

Carpenters Dictionary

*After joining the Union, you may hear words or acronyms you are unfamiliar with.
Below is a list of common terms you might hear as a Union member.*

AFL-CIO – American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations; the umbrella federation for many U.S. unions, representing 12.5 million working men and women. While the Carpenters Union is not associated with the AFL-CIO, it often works closely with the organization to fight for workers rights across the country.

Allied Construction Employers Association (ACEA) – An association in Wisconsin that represents contractors for purposes of bargaining, lobbying and industry issues. They are a collective of construction industry partners, supporting contractors so that everyone comes out of the bargaining process satisfied with the outcome. A majority of members are union contractors and the Association promotes joint effort issues and programs between labor and management.

Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) – A national association of general contractors. AGC represents more than 26,000 firms, including more than 6,500 of America's leading general contractors, and more than 9,000 specialty contracting firms, many of which are union companies. The North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters negotiates with the AGC and other contractor partners on our area contracts.

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) – A national U.S. trade association representing the merit shop (non-union) construction industry. ABC is an association that works to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, fights Prevailing Wage laws and has been an active supporter of harmful Right-to-Work legislation in states across the country. If ABC believes that "...employers should have the right to determine wages and working conditions", who stands up for workers?

Business Representative – Business Representatives are hired by the Council to assist union members by answering questions, helping them find work, recruit potential new members to our Union and organize workers on job sites. Business Representatives are held accountable by the leadership of the Regional Council and its delegates.

Building Trades – By definition, trades within the construction industry, including carpenters, operating engineers, laborers, painters, electricians and more. Many areas also have Building Trades organizations that advocate for unionized construction members, as well as members of other trades. These groups bring the various trades together to work toward advancing all building and construction trades unions through legislative action, developing apprenticeship programs, securing jurisdiction, negotiating project labor agreements and more.

Carpentry Contractors Association (CCA) – An association in Minnesota that represents contractors for purposes of bargaining, lobbying and industry issues. They partner with other groups like FCF and MDPA during negotiations, supporting contractors so that everyone comes out of the bargaining process satisfied with the outcome. A majority of members are union contractors.

Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) – Collective bargaining is the process of negotiating between employees, represented by the Union, and an employer or group of employers. The agreements agreed upon during collective bargaining include wages, benefits, training, work hours and overtime.

Carpenters International Training Fund (CITF) – The CITF and its affiliated training programs invest more than \$200 million a year to develop and deliver curriculum and training for UBC members. Curriculum is developed at the International Training Center with input from contractors, industry experts, and product and equipment manufacturers. Through a network of more than 200 training centers across North America and 2,500 full-time instructors, UBC training is what gives union carpenters and our signatory contractors their strong competitive advantage.

Davis-Bacon Act – A United States federal law that establishes the requirement for paying the local prevailing wage on public works projects in the construction industry. This legislation prevents contractors from using unskilled or immigrant labor in order to bid lower on jobs, and ensures workers are paid fairly. When Signatory Contractors bid and win these jobs, carpenters have more work available to them.

Defined Benefit (DB) – A traditional pension plan in which an employer contributes a set amount of money on your behalf. At retirement, the amount is totaled and, using a predetermined formula, is divided into a specific monthly benefit amount you receive for the rest of your life.

Defined Contribution (DC) – A defined contribution plan is a type of retirement plan where your employer regularly contributes a set amount that is tax-deferred until withdrawn after retirement.

Department of Labor (DOL) – The United States Department of Labor is a department of the U.S. Federal government responsible for occupational safety, wage and hour standards, unemployment insurance benefits, reemployment services, and some economic statistics. Laws put into place by the DOL allow the department to have oversight, require report filing and protect union funds. The Labor Relations branch of the DOL directs basic standards of democracy and fiscal responsibility in Labor organizations, helping to keep everyone honest.

Des Moines Construction Council (DMCC) – An association in Iowa that represents many Des Moines-area union contractors for purposes of bargaining, lobbying and industry issues. Their goal is to support contractors so that everyone comes out of the bargaining process satisfied with the outcome.

