



Department of Consumer Affairs
Contractors State License Board

Frequently Asked Questions About Journeymen

What is a journeyman?

A journeyman is a person who has completed an apprenticeship program or is an experienced worker, not a trainee, and is fully qualified and able to perform a specific trade without supervision. But, that person does not have a license and is not able to contract for jobs that value more than \$500 in labor and materials.

What is an apprenticeable occupation?

An "Apprenticeable Occupation" is one that requires independent judgment and the application of manual, mechanical, technical, or professional skills and is best learned through an organized system of on-the-job training together with related and supplemental instruction. For additional information on apprentice skills and programs visit the [Department of Industrial Relations](#).

I trained for 3 months and was then given a truck and told to go do the jobs assigned. Does that make me a journeyman?

Most trades require one to five years of apprentice time in order to fully understand the complexity of the work along with codes, standards, business management, and troubleshooting. Just because an employer is sending you out on basic jobs, it does not qualify you as a journeyman.

The apprentice time is valuable learning time that can not be skipped. Writing an invoice and collecting for services is not the same as processing the invoice, depositing the money, balancing books monthly, paying expenditures, processing payroll, and providing the government with all applicable paperwork.

I built the house I live in and remodeled a rental. Does this qualify me to be a journeyman as it took 4 years to complete both projects? I also hired all the subcontractors with no problem.

Owner/builder qualifications are difficult to assess. The CSLB may consider the work if there is verifiable evidence that it was completed to code. Also in consideration is how long it would have taken a licensed contractor to complete the same project. A new home and remodel could take less than a year to complete. As such only one year's experience would be credited. However, you still needed to complete 2-4 years of apprentice training prior to your owner/builder experience.

Learning along the way and being sure that it is done right does not automatically qualify for journeyman accreditation. Hiring subcontractors to complete the work on the house does not qualify you to be a journeyman. Experience must be hands-on in the trade.

Can I substitute any education, technical training, or apprenticeship training for the required journeyman experience?

You may receive credit for your technical training, apprenticeship training, or education in place of a portion of the required four years of practical experience. At least one year must be practical experience. You must provide written documentation of any training or education claimed in place of experience. Acceptable documentation includes copies of apprenticeship certificates and college transcripts.

For more information, check out the [Applicant section](#) of this Web site.

I worked for myself since I was 16 years old. I am now 21. Does that qualify for four years of journeyman experience?

Provided you submit verifiable evidence that you worked full-time for the last four years, you may qualify, depending on the trade. Verifiable evidence includes, but is not limited to invoices, income tax reports, 1099s, and copies of contracts. If you were paid in cash and kept no records and filed no taxes, it will be difficult for you to prove you actually did any work.

An important aspect of being a journeyman ready to be a contractor is knowing how a business is run and demonstrating that knowledge whether you are licensed or not. Depending on the trade, you also need to prove 1-4 years of apprentice experience in addition to the four years of journeyman time.

I have been a property manager for four years at an apartment complex. Does this experience count as journeyman?

This could be very difficult to prove as verifiable experience because you do not complete any one trade on a regular basis for four years. If you wanted to apply for a C36 Plumbing license you would need to show that you performed plumbing every day for four full years for approximately eight hours per day.

Note: A plumbing apprenticeship is normally five years. Plus another four years of journeyman time in order to apply. Most apartment complexes have a variety of trades that need attention but rarely the same trade day after day. To qualify for a B license you would have to prove that you actually built or rebuilt apartments on a daily basis not just repaired siding or drywall on occasion.

Can you come out and see me work to prove I am a journeyman? How about if I send photos?

The CSLB does not visit worksites. The CSLB exam tells us if you know your trade. The burden of proof for your experience is upon you, the applicant. Photos tell us nothing but that you are on a site. Whether you actually performed any of the work there is inconclusive.

You must provide verifiable evidence of your experience. All experience claims must be verified by a qualified and responsible person, such as a homeowner, an employer, fellow employee, other journeymen, contractor, union representative, building inspector, architect, or engineer.

The person verifying your claim must have firsthand knowledge of your experience during the time period covered - that is, he or she must have observed the work that you have completed and must complete the *Certification of Work Experience* form that is included with the application.

Even if you provide a *Certification of Work Experience* form, be prepared to furnish documentation of any experience you claim on the form whenever such documentation is requested. The failure to provide this documentation will result in rejection of your application or denial of the license.