

CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR VETERANS



Construction
Inclusion Week

TOOLBOX TALKS

09



Estimated Time:

15 minutes max



Audience:

**All construction professionals,
veterans, HR teams, hiring managers,
transition programs, team leaders.**

CIW PILLARS:

*Attract and Retain,
Belonging & Workforce Culture*

CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR VETERANS



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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

This Toolbox Talk is provided as a voluntary workforce development resource in support of Construction Inclusion Week. It does not impose or endorse any directives, quotas, or identity-based exclusions or preferences.

The content reflects voluntary best practices and is designed to promote safety, opportunity, and inclusive team culture benefiting everyone across the construction industry, to help support, attract, and retain top talent.

Construction Inclusion Week does not control or endorse the content of third-party links. Activities should be adapted to align with your company's legal policies and job-related criteria.



CONSTRUCTION CAREERS FOR VETERANS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This conversation shows how construction offers a strong career path for military veterans and how teams can help them transition successfully.

It supports veteran workforce inclusion and highlights the value of military experience in construction careers.

- Understand how military skills transfer to construction roles.
- Recognize challenges veterans face when entering civilian careers.
- Use inclusive practices to support veterans on your team.
- Learn how to help veterans transition through onboarding and mentorship.
- Build a culture and inclusive environment that respects and supports veteran experience.

DEFINITIONS

Veteran:

A person who has served in the U.S. Armed Forces (active duty, reserves, or National Guard)

Camaraderie: Mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together; often found in both military and construction settings.

Skills Translator: A tool or method used to connect military job experience with civilian career opportunities.

Mission-Driven Work: Jobs that are purposeful, team-oriented with structure and impact, aligned with clear outcomes; something many veterans value.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Many veterans bring strengths like leadership, discipline, adaptability, or a strong work ethic—especially when expectations are clear. While every service member's experience is unique, construction can offer a familiar sense of structure, purpose, and teamwork.



KEY CONCEPTS:

- **Construction shares many military values: structure, teamwork, mission-focus, and hands-on problem-solving. Many struggle with the shift to civilian jobs and may not know how to translate their skills.**
- Simple things like clear communication, mentorship, and respect go a long way.
- Recognizing veterans' qualifications and leadership experience can strengthen team cohesion and trust.

Veterans may bring skills such as teamwork, adaptability, and leadership that can transfer into construction roles. They understand structure and the importance of getting the job done right. Many have led teams, worked under pressure, and adapted to changing conditions, skills that directly transfer to the jobsite.

The shift to civilian work can bring changes that require adjustment and support. Some veterans may not know how their military experience fits into this new environment. Others may be unsure of the culture or worried about asking for help. That's why support, mentorship, and clarity matter.

Construction can be a natural next step for veterans. It offers structure, purpose, and clear goals. But success doesn't happen by accident.





Teams need to be intentional about welcoming veterans, starting with onboarding, coaching, and showing them they belong. Outreach can include veterans and other qualified candidates; selection and advancement are always based on job-related skills, performance, and safety criteria.

Recognizing veterans isn't just about saying thank you. It's about making sure they have the tools, information, and support they need to succeed. When we do that, we gain teammates who are dependable, mission-driven, and ready to lead.



Let's ensure those who've served have access to clear pathways and tools for success and show them this industry can be their next mission.

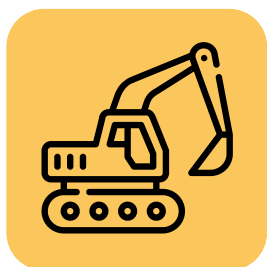


ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

General Ask:

Think about someone who served in the military. What qualities did they bring to their work? How did others treat them? Now ask yourself, what could we do to help more veterans see this industry as their next team?

The following page includes ways to practice mentorship, on site, in the office, or with community partners:



**JOBSITE
ACTIVITIES**



**OFFICE
ACTIVITIES**



**SCHOOL/
COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**



**GROUP
ACTIVITY**



JOBSITE ACTIVITIES

- Host a **“Veteran Spotlight”** huddle; highlight team members who served. Thank them for their service.
- Ask a veteran crew member to share one lesson from service that helps them on the job.
- Create a **“Service Wall”** to display photos or team members’ military backgrounds and recognize their service.
- Offer opt-in storytelling channels (employee spotlights, panels, private affinity/resource groups). Avoid public identifiers on PPE/badges.
- Walk through your onboarding process, what could be confusing to someone newly out of the military?
- Host a **“Day in the Life”** talk by a veteran in construction for the crew.



OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- Launch a **“Veteran Buddy”** Program, pair newly hired veterans with mentors during onboarding.
- Partner with a local Veteran Service Organization (VSO) or Helmets to Hardhats or other veteran employment programs to explore partnership opportunities.
- Include language in job postings that welcomes all qualified candidates including veterans, (e.g., “structured environment,” “mission-focused teams” , “We welcome applications from veterans”) while clarifying that selections are based on job-related qualifications and requirements).
- Create a **“Veterans at Work”** story feature in internal communications or newsletters. Highlight veteran employees.
- Review your onboarding checklist through a veterans Lens. Ask: Would this make sense to someone new to civilian work?



SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Partner with military transition programs for speaking engagements about careers in construction.
- Offer jobsite tours or internships for National Guard or reserve members.
- Co-host an “Intro to the Trades” event with veteran service organizations.
- Create a video or flyer showing how veterans thrive in construction.



GROUP ACTIVITIES

- In pairs, ask: What do veterans bring that we need more of on our teams?
- List of 5 things new veteran hires might struggle with, and how to help.
- Write a group welcome message or video for veteran applicants.
- As a team, review your job descriptions. Do they speak to veterans. Identify 1–2 changes to better communicate alignment.



"When veterans find their next mission in construction, everyone wins; let's build the bridge from service to site."



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes construction a good fit for people coming from the military?
2. What parts of our onboarding or culture could be improved for veterans?
3. How can your company or team improve how it supports veterans?
4. What's one step we can take to make veterans feel respected, not just welcomed?
5. How can we elevate the voices of veterans already on our teams?

**Veterans bring discipline, leadership, and a sense of purpose.
Let's honor service with opportunity, not just recognition.**



THIS WEEK:

- Invite a local veteran's group to your next job fair or site event.
- Share your company's commitment to veteran hiring on social media.
- Update job descriptions or career pages to highlight veteran pathways.
- Reach out to a local Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) to explore partnership opportunities.
- Ask how you can make onboarding easier for those new to civilian work?



POST YOUR IMPACT:

#ConstructionInclusionWeek
#CIWOpeningDoors
#FromServicetoSite

Resources:

- *Helmets to Hardhats*
- *Hire Heroes USA*
- *VA Career Resources*