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) – A Federal law that sets standards of protection for individuals in most private sector retirement plans. ERISA requires plans to provide participants with plan information, including important facts about plan features and funding; sets minimum standards for participation, vesting, benefit accrual, and funding; provides fiduciary responsibilities for those who manage and control plan assets; requires plans to establish a claims and appeals process for participants to get benefits from their plans; gives participants the right to sue for benefits and breaches of fiduciary duty; and, if a defined benefit plan is terminated, guarantees payment of certain benefits.

Executive Secretary-Treasurer (EST) – Elected into office by Council Delegates, the EST is the chief executive officer of the Regional Council and is responsible for the management and supervision of the field activities, business offices, and for conducting the daily business of the Council.

Fair Contracting Foundation (FCF) – Promotes prevailing wage law education, compliance, and enforcement in Minnesota. It advocates for practices, policies and laws that ensure fair government contracts, a strong local industry and protection of the public interest. FCF helps ensure that the Federal Davis-Bacon Act, Minnesota Prevailing Wage statutes and related laws are followed and upheld on public construction projects.

Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) – A process used during construction of health care facilities that coordinates knowledge about infection, infectious agents, and care environment to anticipate potential impact to patients and all those involved in the project. The Carpenters ICRA training course is one piece of a larger philosophy about infection control in health care facilities. ICRA-trained carpenters make themselves more marketable to contractors and help increase market share for the union.

INSTALL – International Standards and Training Alliance is a North American alliance of flooring mills, manufacturers, associations and contractors who work together to develop flooring training and best practices. Members of the Carpenters Union who specialize in flooring get trained in INSTALL methods to ensure superior flooring installations via comprehensive training and certification of floor layers to bring out their best in skill, productivity and attitude.

International Training Center (ITC) – The main campus of the UBC located in Las Vegas, Nev. The ITC is nearly 1 million square feet, with multiple large training centers, classrooms, event rooms and more than 300 guest rooms, allowing it to host various trainings and events. The ITC is where the UBC develops curriculum and trains instructors who deliver craft skills instruction to members at more than

200 training centers throughout North America. The ITC supports the creation of new courses that meet contractors' evolving needs and is home to ongoing refinements in core courses, as well as industry conferences and an array of development programs that teach union members leadership, productivity, project management, communication and other skills.

Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC or JAC) – A joint board consisting of Regional Council staff and management from signatory contractors that develops and oversees the curriculum of our Apprenticeship programs. The group addresses many apprentice issues, supports skill advancement classes for journey-level carpenters, and collaborative to ensure the carpenters training programs are the best they can be.

Journeyman Leadership Program – In this course offered by the UBC, journey-level carpenters develop leadership, mentoring, coaching and communication skills. These journeymen leaders learn to engage with newer members and lead by example, all while promoting positive work environments and productivity on the job. Both participants and their supporting contractors benefit from participation in this leadership training.

Master Builders of Iowa (MBI) – An association of general and specialty contractors in Iowa. MBI represents both union and merit shop (non-union) contractors.

Minnesota Drywall and Plaster Association (MDPA) – An association that represents drywall and plaster contractors for purposes of bargaining, lobbying and discussing industry issues in Minnesota. They partner with other groups like FCF and CCA during negotiations, supporting contractors so that everyone comes out of the bargaining process satisfied with the outcome.

Midwestern District – One of five districts in North America that channels the direction and goals of the UBC to the Regional Councils. This structure of UBC > District > Regional Council > Local Union helps ensure the readiness of resources to protect and secure work, and streamlines services to members. Regional Councils in the Midwestern District include: Indiana Kentucky Ohio Regional Council, Chicago Regional Council, North Central States Regional Council, and St. Louis-Kansas City Regional Council.

Millwright – A craftsperson who installs, dismantles, repairs, reassembles, and moves machinery in factories, power plants, and construction sites. Precision is the standard work product of UBC millwrights and a keen eye is a primary asset for millwrights, sometimes working with specifications requiring tolerances to a thousandth of an inch. Millwright work is one of many crafts to fall under the umbrella of the Carpenters Union.

Misclassification – Also known as employee misclassification, it is the practice of labeling workers as independent contractors, rather than employees. The practice allows employers to avoid paying unemployment and other taxes on workers, and from covering them on workers compensation and unemployment insurance.

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) – An agency of the DOL that assures safe and healthy working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance.

Payroll Fraud – Employers classifying workers as “independent contractors”, paying in cash off the books and other scams, in order to evade paying workers compensation and basic payroll taxes. Payroll fraud hurts all working Americans, and is especially prevalent in the construction industry.

