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# 03. Shipbuilding, Welding & Metalwork

## Detailed Employment Manual for Foreign Job Seekers in Korea

**Purpose of This Manual** Korean shipbuilding and metalwork include hull construction, welding, fitting, piping, assembly, blasting and painting, outfitting, inspection, design, and production management. Practical skill tests and safety awareness are decisive. Accepting local industrial cities significantly increases access to jobs.

## 1. Where Foreign Professionals and Workers Can Find Opportunity

Major hiring locations: Geoje, Tongyeong, Goseong, Changwon, Ulsan, Busan, Yeongam, Mokpo, Gwangyang, Pohang, Dangjin.

Possible visa pathways to review: E-9, E-7-3, E-7-4, E-7-1 (design/engineering), E-10 for seafarers only

- Professional, research, design, and management roles require a strong link between education, experience, and the actual job.
- Field and skilled roles are judged by practical ability, safety awareness, attendance, shift adaptation, and long-term stability.
- Management, service, and customer-facing roles need Korean reporting skills plus the ability to connect the company with overseas markets, workers, or customers.
- The actual permitted work depends on personal status, employer type, exact job code, and work location. Always verify before signing a contract.

**Key Decision Rule** A company may want to hire you, but that alone does not guarantee visa approval. Review the chain carefully: current status → target job → employer eligibility → salary and experience requirements.

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## 2. Job Map: Main Roles and Entry Conditions

The table below summarizes representative roles in this industry. Even within one industry, simple work, skilled work, specialist jobs, and management jobs can have very different hiring standards and visa implications.

| Role | Main Duties | Strong Candidate Profile | Evidence to Prepare |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ship Design** | Hull, piping, outfitting and electrical drawings | Naval/mechanical background, CAD/AVEVA | Drawings and project records |
| **Welding Engineering** | WPS/PQR, process improvement, compliance | Welding engineering, class society standards | Approved procedures, project results |
| **CO2/MAG Welder** | Hull and block welding | Hands-on skill by position, blueprint reading | Certificates, bead photos, test results |
| **TIG/MIG Welder** | Pipe, non-ferrous and precision welding | Material, gas, current, pipe welding knowledge | Specimens, job history |
| **Fitter / Assembler** | Fit-up, alignment, tack welding | Drawing reading, dimension control | Photos and supervisor references |
| **Pipe Fabrication** | Pipe cutting, fitting, installation, pressure testing | ISO drawing reading, fitting systems | Project and testing records |
| **Metal Processing** | Cutting, bending, press work, CNC | Machine handling and tolerance control | Sample work and machine records |
| **Inspection / NDT** | Visual and NDT inspection | Relevant certification, reporting discipline | Inspection reports, certificate validity |

### How to Choose the Right Position to Apply For

1. Start with the job you have actually done the longest, not the title you like best.
2. Choose a second option that connects well to your degree, certification, or transferable skills.
3. Match the level of role to your Korean communication level and practical adaptation.
4. Use exact job names, machines, products, systems, or customers instead of broad titles.
5. Confirm that the contract title matches the real work you will do.

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## 3. Conditions for Research, Specialist, Design, and Management Roles

### 3-1. Design Personnel

Design staff should specify ship types, blocks, systems, and software used.

### 3-2. Welding Technicians

Welding engineers should understand procedures, qualifications, and class requirements.

### 3-3. Inspectors

Inspectors must prove certification level, issuer, validity period, and real reading experience.

### Evidence Professional Candidates Should Prepare

- Degree certificate and transcript, plus a short explanation of relevant coursework when useful.
- Employment certificates showing period, position, duties, weekly hours, and employer contact information.
- A project portfolio that explains the problem, your role, tools, and measurable outcomes.
- Papers, patents, drawings, test reports, dashboards, or work samples that can be shared legally.
- A one-page English or Korean role summary that explains why you fit the exact job.

## 4. Conditions for Field, Skilled, and Operational Roles

### 4-1. Practical Welding Test Preparation

Welders are tested on actual work: position, material, thickness, and process—not only paper certificates.

### 4-2. Understanding High-Risk Work Safety

High work, confined spaces, hot work, and heavy steel handling require Korean safety terms and fast compliance.

### 4-3. Checking Subcontractor Conditions

Check whether you are hired by a main yard or subcontractor and confirm dormitory and transport conditions.

### Evidence Field Candidates Should Prepare

- Work photos or videos that do not expose company secrets or personal data.
- A list of machines, tools, products, materials, or systems you actually used.
- Numbers such as daily output, team size, defect rate, handled volume, or job scale.
- Training cards, licenses, or certificates with issuing body and validity date.
- A real supervisor or HR contact from a former employer who can verify your work.


