

Foreman

Nature of Work

A foreman supervises and coordinates the work of a crew of workers in a specific craft or trade. Foremen are primarily concerned with seeing that the workers under them do their job skillfully and efficiently, and that assigned work progresses on schedule. They deal with the routing of material and equipment, and with the laying out of the more difficult areas of the job. The work requires quick, clear thinking and quick onsite decisions. Foremen should have a broad working knowledge of a craft; must be able to read and visualize objects from blueprints; and should have an eye for precise detail.

Working Conditions

Working conditions for foremen can vary greatly depending upon the craft line being supervised. However, the great majority of work will be onsite and out-of-doors, often resulting in prolonged standing, as well as some strenuous physical activity.

Education and Training

To become a foreman, a craftsman must illustrate an above average knowledge of all facets of a particular trade and do noticeably good work consistently. A foreman should have the same basic aptitude and interests as those working in the craft being supervised, plus additional reading, writing, and math skills. The ability to motivate workers and communicate with them and superiors is essential. A foreman must often lead by example.

Advancement Potential

Being an entry level/first line management position, a foreman who exhibits solid rapport and communicates with his or her workers and superiors, who leads by example, who has outstanding skills and trade knowledge, who gets the job done properly and on schedule, and who works to improve his/her management skills will often be in line for promotion into a supervisory position. With the proper background and initiative a foreman may progress to a superintendent, general superintendent, vice president, or even an owner of a construction company.