

## Cement Mason

Concrete finishers place and finish concrete floors, driveways, sidewalks, curbs, bridge decks and other concrete structures.

Concrete finishers apply architectural, exposed, patterned or stamped, broomed and smooth finishes on concrete surfaces. They are skilled at repairing, waterproofing and restoring concrete surfaces.

They have the knowledge to properly use dry pack grouting and epoxy materials, and understand how to cure concrete perfectly.

In general, concrete finishers:

- Place wet concrete into the forms and spread it to a specified depth
- Level and smooth the surface, round the edges, and make joints or grooves to help control cracking on the surface

Although machines are used to trowel large areas such as warehouses and arena floors, hand trowelling is still required for hard to reach spots in corners, edges, and around pipes. The surface may be:

- Trowelled to a smooth finish
- Brushed to create a coarse, non-skid finish
- Embedded with gravel chips for an exposed aggregate finish
- Patterned or stamped to apply decorative surface
- Trowelled with a dye to create a coloured surface

## Working Conditions

Concrete finishers work both outdoors and indoors, at tasks that are fast-paced and strenuous. Travel may be required to get to construction sites.

Outdoor work can be affected by adverse weather conditions. There is less work available in the winter, and summer hours are often longer than the standard 40-hour week. Overtime is sometimes required because concrete finishers cannot leave a project in the middle and return to it the next day.

There is some risk of injury from working on uneven footing and from other construction-site hazards, and the work involves considerable bending, stooping and kneeling.



## Skills and Abilities

The work is most rewarding for those who take pride in seeing the results of their work, and enjoy physical exercise and working with their hands.

To be successful in their trade, concrete finishers need:

- The physical strength and stamina required to shovel and move wet concrete sometimes in excess of 25 kilograms
- The ability to get along well with other workers

## Employment and Advancement

Most concrete finishers are employed by general contractors involved in building highways, bridges and large buildings, and by contractors who do only concrete work. A few concrete finishers are self-employed, contracting their services for smaller projects such as patios, sidewalks and driveways. Employment prospects for concrete finishers vary with the seasons and with economic conditions.

Journeyman wage rates vary, but generally range from **\$20.00 to \$35.00 an hour plus benefits**.

Experienced concrete finishers may specialize in a particular type of work, advance to supervisory positions or become contract estimators.

## Working in Alberta

To work as a Concrete Finisher in Alberta, a person must:

- Be a registered apprentice, an Alberta-certified journeyman, hold a valid recognized credential (see Recognized Trade Certificates), OR
- Work for an employer who is satisfied that the worker has the skills and knowledge expected of a certified journeyman, OR
- Be self-employed

Concrete finishers learn their skills by registering with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training to participate in apprenticeship training. Upon successful completion, they are awarded the Alberta Journeyman Certificate.

A concrete finisher who holds a valid trade certificate from Alberta or from another Canadian province or territory may apply to write the Interprovincial Exam and, if successful, be granted a Red Seal under the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program. The Red Seal is recognized throughout most of Canada.

A concrete finisher who holds a valid recognized credential that does not have a Red Seal may apply for:



- An Alberta trade certificate under the Qualification Certificate Program
- An Alberta Equivalency document under the Equivalency Program.

Concrete finishers who:

- Hold a credential that is not recognized or is no longer valid in an Alberta-designated trade, OR
- Can demonstrate their experience, skills and knowledge in an Alberta-designated trade, and meet the standards and requirements established by the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board may be eligible to apply for trade certification under the Qualification Certificate Program.
- Individuals possessing a valid Alberta Journeyman Certificate, an Alberta Qualification Certificate, an Alberta Occupational Certificate, or a valid recognized credential are eligible to receive a Blue Seal business credential after completing the necessary requirements.

## **Apprenticeship Training**

The term of apprenticeship for a concrete finisher is 3 years (three 12-month periods) including a minimum of 1200 hours of on-the-job training and 4 weeks of technical training in the first and second years, and 1200 hours of on-the-job training in the third year.

- An applicant who previously completed courses of study or work experience related to the Concrete Finisher trade or holds a related journeyman certificate and has the employer's recommendation, may qualify for credit that could reduce the term of apprenticeship. (see Accreditation Information for a list of accredited courses)
- A person who has previous training or work experience in the trade and wants to determine their level of skill and knowledge for entry or advanced standing in an apprenticeship program may apply for a Prior Learning Assessment.
- A high school student can become an apprentice and gain credits toward apprenticeship training and a high school diploma at the same time under the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).



