Energy powers practically everything in our lives. And energy comes from many different sources: natural gas, coal, uranium, water, sun and wind. Transforming natural resources into energy and safely delivering that energy to homes and businesses require the talent of many types of skilled workers. And, while training and knowledge requirements vary depending on the nature and complexity of the job, there are foundational competencies many energy companies look for in selecting employees. Few new hires may be able to demonstrate every competency beginning on day one, but collectively, their mastery point to the characteristics of a successful worker for many energy jobs.

*What is competency? It’s the ability to repeatedly do something with success and efficiency, regardless of condition or circumstance.*

Demonstrating competency in personal effectiveness, academics and workplace effectiveness is the focus of Tiers 1-3 of the Energy Industry Competency pyramid developed by CEWD. While higher tiers of the pyramid hone in on specific competencies required in the industry and for particular occupations, Tiers 1-3 describe the basic skills necessary to be successful in most energy jobs.

**Tier 1: Did You Know?**

**Personal Effectiveness Competencies:**

* Works effectively one-on-one and in teams
* Treats people fairly and respectfully
* Acts professionally, demonstrating self-control and composure
* Is honest, ethical, law-abiding and drug-free
* Completes work assignments safely, accurately and completely
* Is reliable and dependable
* Understands and complies with rules and policies
* Demonstrates a desire and ability to learn and grow
* Adapts effectively and quickly to changing requirements or assignments

**Tier 2: Academic Competencies:**

* Uses mathematical concepts and equations to solve problems
* Is able to read, understand and interpret written information
* Is able to write, understand and speak standard English
* Demonstrates understanding of appropriate engineering and technology concepts
* Understands and uses scientific rules and methods to solve work problems
* Applies basic IT skills to maximize personal efficiency and work flow
* Uses logical thought processes to analyze information and draw conclusions

**Tier 3: Workplace Competencies:**

* Understands how individual job duties contribute to company goals and operations
* Works effectively in a team environment with co-workers and supervisors
* Accepts, understands and completes work assignments with minimal supervision
* Is able to work effectively within a schedule using correct procedures
* Anticipates potential issues and applies appropriate problem-solving and critical thinking skills
* Practices ethical behavior and understands consequences of unethical or illegal behavior
* Demonstrates positive work behavior
* Maintains any industry-required credentials

**Education and Training Checklist**

High school graduates frequently demonstrate many of the characteristics exemplified in the personal effectiveness (Tier 1) and academic competencies (Tier 2) listed above. But achieving competency in all three tiers is helped by earning a series of industry-recognized credentials. Students who want to pursue a career in the technical and skilled craft areas (lineworkers, utility technicians, power plant operators, pipefitters/pipelayers/welders, engineers) should consider gaining these credentials in addition to a high school diploma or GED:

* National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) or NCRC-Plus (Silver Level or Higher)
* Energy Industry Employability Skills Certificate

You can learn more about the CEWD Competency Model, the NCRC, the NCRC-Plus and the Employability Skills Certificate at [www.cewd.org](http://www.cewd.org).

**A Final Thought**

Being happily employed in the energy industry is as much about what you ***like*** as it is about what you ***know***. A career in energy may be right for you if:

* You like to know how things work on a practical level.
* You like to work with your hands.
* You like being outdoors or in a plant environment.
* You want a job that helps people.
* You work well under pressure.