Pile Driver – A construction worker skilled at driving steel, concrete or wood piling into the earth during the early stages of construction. This skill is crucial to both a project’s success and the safety of workers, since the piling is also meant to hold back the earth during excavations, to set up the foundation of skyscrapers, highways, and bridges, and to build docks and wharfs. Pile Driving is one of many crafts to fall under the umbrella of the Carpenters Union.

Prevailing Wage – The defined hourly wage, benefits and/or overtime paid in the largest city in each county, to the majority of workers, laborers, and mechanics on public construction projects. Prevailing wages are established by the Department of Labor for each trade and occupation working on public projects. *See: Davis-Bacon Act.*

Pro 10 – A 10-hour professional training course for union construction workers, their signatory contractors and the clients of these contractors to enhance communication, cooperation and productivity on all job sites. Pro 10 training was developed by the Minnesota LUC Committee (Labor-Users-Contractors) to further the understanding between each group and to create a more effective work environment.

Project Labor Agreement (PLA) – A PLA is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement with one or more labor organizations that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project. These terms apply to all contractors and subcontractors who are awarded the project. This often means that workers on the job are unionized and receive union wages and benefits. The Federal government encourages PLAs on federally funded projects, but PLAs are used on both public and private projects and specifics of the agreement may vary based on the project itself.

Project Maintenance Agreement (PMA) – Designed to provide skilled craft personnel and competent contractors to safely perform various types of industrial

maintenance work — from quick turnarounds to major upgrade programs — on all types of industrial facilities throughout the region.

Regional Council – The Regional Council is the entity that oversees Local unions in a specific area. Locals elect Regional Council delegates who vote for the EST and make important decisions for all Locals in the area. The Regional Council falls between Local Unions and Regional Districts in the hierarchy of the UBC. This structure of UBC > District > Regional Council > Local Union helps ensure the readiness of resources to protect and secure work, and streamlines services to members.

Right to Work – Right to Work laws prohibit agreements between employers and labor unions that govern the extent to which an established union can require employees' membership, payment of union dues, or fees as a condition of employment, either before or after hiring. Right to Work hurts unions and the ability for workers to be represented and collectively bargain.

Roberts Rules of Order – A widely accepted guide to running meetings effectively and fairly. This process is used in Local Union meetings and Regional Council Delegate meetings, and facilitates discussion and group decision-making.

Signatory contractor – A contractor who agrees to use union labor on jobs on which they bid, pay union wage rates, and pay into pension and benefit funds for our members. In turn, they have access to a union workforce that is well trained, highly skilled, and productive. The union works in partnership with signatory contractors, helping them to compete and stay profitable, which ultimately creates more work for union carpenters.

Sisters in the Brotherhood (SIB) – Sisters Committees are organized in an effort to create a network of women carpenters throughout the UBC. The committees provide an opportunity to connect with and mentor other women carpenters, promote the advancement of tradeswomen and work to increase the number and diversity of women in the Union.

Uniformed Services Employment & Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA) – A Federal law that establishes rights and responsibilities for uniformed military Service members and their civilian employers. It specifically relates to issues that may arise when a person needs to be absent from their jobs in order to serve, as well as expands the length of time someone may be absent from work for service and is able to keep their reemployment rights.

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC) – The UBC is the international body of the Carpenters Union and is one of the largest trades unions in North America, with more than 600 Local Unions across Canada and the U.S. With a 130-year history, the UBC is a progressive union whose mission is to better the lives of all of its members and to support its signatory contractors.

Wage Theft – Denial of wages or employee benefits that are rightfully owed to an employee. Wage theft can be conducted through various means such as failure to pay overtime, minimum wage violations, employee misclassification, illegal deductions in pay, working off the clock or not being paid at all.

Window Dues – Monthly dues you pay to your Local; basic membership dues, which you pay regardless of whether or not you are working. These dues make you eligible to work for signatory contractors and provide your union card.

Working Dues – Percentage of your gross wages that are paid to the Regional Council. Working dues are utilized to pay the wages of Council staff, maintain properties owned by the membership, and work to maintain area standards. For most members, working dues are taken care of through a payroll deduction from your employer before you receive your paycheck.