship program. The UBC is among the best in North America in apprenticeship training. Your hometown will have a local UBC-affiliated training center close by, with people who can answer any question you have.

What are the working conditions?

Residential carpenters may work in a variety of conditions, both inside and out. It's a physical job. Lifting, pushing, pulling, and bending are common. But you are trained in how to do these tasks safely before ever attempting anything like that on a job site. Hardhats, safety glasses, durable clothing and safety shoes are the typical items worn on a job site.



What is the pay?

Residential carpenters are usually paid by the hour, and as union members, they get "time-and-a-half" or "double-time" for all work done beyond eight hours. From the first day of your apprenticeship you earn a good wage and start earning benefits. You also get regular raises, usually every six months, until you reach the full journeyman scale at the end of the apprenticeship program.

- **Earn while you learn**—Apprentices start earning a good wage immediately.
- **No school loans or tuition to pay back.**
- **Pay raises**—Keep progressing through the program and earn more and more money.
- **Bennies**—Health and retirement benefits start now, for you and your family.

What about job security?

Professional residential carpenters are members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America—a proud organization that has given men and women an excellent quality of life since 1881. From the first day of your apprenticeship, you will work for a union contractor under the protection of a union contract, which outlines wages, benefits and working conditions. The UBC Local in your area has experienced staffers whose primary job is to keep you working.



What is an apprentice?

An apprentice is a person in the process of becoming a skilled residential carpenter through training and experience. Apprentices study both in the classroom and on-the-job, under the guidance of skilled workers of that trade, called journeymen. In most cases, the length of your apprenticeship is four years, and training is free. Apprentices earn a good income and learn a trade—all at once. No school loans to repay!

Does my high school coursework matter?

You can get a head start on becoming a residential carpenter by taking classes in mathematics, industrial arts, and CAD, and by enrolling in shop. Really, any class that helps familiarize you with geometrical layout and woodworking is a plus, because the coursework will help you develop the dexterity and practical thinking skills you will need for this career.