



**ROADS TO JOBS**  
Life Skills for Construction Careers

## **Road Construction Job Interview Tips**

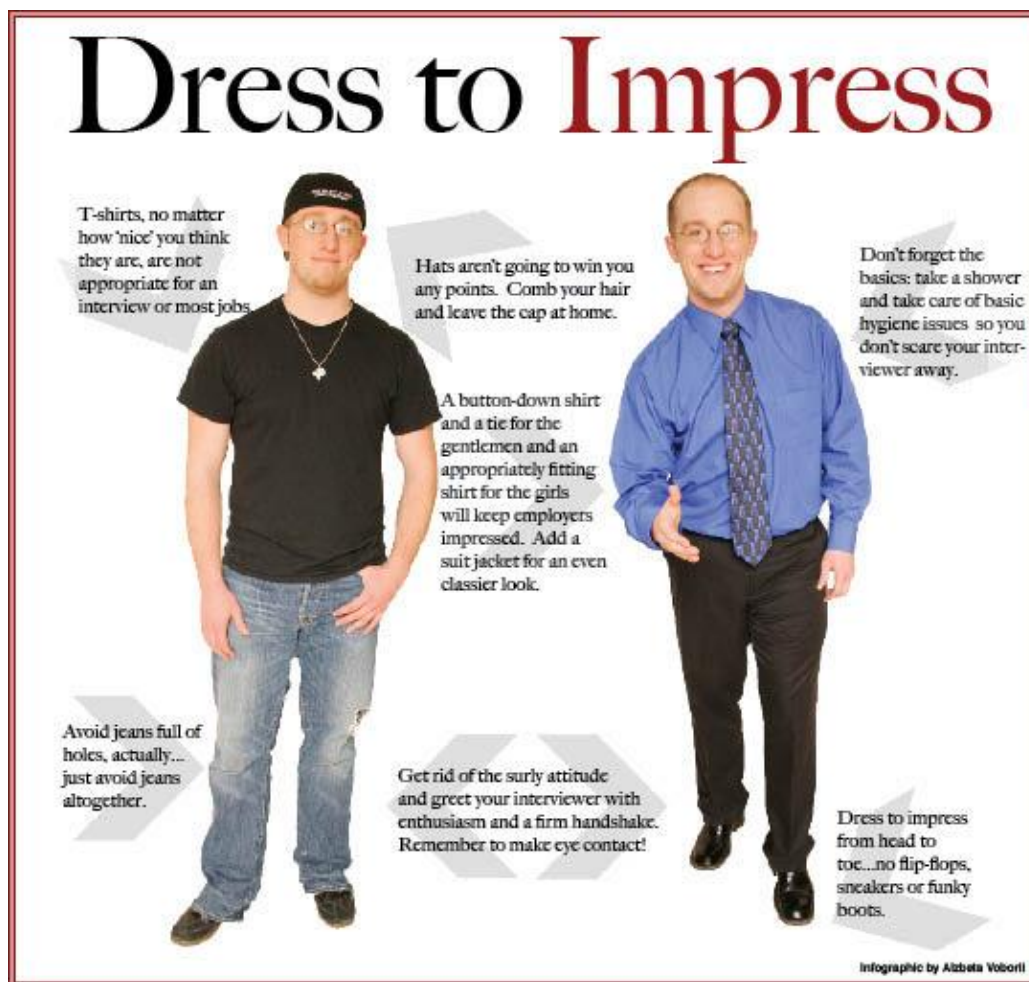
# Dressing for the Interview

Okay, the resume or job application was accepted and now you have an interview!

