

A job profile:

Bricklayers build the interior and exterior walls of buildings, which may involve constructing new buildings or repairing and maintaining existing ones. This is probably the job that most people think of when the construction industry is mentioned, but they probably don't appreciate the many different types of material that bricklayers use, and the different effects they can create (such as ornamental walls and vaulted archways). Brickwork is an essential part of many structures and a bricklayer needs to be able to read plans and drawings to make sure that the structure is accurate and meets design requirements.

A bricklayer may work on new buildings, extensions or the restoration of existing buildings. A variety of specialist tools are used including trowels for spreading mortar, club hammers and bolsters to cut bricks and brick hammers to trim bricks or blocks to size and to check that the walls are perfect. The work is mainly outdoors and conditions can be dirty and dusty as well as cold, damp and muddy.

Health and safety is an important aspect of the job, so bricklayers need to wear protective clothing, footwear, a safety helmet and occasionally safety glasses.

Opportunities:

Work Location

A bricklayer's location of work varies depending on the site location, opportunities occur on building sites in towns, cities and rural areas both commercially and privately throughout the UK.

Employers are building, construction and civil engineering companies of all sizes. These range from local building firms employing one or two operatives, to nationally known firms employing hundreds of operatives.

Self Employment

Opportunities occur for bricklayers to work independently as *self-employed subcontractors*.

Hours of Work

Bricklayers work a 39 hour week. Overtime, including Saturday working may be available.

Becoming A Bricklayer – Entry Requirements, Training & Personal Qualities:

Entry

Many people join this occupation via the Apprenticeship NI programme. There are various relevant qualifications available from organisations like City & Guilds and Edexcel. These courses may be in a more general subject area, such as construction.

Training

Apprenticeships will usually involve work and college-based training. You will also receive training in subjects like health and safety.

Personal Qualities

As a bricklayer, you'll need to:

- Be good with your hands
- Be a good teamworker with the ability to work well on your own
- Be physically fit, as the work involves bending, stretching and lifting
- Understand the importance of health and safety in the industry
- Follow written plans and instructions
- Have good number skills

Many companies will provide transport, but having a driving licence can be useful in this type of work.

This job might not be suitable for people who suffer from skin conditions, such as eczema, or breathing complaints, such as asthma.

Career Progression

In the construction industry, it is possible to work up from a craft level position to a managerial role, e.g. Construction Site Manager.

Other useful websites to explore:

- www.citbcsni.org.uk/careers
- www.nidirect.gov.uk
- www.careersserviceni.com
- www.bconstructive.co.uk