**To learn the skills required of a Concrete Finisher in Alberta and be issued an Alberta Journeyman Certificate, a person must:**

- Satisfy the entrance requirements or pass the entrance exam (see Entrance Level Competencies, Exam Counselling Sheet, Entrance Exam Study Guide, and Entrance Exam Support Materials List)
- Find a suitable employer who is willing to hire and train an apprentice

*Most employers prefer to hire high school graduates and may select apprentices from among their current employees.*

- With their employer, complete the Apprenticeship Application and Contract and submit it to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office
- Pay the non-refundable application fee as identified on the application noted above
- Complete the required on-the-job training
  - during on-the-job training, apprentice concrete finishers earn at least 65 percent of the journeyperson wage rate in their place of employment in the first year, 75 percent in the second, and 85 percent in the third year.
- Complete the required technical training each year (see Course Outline)
- Enroll in technical training (see Technical Training Centre)
  - select an educational institution that offers training for Concrete Finisher apprentices, and a time to attend training
  - determine requirements for enrolling at the selected institution, and forward completed enrollment form to the selected institution
- Review books and materials required for training (see Textbook and Resource List)
- Successfully complete all required exams (see Exam Counselling Sheets)
- Review the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Policy on Cheating

Apprentices may attempt the Interprovincial Exam in the final period of their apprenticeship training and, if successful, be granted a Red Seal. (see Exam Counselling Sheets)

*Review the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Policy on Cheating*

When apprentices attend technical training, they are required to pay the applicable tuition fee and purchase course supplies.



Grants, scholarships and other financial assistance may be available. For more information see Financial Assistance or contact an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office.

### **Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program**

To qualify for a Red Seal, a person must:

#### **Hold a valid trade certificate in a trade that participates in the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program:**

- An Alberta trade certificate or completion of apprenticeship certificate, OR
- A journeyperson or completion of apprenticeship certificate issued by another Canadian province or territory
- For applications based on Alberta certificates
  - Complete the Interprovincial (Red Seal) Examination Application - Alberta Certified (no application fee is required)
  - Submit the application to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office
- For applications based on non-Alberta certificates
  - Complete the Qualification Certificate – Recognized Credential Application
  - Submit the application to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office
  - Pay the non-refundable application fee as identified on the application form
- Prepare for the exam (see Exam Counselling Sheets)
  - Review the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Policy on Cheating
  - Review available resource materials (see Resource Materials - Concrete Finisher)
- Successfully complete the required exam

### **Equivalency Program**

To qualify for an Equivalency document based on a recognized credential, a person must:

- Have a valid recognized credential that does not have an Interprovincial Standards Red Seal
- Complete the Equivalency Application and deliver it in person to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office. Government issued photo identification is required.



- Pay the non-refundable application fee as identified on the application noted above

*A person who holds a valid recognized credential, as described above, does not require an Alberta Equivalency document to work in the trade in Alberta. However, some employers may require Alberta documentation as proof that the holder is allowed to work in the trade or that the holder's credential is recognized.*

## **Qualification Certificate Program**

**To qualify for a Qualification Certificate *based on a recognized credential*, a person must:**

- Hold a valid recognized credential that does not have an Interprovincial Standards Red Seal
- Complete the Qualification Certificate – Recognized Credential Application and submit it to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office.
- Pay the non-refundable application fee as identified on the application noted above
- Prepare for the exam(s) (see Exam Counselling Sheets)
  - review the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Policy on Cheating
  - review available resource materials (see Resource Materials - Concrete Finisher)
- Successfully complete the required exam(s)

**To qualify for an Alberta Qualification Certificate based on work experience, a person must:**

- Have at least 5,400 hours and 54 months of 'hands-on' work experience as a concrete finisher

*Time spent on supervisory or foreman duties, counter work, heading the tool crib, or on a training course is NOT counted as 'hands-on' work experience.*

- Complete the Qualification Certificate - Work Experience Application (and review the Application Guide) and submit it to an Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office
- Pay the non-refundable fees as identified on the application noted above

*This application fee covers the review of the application, the assessment and confirmation of the applicant's work experience hours/months, the administration of the applicant's demonstration of competency, and one attempt at the Qualification*



*Certificate theory examination. The Qualification Certificate practical examination requires a separate fee as identified on the application noted above.*

- Prepare for the exam(s) (see Exam Counselling Sheets)
  - review the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Policy on Cheating
  - review available resource materials (see Resource Materials - Concrete Finisher)
- Successfully complete the required exam(s)

