

## Roughneck

Roughnecks are crew members on offshore oil or gas rigs. They do manual and semi-skilled work, mostly on the drilling operation, working under the supervision of a driller or assistant driller. They are also called floorhands.

### The Work

You could be:

- adding fresh lengths of drill pipe as the drill bites deeper into the rock
- operating semi-automated pipe-handling machines
- replacing drill bits when they are worn
- maintaining drilling equipment and keeping it in good order
- assisting with mixing the drilling mud (lubricant used for the drill bit) and chemicals
- cleaning and maintaining the equipment used to circulate mud down the drill pipe
- using hoisting gear, ropes and air winches
- carrying out some of the duties of a roustabout, such as keeping the rig floor clean and tidy
- assisting other members of the drilling crew, such as the derrickhand.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

The starting salary for roughnecks is normally in the range of £18,000 to £25,000 a year. (In addition, employers provide accommodation and food, as well as warm and waterproof clothing). With experience, this can rise to £35,000 a year or possibly more.

### Conditions

- You would work on an oil or gas rig outdoors in conditions that can be very cold, wet, windy, noisy and dangerous.
- There are risks of injury from accidents, especially when working at heights.
- You would normally work offshore for 2 or 3 weeks, followed by a 2 or 3 weeks' rest period onshore. This will mean spending long periods away from your home and family.
- There is often no mobile phone signal, but there are pay phones and usually internet access.
- Alcohol is banned on rigs, and there is random alcohol and drug testing.
- When offshore, you would normally work a 12-hour shift, including rest and meal breaks, with 12 hours off duty.
- Employers provide free accommodation and meals. You would usually share a cabin with a colleague. There are usually good recreational facilities.
- You would wear protective and waterproof clothing. Employers provide all necessary safety equipment,

such as thermal suits, gloves, boots and a hard hat.

- You have to fly by helicopter between the rig or platform and onshore.

## Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- Experience in any type of manual labour can be useful.
- You must be at least 18 years of age to work offshore.
- To work offshore, you must pass an offshore survival certificate, such as the Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training Certificate (BOSIET). Contact OPITO for more details. Many people do the course at their own expense before looking for work. In other cases, some companies sponsor new employees through the course.
- You may also have to undertake the Minimum Industry Safety Training (MIST) course.
- Normally, you need previous experience of working offshore. Entrants usually begin as [Roustabouts](#) and work up to roughneck.
- You should be fit, as this job involves climbing, lifting and using heavy equipment.
- You have to pass a medical examination every 2 years.

The UK oil and gas industry is located mainly off the east coast of Scotland and England. But there are also fields west of Shetland and in the Irish and North Seas. The employers in the industry include operating companies (usually oil companies) that hold exploration and production licences, drilling companies with contracts to do drilling work and a wide range of other major contractors and companies offering specialist technical services. The main recruitment contacts in Scotland are in the Aberdeen area.

## What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good practical skills
- stamina and good physical fitness
- agility and a good head for heights
- a strong sense of responsibility
- an awareness of health and safety issues at all times
- a resilient nature.

You need to be able to:

- work outdoors in all weathers
- live on a rig or platform for long periods of time
- live and work as a member of a team
- observe regulations and follow instructions very carefully.

## Training

- Your training may start with courses leading to the MIST and BOSIET certificates, if you do not already hold these. However, this is not an entry level job, so it is likely you will already hold them.

- Otherwise, you may begin with induction training ashore, covering information on the industry and the company, health and safety and skills training.
- Further on the job training then takes place offshore on the oil rig or platform.
- You might undertake banksman slinger training for crane and lifting work.
- You may attend further short courses from time to time.
- You may be able to gain Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in Offshore Deck Operations at SCQF Level 5.

## Getting On

- After sufficient experience, you may be able to move on to work as a derrickhand. This usually takes 1-2 years.
- From there, further promotion is possible to driller, and perhaps eventually to toolpusher or oil rig manager.
- Many of the large companies in the oil and gas industry operate throughout the world, so you may be able to work overseas.

## Contacts

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### My Energy Future

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## Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

### Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.