

Civil Engineer

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Greg, 26, works for a specialty construction firm based in Toronto. He did his bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the University of Waterloo and his master's degree in engineering science at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is currently completing his experience requirement in order to become a licensed professional engineer in Ontario.

Stephanie: What made you decide to become a civil engineer? How did you become a civil engineer?

Greg: I'm not actually licensed as an engineer yet, but I do perform almost all of the same functions as one. I became an engineer because I've always liked math and science. I chose civil engineering because I was more interested in large-scale projects rather than smaller ones. I became a civil engineer by getting a bachelor's degree in applied science (civil engineering) from the University of Waterloo and a master's of engineering science from the University of New South Wales in Australia. All provinces in Canada have experience and other requirements (beyond academic) which must be fulfilled for licensure. I'm still in the process of fulfilling the Ontario requirements.

Stephanie: What does a civil engineer do?

Greg: Civil engineers have a very broad scope of work from which to choose. Traditionally the field has been divided into areas such as structural engineering, transportation engineering, water resources engineering and geotechnical engineering, but the lines between the disciplines are becoming very blurry and people often cross over from one area to another. Civil engineers can find employment with contractors, consultants, developers and all levels of government. In general, civil engineers use their skills to design and construct structures or systems that fulfill a need in society. Later in their careers, many civil engineers move

from purely technical or design roles to managerial or administrative ones. Stephanie: What do you like about your job? Greg: I work for a specialty construction contractor, so I get to see unique and challenging problems every day. I use my academic skills to solve real world problems in the most cost-effective manner and I'm learning new things all the time. Stephanie: What is your least favourite part of the job? Greg: Dealing with red tape and paperwork that is necessary in today's business environment but doesn't actually get me any closer to the goal of completing a project. Stephanie: What advice do you have for someone considering becoming a civil engineer? Greg: Talk to existing civil engineers about their current and past jobs to see if it sounds like something you would like. University engineering courses have a reputation for being difficult, but I believe that almost anyone who really wants to has the ability to complete one. Stephanie: What kind of an education do you need to be a civil engineer? What kind of education did you get? Greg: It is technically possible to become a licensed engineer by simply taking a series of exams set by the licensing board in your province, but most people fulfill the academic requirements by completing an undergraduate engineering program at an accredited university. You also need applicable real-world experience and to complete a law and ethics exam before being licensed. Stephanie: What is your favourite civil engineering work, and why? Greg: My favourite civil engineering work is the US Interstate Highway system. It's an incredibly complex and expensive system that performs well and that most people take for granted even when using it. We are always trying to find new careers to feature in the spotlight! If there is a career you would like to know more about, please let us know what it is, and we will do what we can to include it on the site. E-mail your suggestions to info@schoolfinder.com. It's application season already, which means deadlines are looming. Different provinces and different schools have diffe...

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