Road Worker

A road worker helps to build new roads and pavements, repair or improve existing ones, and bury cables underneath the road surfaces. They are also called Highway Maintenance Operatives and Vehicle Restraint Operatives.

The Work

You could be:

- digging trenches for laying cables and pipes for services such as gas, electricity, water, telephones and television
- using hand tools, such as picks and shovels, using machinery such as drills, cement mixers and rollers
- driving large vehicles with machinery attached
- mixing and spreading concrete, tarmac, gravel and crushed stone
- laying kerb slabs and paving stones
- painting road markings, filling in potholes and resurfacing cracks
- putting up fences, barriers (called vehicle restraint systems) and road signs or traffic lights and street lights
- trimming trees and grass in the central reservations
- spreading grit and salt in snowy weather.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Pay rates vary, depending on:

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

The apprentice rate, for those aged under 19 or aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship, is £8.00 an hour (1 April 2026).

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour. This can rise up to around £15.00 an hour or more with experience. You can earn extra through overtime and shift allowances.

Conditions

- You work outdoors in all weathers.
- You use very noisy equipment such as pneumatic drills.
- You wear protective clothing including reflective jacket, ear protectors, hard hat and boots.
- You might be working in remote areas, travelling a lot and spending days at a time away from home.

- Your standard working week is between 37 and 39 hours, but overtime is common.
- You work night and weekend shifts to avoid disruption to traffic.
- You carry heavy materials, equipment and tools.

Getting In

- You could enter through a Modern Apprenticeship in Construction: Civil Engineering at SCQF Level 5.
- You do not always need formal qualifications, but some employers ask for subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and a science or technological subject.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Construction (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which can help to get into a relevant Modern Apprenticeship.
- You need basic reading and number skills.
- You may have to take an aptitude test as part of the application process.
- Experience of working as a labourer may be necessary.
- A driving licence is sometimes required, a Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) licence can be useful and a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) is desirable.
- You must be over 18 to operate some vehicles and machinery.
- You must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or equivalent to work on a site. You will need to pass a health and safety test.

Look for jobs with local authorities as well as with private civil engineering companies and building contractors.

What Does It Take

You need:

- physical fitness and stamina
- confidence in operating machinery
- a steady hand
- the ability to follow instructions
- an awareness of health and safety regulations
- a willingness to work outwith normal hours on a callout rota
- the ability to work in a team.

Training

- Training during an apprenticeship is mainly on the job with off the job training at college. You would work towards SVQ Road Building and Maintenance (Construction) at SCQF Level 5.
- You could study part time for SVQ Winter Services (Construction) at SCQF Level 5.
- Several colleges and private training providers offer short courses that qualify road workers to register for a Street Works Qualification Register identity card.
- You might do training to qualify you to drive specialist and large vehicles.

Getting On

- After experience, you can move on to a supervisory job such as ganger, or to train in operating specialised

machinery.

- You can also become self-employed, hiring yourself out on a contract basis, or find work abroad.

More Information

For more information please see the list of organisations below:

- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- Street Works Qualification Register (SWQR)

Contacts

GoConstruct
Website: www.goconstruct.org
X: @GoConstructUK
Facebook: www.facebook.com/goconstructuk

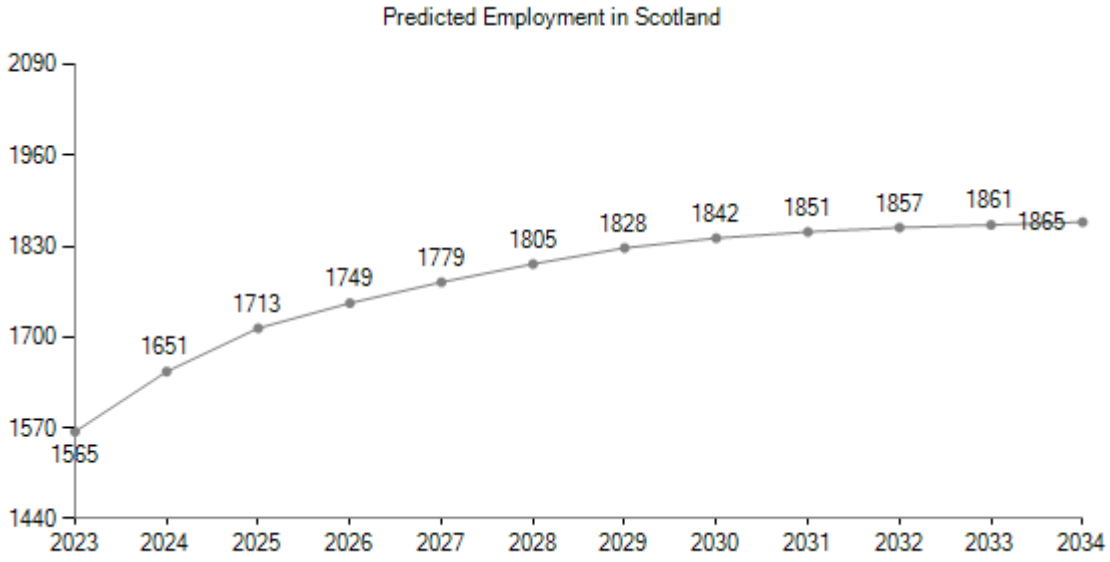
Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by LMI for All



LMI data powered by Lightcast