



*Belonging and Excellence for All (BE4ALL) is a joint effort by SMART, SMACNA, and the ITI to create an industry-wide culture where everyone is welcome and belongs, including those from historically underrepresented groups, and where we all strive for the highest standards of performance and professionalism, resulting in a thriving unionized sheet metal industry that affirms the dignity and worth of us all. These Toolbox Talks are in support of this mission.*

## BE4ALL Toolbox Talk

# Opportunities in the Unionized Sheet Metal Trade

## A Career with Options, Stability, and Purpose

Being a part of the unionized sheet metal trade opens the door to a wide range of career opportunities. Whether you're just starting out or already working, your path forward is full of possibilities. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that job opportunities for trained sheet metal workers remain steady, even during downturns in construction, because of the ongoing demand for HVAC, maintenance, and energy-efficiency upgrades in buildings. Many job openings also arise from retirements, creating more chances for advancement.

## How to Take Advantage of These Opportunities

Your career success in the trade isn't just based on how many years you've worked, it's about the skills you build and your willingness to learn and grow.

Ways to improve your future in the trade:

- **Participate fully** in your training and any continued education opportunities offered.
- **Continue developing skills** beyond your apprenticeship.
- **Earn certifications in specialized areas** such as welding, detailing, TAB, IAQ, or energy management.
- **Talk to your foreperson**, supervisor or mentor about your long-term goals. They can't support your journey unless they know where you want to go.
- **Get involved in your local union meetings**, events hosted or attended by your local or contractor, and the array of different committees both locally and nationally.
- **The more skills you gain, the more opportunities you unlock** – for pay, work security, and career advancement.

## Paths to Specialization

Sheet metal workers can branch into multiple specialty areas. Here are just a few:

- HVAC Installation & Service
- Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing (TAB)
- Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)
- Welding (AWS Certifications)
- Detailing (CAD/BIM)
- Fire & Smoke Damper Technician (FSDT)
- Energy Management
- Architectural Sheet Metal
- Industrial/Commercial/Residential Fabrication
- Sign Installation
- Cleanroom and Critical Environments
- Food Service Equipment Fabrication

Every one of these areas offers room to become an expert, earn more, and take pride in your work.



## Your Career. Your Choice.

Remember: You don't need to have it all figured out today. But the unionized sheet metal trade gives you the *freedom and support* to shape your career over time.

You're not limited to one path – you can grow in multiple directions, become a specialist in several areas, or transition from the field into leadership, teaching, or entrepreneurship. What matters most is your dedication, your willingness to learn, and your pride in the craft.

**Let's continue building a trade where every member feels empowered to grow, contribute, and succeed.**

### Opportunities to Lead and Inspire

Advancement doesn't stop at the jobsite. With time and experience, union members can pursue roles like:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreperson / Supervisor / Superintendent</li> <li>• Project Manager or Estimator</li> <li>• JATC Instructor or Coordinator</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Officer or Organizer</li> <li>• Contractor / Business Owner</li> <li>• SMOHIT, ITI, or NEMI Staff</li> </ul> |
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Some SMART and SMACNA members have even gone on to influence policy, lead training innovations, or represent our trade on national and international stages.

### Resources for Your Journey

Free training and certifications are available through SMART, SMACNA, ITI, NEMI, ICB, SMOHIT and your local JATC for nearly every specialty mentioned. Ask how to get started.

## Staff Conversation & Notes:

What's one career path in the Sheet Metal trade you'd like to learn more about?

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What skills do you already have that could support you in a leadership, teaching, or specialty role?

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Have you told your supervisor or JATC coordinator about your long-term career interests?

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## BE4ALL Toolbox Talk Participation Sheet

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Presented: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant	Initials

Participant	Initials



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