First, think about how you will dress. Even though you may be interviewing for a construction job, it is not appropriate to dress like you are on a work site! Consider these following tips:

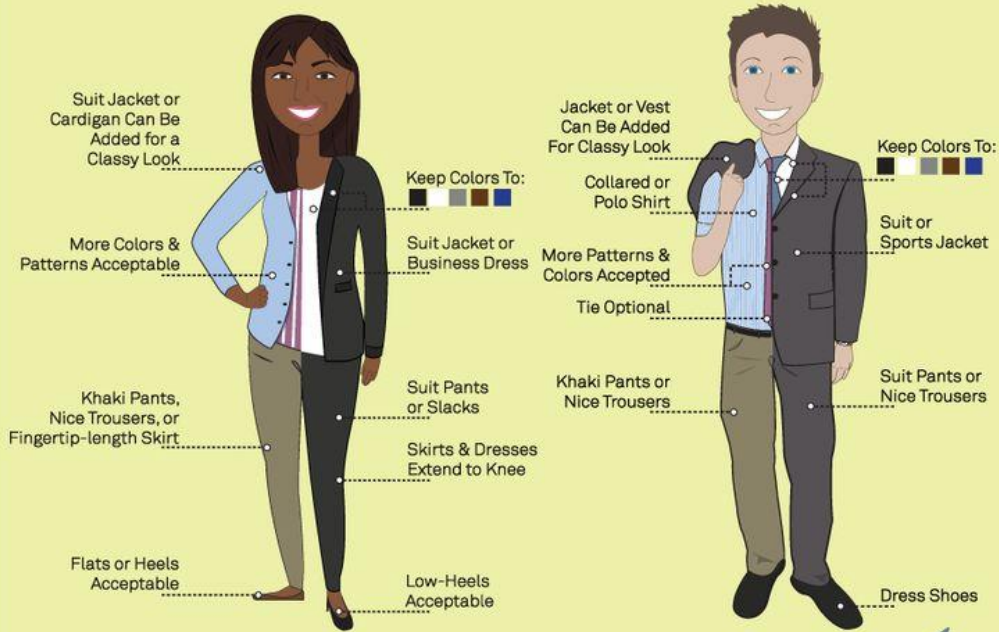
- Look as nice as possible for the interview – dress casual is appropriate for most construction companies
- Err on the side of overdressing
- Pay attention to details – don't wear stain or wrinkled clothes
- Dress in neutral colors – blue is most popular, followed by black, brown and gray
- Put the spray away – leave off the cologne, perfume and aftershave

For men, nice pants, a shirt and tie are always appropriate. For women, dress slacks and a blouse or a skirt and blouse are good choices. See the illustration below:



# Business Casual vs. Professional

Have an interview or professional event coming up? Learn how to decode dress code.



## Tips for Success in Any Business Situation



- 1 When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- 2 A suit (suit & tie for males) will suffice in most situations
- 3 Make sure your outfit is wrinkle-free.
- 4 Stick with solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics or simple patterns.
- 5 Accessories should be kept simple: basic pumps, modest jewelry, light make-up & light perfume.
- 6 Wear a belt and a watch.
- 7 Be sure your hair is neatly trimmed or groomed. Avoid the "messy" look.
- 8 Shirts with lettering or graphics should not be worn.
- 9 Check your outfit for missing buttons, lint, or a crooked tie.
- 10 A skirt should be no shorter than the tips of your middle fingers (or just above the knee for good measure).

**PURDUE CCO**

# Conducting Yourself in the Interview

Once you are at the interview site there are a few things to remember to help you make a good impression:

- Shake hands with the interviewer(s) and smile. This establishes you as a friendly person and someone who is happy to be there and ready to work.
- Look the interviewer(s) directly in the eye. Being direct establishes that you have nothing to hide.
- Learn and use names of interviewers at least three times during the interview. People like to hear their own name and knowing your interviewer's name demonstrates that you are listening and care what they have to say and that you care about the organization.
- Listen! When you really hear what is being said you can learn important things about the organization.
- Don't feel compelled to talk constantly. Answer questions succinctly and then wait for the interviewer to respond.
- Let the interviewer bring up questions. Then give yourself a moment to think before responding. It's okay to allow for a thoughtful pause.
- Be prepared to ask intelligent questions, especially about the employer's needs. This shows you've done your homework on the company and that you are genuinely interested.
- Always say "Thank You" at the beginning, middle and end of interview.

