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Welcome Work Construction Dictionary



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Introduction to the Construction Dictionary

This dictionary has been developed as part of the Welcome Work project, which supports people with a refugee or migrant background as they enter the construction sector. Many newcomers arrive with experience from their home countries, while others are learning about construction work for the first time. In both situations, understanding basic terminology makes day-to-day tasks easier, safer, and more accessible.

Construction sites bring together workers from many countries and language backgrounds. Clear communication helps prevent mistakes, reduces risks, and allows everyone to carry out their duties with confidence. This resource explains common words used in building, electrical work, and general site activity. It also introduces tools, equipment, and materials that workers are likely to encounter. Each definition is short, direct, and written in plain language so that it can be translated into English, Danish, Polish, Spanish, French and Ukrainian without difficulty.

The dictionary is designed to support practical learning. Workers can use it alongside training sessions, workplace instructions, and on-site supervision. It aims to give people the vocabulary they need to ask questions, follow guidance, and work safely with colleagues. By improving understanding of everyday terms, the dictionary also helps workers build independence and progress in their roles.

Whether someone is new to construction or refreshing their knowledge, this resource provides a clear entry point. It supports confidence, safety, and cooperation in a multilingual working environment, and forms part of a wider effort to help newcomers settle into their jobs, develop skills, and take part fully in the construction sector.



Common Tools Used in Construction Work



The following section introduces tools that workers will often see on construction sites. Each description explains what the tool is used for and how it supports everyday tasks. The aim is to help workers recognise the tools, understand their purpose, and use them safely under supervision.

Angle grinder

A handheld power tool used for cutting, grinding, or polishing metal, stone, or concrete.



Cable reel unwinder

A device that holds a reel of electrical cable and allows it to be pulled out smoothly without twisting.



Hex keys (Allen keys)

L-shaped tools used to tighten or loosen screws with a hexagonal socket.



Torx keys

Tools shaped to fit star-shaped Torx screws.



Common Tools Used in Construction Work

Tools & Electrical Items



Cable glands

Fittings that secure and seal cables where they enter a box, panel, or piece of equipment.



Heat shrink tubes

Plastic tubes that shrink when heated to protect or insulate electrical connections.



Residual current device (RCD)

A safety device that disconnects the power if it detects a fault, helping to prevent electric shock.



Sockets

Fixed connection points where plugs are inserted to draw electrical power.

Common Tools Used in Construction Work



Tools & Electrical Items

Plug

A connector at the end of a cable that fits into a socket to supply electricity.



Cordless screwdriver

A battery-powered tool used for driving screws.



Drill

A power tool used for making holes or driving screws into various materials.



Metal cutting disc

A thin circular blade used with tools such as angle grinders for cutting metal.



Zip tie / cable tie

A plastic fastener used to secure cables, pipes, or bundles of materials.



Common Tools Used in Construction Work

Tools & Electrical Items



Plastering trowel

A flat metal or plastic tool used to smooth and finish plaster or mortar.



Brick trowel

A trowel used for applying mortar when laying bricks or blocks.



Putty knife

A flat, flexible blade used for filling, scraping, or smoothing surfaces.



Plaster float

A tool used to level and smooth plaster or concrete surfaces.

Common Tools Used in Construction Work



Tools & Electrical Items

Plumb line

A weight on a string used to check if a wall or element is vertical.



Spirit level

A tool used to check horizontal or vertical alignment.



Paint roller

A roller used to apply paint evenly on large surfaces.



Scraper

A tool used to remove old paint, plaster, or residues.



Sandpaper

Abrasive paper used to smooth or prepare surfaces before finishing.



Common Tools Used in Construction Work



Tools & Electrical Items

Wheelbarrow

A small hand vehicle used to transport materials.



Shovel

A tool used for moving sand, cement, or earth.



Measuring tape

A flexible tape used to measure distances.



Chalk line

A string coated with chalk used to mark straight lines.



Hammer

A hand tool used for striking or fixing nails.



Chisel

A tool with a sharp edge used for cutting or shaping masonry or stone.

Common Tools Used in Construction Work

Tools & Electrical Items



Wall chaser

A power tool that cuts narrow channels in walls for cables or pipes.



Hole saw

A circular cutting attachment for a drill, used for making round holes.



Cover plate

A plate that covers electrical boxes, sockets, or switches after installation.



Earthing tape / grounding strip

A metal strip used to create a safe electrical earthing connection.

Common Tools Used in Construction Work



Tools & Electrical Items

Miniature circuit breaker (type S)

A protective device that switches off a circuit when it detects a fault. Type S reacts more slowly to allow brief start-up currents.



Contactor

An electrically controlled switch used to turn power on or off in larger circuits.



Terminal blocks

Connectors used to join electrical wires securely inside a panel or junction box.



Ring lug

A metal connector with a circular end that fits around a screw or bolt to secure a wire.



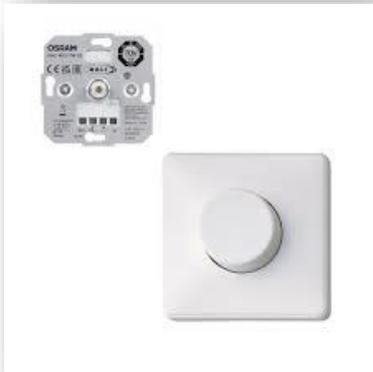
Common Tools Used in Construction Work

Tools & Electrical Items



Rail clamp / through connector

A device used to fix components onto mounting rails or to join conductors in an electrical system.



