

Analyzing the Gender Gap in Field Positions on Commercial Construction Projects



The percentage of women working in the construction industry is on the rise. However, most women working in the construction industry often fill administrative roles, office positions, and project management roles rather than field positions such as tradeswomen, foremen, or superintendents. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of 2020, women constitute 10.9% of the entire construction industry. Specifically, 86.7% of those women are in office positions with only 3.5% of women in trade positions. These numbers signify that the construction industry is not benefiting from women in field positions. This is due to challenges that women working in field positions face such as male-dominated culture and work environment, perception of capabilities, and unsafe work environments. This research includes a literature review as well as a summarization of results concluded from semi-structured interviews with women currently working in field positions in the commercial construction industry.

How women interviewed overcome challenges:
Male and female superintendent role models, field training programs, women in construction support groups, view challenges as opportunities

Key Words: Male-dominated, harassment, barriers, bias, field positions



Methodology:
Interviews conducted with women currently in field positions on commercial construction projects

Average level of respect women interviewed receive on a scale of 1-10, 1 being complete disrespect, 10 being utmost respect and encouragement: 5.8

Top 3 challenges women interviewed had in common:
Safety concerns (harassment, insufficient PPE, isolation), need to prove themselves, career advancement

