I am interested in a career as a drywall worker. Would you please send me some information about entry-level skills needed? I also would like to know about job openings and pay scales currently available.

In your part of the country the first group to investigate is the Architectural Contractor Trade Association in Farmington Hills, Mich. Their Web site, www.actmich.org, has a wealth of information about apprenticeship programs available. There are two tracks you might be interested in. The information below was taken from ACTA’s Web site. The first is your primary area of interest.

“Drywall finishers are important members of the interior finishing team. The drywall finisher ensures that all seams, angles, corner beads and nail spots are finished and sanded smooth. Finish work around critical lighting and architectural designs are areas where unique techniques are used for reducing expansion, crowning, ridging and beveling edges of walls and ceilings. This is necessary in creating a unified and seamless wall or ceiling surface to which paint, wallcoverings or other decorative finishes can be properly applied.

“Drywall finisher apprentices are trained in a two-year apprenticeship program taught at the Painting and Drywall School in Hazel Park, Mich. Those in the drywall trade must be especially aware of safety due to their frequent use of ladders and scaffolding, as well as often working in confined spaces. The ability to read blueprints, good mathematics aptitude and mastery of the architect’s scale, as well as knowledge of the care and maintenance of the specialized equipment used in the trade, are all part of the skill and artistry of a successful drywall tradesmen.”

The other area you might want to explore is carpentry: “Carpenters work in many different areas of the construction industry. The need for carpenters is greatest in the field of new construction, but many carpenters also work on modifying existing structures or remodeling projects. Carpentry is a year-round occupation that requires skill with wood materials, metal framing, flooring, lath and other fabrication techniques. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America offers a four year apprentice training program to those who wish to enter the carpentry trade.”

Our next question comes from Gregg Yesko with Gilbane, who was having a problem with an overzealous inspector. The inspector was looking at the finished drywall 12 inches from the surface of the wall. Gregg wanted to know if there were standards for inspecting finished surfaces. Well just so you know that I don’t always take credit for the answers in this column, while I was doing my research, Gregg came up with the answer.

So here’s to Gregg and the kind assistance of Diana at the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America. PDCA publishes Standard PDCA P6-99 for the Acceptance of Completed Wallcovering Installations. Article 5, paragraph 5.5 states the following:

“5.5 Upon completion, a visual inspection by the owner of owner’s agent should occur in order to determine compliance with this standard.
“5.5.1 The acceptability of the surface shall be determined when viewed without magnification, at a distance of 5 feet or more, under inspection lighting conditions, and from a normal viewing position.
“5.5.1.1 Inspection lighting conditions will allow the finished surface to be viewed with minimal distortion, which may be caused by the quality of the substrate preparation and/or illumination at an acute angle.”

By the way, Standard P-6 and other standards are available on the PDCA Web site at www.pdca.com.

About the Author
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