

Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers)

General competency framework · Frontline / operational level · 5 competencies · approx. 75 minutes

How to use this guide

- Focus on these 5 competencies — the behaviours that matter most for this role — not a chronological career history.
- Ask every candidate the same core questions, then probe. Allow around 15 minutes per competency.
- Ask for real examples and use STAR — the Situation, the Task, the Action they took, and the Result.
- Stay neutral, capture what they say, and judge later. Gather evidence on one competency at a time.
- Rate each competency 1–5 against the positive and negative indicators, and note the evidence.

5 Outstanding 4 Good 3 Acceptable 2 Marginal 1 Poor

1. Technical Capability

Has the necessary knowledge, skills and proficiency to conduct their role. Demonstrates mastery in their area of technical capability. Stays up to date with advances in their field and commits to their continuous development.

Why this matters for Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers): The relevant Apprenticeship Standards (Installation and Maintenance Electrician, Plumbing and Domestic Heating Technician, Carpentry and Joinery, Bricklayer) all centre regulatory knowledge (BS7671, Water Regs, Building Regs), materials, methods, fault diagnosis. Trade certifications (JIB, Gas Safe) verify ongoing competence. Technical mastery is non-negotiable.

Tell me about the skills or know-how you need to do this kind of job well.

- How did you learn them?
- How do you make sure you do the job to the right standard?

Describe a time you had to learn a new machine, system or way of working.

- How did you get to grips with it?
- How long did it take you?

How do you keep your skills up to date for your work? Give me an example.

- When did you last learn something new for the job?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Lacks the know-how the job needs		Has the skills and knowledge the job needs
Struggles with the equipment or systems		Confident and capable with the tools of the job
Makes avoidable mistakes in the work		Does the technical parts of the job to a good standard
Lets their skills get out of date		Keeps their skills current and picks up new methods
Won't learn new equipment or ways of working		Willing to learn new kit and ways of working

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

2. Dependability

Conscientious and thorough in their approach to work, delivering what they promise to the necessary standard. Behaves in line with the organisation's values and ethical principles.

Why this matters for Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers): The Standards' named behaviours include 'takes responsibility', 'works safely', 'quality focused', 'reliable'. Trade certifications (JIB ECS, Gas Safe Register, CSCS) and regulatory regimes (CDM, Building Regs, BS standards) all rely on the trade-person's personal compliance. The work is often unsupervised.

Tell me about a time you had a lot to get done on a shift. How did you make sure it was all done properly?

- How did you keep the standard up?
- What did you do if you were running short of time?

Describe a time you turned up and found things hadn't been done properly by someone before you. What did you do?

- How did you handle it?
- What was the result?

How do you make sure your work is always done to the right standard, even when no one's checking? Give an example.

- Have you ever been tempted to cut a corner? What did you do?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Cuts corners to get done quicker		Does the job properly, to the right standard
Unreliable; doesn't do what they said		Reliable — does what they say they will
Sloppy or careless in their work		Careful and thorough
Standard drops when no one is checking		Keeps standards up even when unsupervised
Bends the rules when it suits them		Sticks to the rules and does the right thing

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

3. Customer Focus

Builds effective customer relationships to ensure needs and expectations are understood. Understands the importance of the customer to the business, seeking regular feedback whilst being prepared to say no when needed.

Why this matters for Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers): Domestic trades work in customers' homes, often unsupervised. Explaining the work, pricing transparently, dealing with disruption to the home, and managing customer expectation through completion. Reputation drives referral; the trade-person's manner matters as much as their craft.

Tell me about a time you went out of your way to help a customer or member of the public.

- What did they need?
- What did you do?
- How did they react?

Describe a time a customer was unhappy or difficult. How did you handle it?

- What was the problem?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?

How do you know when you've done a good job for a customer? Give me an example.

- What do you look or listen for?
- Tell me about a time you got it right.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Treats customers as a nuisance; unhelpful		Friendly, helpful and professional with customers
Doesn't take responsibility for a customer's problem		Takes ownership of sorting out customer issues
Doesn't really listen to what the customer needs		Listens and checks what the customer actually needs
Promises things that can't be delivered		Only promises what can be done; honest with customers
Doesn't see why the customer matters		Understands the customer keeps the business going

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

4. Organisational Skills

Establishes clear priorities and builds plans to ensure delivery on time. Works in a systematic manner and manages resources efficiently. Quickly adapts plans as circumstances require. Sees things through to completion.

Why this matters for Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers): The Standards' skills include interpreting drawings/schematics, multi-stage installs, sequencing work alongside other trades, and time management on site. CDM Regulations require coordination of trades; the competent trade-person plans their own work and supports others' planning.

Tell me about a busy shift or day when you had a lot to get through. How did you manage it?

- How did you decide what to do first?
- Did you get it all done?

Describe a time you had to juggle a few different tasks at once.

- How did you keep on top of it all?
- What was the result?

How do you make sure you don't forget or miss things at work? Give an example.

- What helps you stay organised?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Gets overwhelmed on a busy shift		Keeps on top of a busy workload
Does things in a random order and misses tasks		Works in a sensible order and doesn't miss things
Often runs late or leaves things unfinished		Gets things done on time and finished
Can't juggle more than one thing		Handles several tasks without dropping any
Doesn't plan ahead		Plans ahead so the work gets done

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

5. Resilience

Remains calm and maintains a positive attitude when faced with difficult circumstances. Thrives under pressure, remaining focused despite distractions. Quickly recovers from setbacks.

Why this matters for Construction and building trades (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers):

Physical demands (heavy materials, awkward access, working at height), weather (outdoor or unheated working), repetitive labour, peak workloads. The trade is physically demanding across a long career.

Tell me about a really busy or stressful time at work. How did you cope?

- What made it hard?
- How did you keep going?

Describe a time something didn't go your way at work. How did you pick yourself back up?

- How did you feel?
- What did you do?

How do you keep calm when things get difficult or busy? Give me an example.

- What helps you stay level-headed?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Loses their cool when it gets busy		Stays calm and in control when busy or stressed
Lets setbacks knock them off course		Bounces back from setbacks
Gets negative when things go wrong		Keeps a positive attitude
Easily distracted under pressure		Stays focused under pressure
Struggles to keep going when it's hard		Keeps going when the going gets tough

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____