## Elevator Speech

- Interviewer likely to say, "Tell me about yourself."
- A short summary about yourself, what you do and what you want to do
- A 30-second 'speech' or 'pitch' that tells what you do, what you're capable of and what you want
- Think about it in terms of the time it takes for an elevator ride to briefly summarize your pitch
- A very concise version of "tell me about yourself"
- If networking, it's the info shared when asked "what you do"
- Should get their attention
- Will set the tone for how you are viewed
- Will complement the objective stated on the resume

### ► Answer four key questions

1. What do you do well?

2. What is your greatest strength in this area or the best compliment you've ever received about your skill? (shows confidence)

3. What would you like to do? (goals)
4. What's your why? (motivation)

- Adapted from [Idealistcareers.org](http://Idealistcareers.org)

Example Elevator Speech:

- ▶ I am a professional communicator with broad experience across all areas of marketing and communication and in a variety of public and private industries. I am passionate about building relationships for and with my clients and I utilize my strengths in administration and organization to plan and implement communications outreach that affects desirable change within a target audience. My goal is to serve as a project manager for a marketing team that focuses on the transportation industry and specifically on educating job seekers about the numerous career opportunities in the industry.

## Sample Interview Questions

These are examples of some of the questions you may be asked during an interview. Review these to help you start thinking about how you might answer.

- Teamwork/collaboration – “Tell me about a team project that you worked on.”
  - Be prepared to talk about one or two successes stories that focus on teamwork
- Leadership – “Tell me about a time you stepped up into a leadership role.”
  - Be prepared to demonstrate you can be a leader
  - Leadership is evident in many things; find yours and highlight
- Problem-solving – “Describe a difficult situation at work or school and how you coped with it.”
  - Be prepared with an example that relates to the job interview
  - Have examples that show how you solved a problem successfully
- Communication/handling conflict – “Tell me about a time that you disagreed with a rule or approach.”
  - Be prepared with an example that shows how you calmly handled a disagreeable situation or individual
  - Always speak positively about others; disagreements will happen and good employees should be flexible and willing to solve them
- Initiative – “Tell me about a time you went beyond your job description to save the company time or money.”
  - Be prepared with examples that demonstrate your drive and willingness to go beyond the call of duty
  - In considering some of these interview questions, incorporate how you showed *initiative* in your answers

# The Interview Process

Experienced interviewers typically follow a similar process to discover the most they can about a job candidate. It is also your chance to make the best possible impression and to learn what you can about the company.

Here is sample of how an interview may go:

## Introduction

- Both parties are getting their first impressions
- Personal introductions
- Interview has begun even before first question is asked

## Background/Probe Stage

- Both parties are getting to know each other
- Questions and answers begin
- Both parties may take notes
- Being prepared for questions will result in more confident answers

## Matching Stage

- Interviewer may ask if you have questions
- Be prepared with some knowledge of the company
- Be prepared with one or two questions

## Final Thoughts/Closing the Interview

- Be prepared to add your final thoughts/clarify something
- Ask about next steps
- Thank them for their time

# Follow Up Thank You Note

Once the interview is over it is always a good idea to send a thank you note to the interviewer and/or the hiring manager. It shows initiative, good manners and makes a positive impression. The note should be written and mailed immediately after the interview. Be sure to include the following points:

- Quick review of why you'd be good for the position
- Reference something specific from the interview
- Mention how you would contribute to the company
- Express interest in working for the company

Here is a template for a thank you letter:

Dear [Interviewer's Name]:

I enjoyed meeting with you \_\_\_\_\_(state day or date) and learning more about the opportunity at \_\_\_\_\_ (company name).

*Here is where two or three sentences about the substance of the interview or clarifications should be made.*

Thank you again \_\_\_\_\_(name) for meeting with me. I'm excited about the opportunity to contribute to your team/company.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_(signature)

Jack Doe