BUILDILLINOIS

SHEET METAL WORKER

The sheet metal worker works from sketches, blueprints, or verbal instructions necessary to make products, and then installs a wide variety of articles made from sheets of steel, aluminum, copper, and other materials. They apply shop mathematics to lay out the work to be performed. A sheet metal worker uses hand or power-operated tools such as shears, breaks (for bending), punch and forming presses, and rolling and crimping machines to cut, bend, and shape the metal. They build the heating, air conditioning, ventilation, and exhaust system ducts in commercial building and homes. These workers make a very wide variety of metal fittings and equipment for the construction industry.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Sheet metal workers do a great deal more shop work than other construction trades. They usually spend most of the day at one worksite when a project is in progress, moving to another site when it is completed. Sheet metal workers must always be careful because of the tools and sharp edges of the metal with which they work.

APTITUDE AND INTEREST

Those interested in becoming sheet metal workers should enjoy working with their hands. They must be able to follow instructions and work closely from shop drawings and blueprints.

TRAINING

Training is essential to become a skilled sheet metal worker. It can be acquired informally through "learning-by-working;" through company on-the-job training programs; by attending trade or vocational/technical schools; through unilaterally (management or labor) sponsored trainee programs; through registered labor-management apprenticeship programs, or a combination of the above. It is generally accepted that the more formalized training programs give more comprehensive skill training. Recommended high school courses include English, general math, geometry, trigonometry, mechanical drawing, physics, and general science. Computer literacy is becoming more important as both layout and Computer Numeric Controlled Machinery (CNC) operation is facilitated by computers.

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