DALI lamps

Lighting units designed to work with DALI control systems for dimming and automation.



Control unit

An electronic device that manages or regulates equipment such as lighting or heating.



Insulation resistance

A measurement used to check how well electrical insulation prevents current from leaking.

Key Terms Used in Construction



This section explains common words and expressions used across the construction sector. These terms appear in site instructions, training materials, drawings, and everyday conversations between workers. Each definition is written in plain language so that learners can understand the meaning quickly and use the terms with confidence. The aim is to support clear communication on site and help workers take part fully in their tasks and responsibilities.

1. Aggregate

Crushed stone, gravel, or sand used in concrete, asphalt, or as a base layer.

2. Architect

A person who designs buildings and helps oversee the building process.

3. Beam

A horizontal structural element that supports weight from floors or roofs.

4. Blueprint

A detailed drawing used for planning and building structures.

5. Brickwork

Walls or structures made from bricks held together with mortar.

6. Building Permit

Official permission from local authorities to begin construction or renovation.

7. Cement

A powder that hardens when mixed with water and is used in concrete and mortar.

8. Concrete

A mixture of cement, water, and aggregates that sets into a solid material.

9. Contractor

A person or company hired to carry out construction work.

10. Damp Proof Course (DPC)

A barrier in walls that stops moisture rising from the ground.

11. Excavation

The process of digging the ground for foundations or underground work.

12. Fascia

A board fixed to the edge of a roof, often used to support guttering.

13. Foundation

The lowest part of a building that transfers the load to the ground.

14. Joist

A horizontal support used in floors or ceilings.

15. Load-Bearing Wall

A wall that supports the weight of the structure above it.

Key Terms Used in Construction



16. Masonry

Work involving brick, stone, or concrete blocks.

17. Mortar

A mixture of cement, sand, and water used to bind bricks or stones.

18. Plastering

Applying plaster to walls or ceilings to create a smooth surface.

19. Reinforcement (Rebar)

Steel bars placed in concrete to increase its strength.

20. Roof Truss

A framework of beams that supports a roof.

21. Scaffold

A temporary structure that supports workers and materials during construction.

22. Site Plan

A drawing showing the layout of buildings and features on a piece of land.

23. Skirting Board

A board fitted along the bottom of an interior wall to cover the join between wall and floor.

24. Subcontractor

A specialist hired by the main contractor to carry out specific tasks.

25. Surveyor

A professional who measures land and checks construction work for quality and compliance.

26. Timber

Wood prepared for use in building.

27. Trowel

A small tool used for applying and spreading mortar or plaster.

28. Underpinning

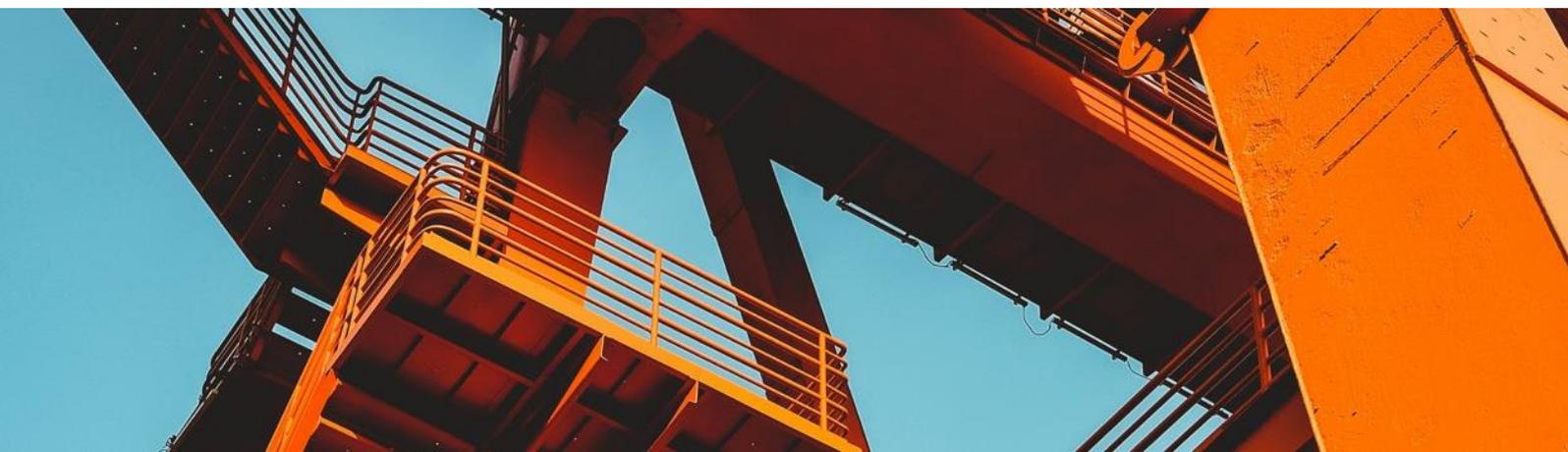
Strengthening or supporting a building's foundation.

29. Vapour Barrier

A layer that prevents moisture passing through walls or ceilings.

30. Wall Tie

A metal connector used to link two layers of brick or blockwork.



welcome work

Inclusion In Construction



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Follow our journey



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