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## 5. What Korean Employers Usually Want in Foreign Hires

- A person who understands the role and asks questions when something is unclear.
- Reliable attendance, punctuality, and accurate handover behavior.
- Fast reporting when there is a defect, delay, safety issue, or customer problem.
- Respect for safety, quality, and procedure over personal guesswork.
- Ability to cooperate across different nationalities and departments.
- A realistic explanation of regional work, dormitory life, shift work, or long-term plans.
- A clear reason why the company benefits from your language, market, or technical background.

## 6. Korean Workplace Culture: What You Need to Understand

- Morning toolbox meetings and work permits are standard.
- Safety comes before schedule in confined space and hot work areas.
- Teams coordinate closely across cutting, fitting, welding, and inspection.
- Change notices and drawing mismatches must be reported immediately.
- If you do not understand an instruction, ask again. Saying “OK” without understanding creates risk.
- Important matters are often followed by written messages, logs, or reports. Keep records when appropriate.
- Hierarchy exists, but abuse, violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination are not acceptable.
- When conflict happens, report facts clearly rather than arguing emotionally in public.

## 7. Safety, Rights, and Legal Protection

- If you do not understand safety training, ask for repetition, translation, or demonstration.
- If PPE is missing or the task feels unsafe, stop and ask the supervisor to clarify the method.
- Keep evidence if there is unpaid wages, injury, abuse, harassment, or illegal document retention.
- Use official channels when needed: immigration support, labor counseling, police, or emergency services.

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## 8. How Regional, Rural, Remote, and Shift Work Can Become an Opportunity

**Why Regional Jobs Matter** In Shipbuilding, Welding & Metalwork, real jobs are often concentrated in industrial, rural, coastal, or project-based locations rather than central Seoul. Candidates who are open to these locations face less competition and may receive housing, meals, shuttle buses, or faster promotion opportunities.

### Advantages of Regional or Remote Work

- Less competition than major-city positions.
- Dormitory, meals, or shuttle support may reduce living costs.
- Smaller or regional employers may give responsibility earlier.
- Long-term work can create better paths toward skill recognition or status upgrades where applicable.
- Daily living costs are often lower outside major metropolitan areas.

### Conditions You Must Check Carefully

- Dormitory address, room occupancy, heating/cooling, bathroom, internet, and utility rules.
- Distance to the workplace and availability of transport for night or early shifts.
- Access to hospitals, banks, supermarkets, and foreign support centers.
- Rules for home visits, long business travel, or relocation to another worksite.
- Exact structure of base salary, fixed allowances, night pay, overtime pay, and deductions.

### How to Talk About Shift Work in an Interview

Do not say only “I can do shifts.” Explain whether you have done rotating shifts before, how you manage sleep and health, how you will commute, and how long you are prepared to stay. If you have a health limit, disclose it honestly before hiring.

### Warning Signs You Should Not Ignore

- Borrowed or fake certificates.
- Being forced into a different role after failing a practical test.
- Poor ventilation or missing PPE for welding and painting.
- Confusion between the actual employer and the main shipyard.

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## 9. Practical Job-Application Roadmap

1. Check your current immigration status and whether the target role can realistically match it.
2. Select one or two realistic job targets and prepare a short role statement for each.
3. Prepare translations and, where needed, official confirmation of education, experience, and certificates.
4. Customize your Korean-style résumé and portfolio for the exact role.
5. State clearly your preferred region, shift availability, expected salary, housing needs, and start date.
6. Use the STAR method in interviews to explain practical work, problem-solving, safety, or customer cases.
7. When you receive an offer, review both the role and the visa pathway together.
8. Check the contract, housing rules, deductions, allowances, and working-hour system carefully.
9. After joining, understand the safety orientation and role training before signing acknowledgments.
10. Set 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day goals and ask for supervisor feedback.

## 10. Interview Questions You Should Prepare For

- Why do you want to work in Shipbuilding, Welding & Metalwork in Korea?
- What was the most important task you handled in your last job, and what result did you achieve?
- How did you respond when there was a defect, customer issue, delay, accident risk, or equipment failure?
- What will you do if you do not fully understand a Korean instruction?
- How long can you work in a regional area, remote site, or shift system?
- What value do you bring because of your language, market knowledge, or technical background?

## Useful Korean Workplace Terms to Learn

- Attendance
- Shift
- Overtime
- Special workday
- Safety training
- Work instruction
- Handover
- Defect
- Breakdown
- Report
- Approval
- PPE
- Risk
- Emergency stop
- Dormitory
- Deduction
- Payslip

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- Employment contract

## Final Checklist Before You Accept a Job

- State clearly how your degree, experience, and target job are connected.
- Use numbers in your résumé: machines used, customers served, output, defect rate, sales, test cases, or project scope.
- Prepare Korean workplace language separately from TOPIK scores.
- Be honest about willingness for regional work, shifts, dormitory life, or travel.
- Check visa fit before signing because a company’s hiring intention does not automatically mean the visa will be approved.
- Confirm the job title, worksite, salary, allowances, hours, holidays, and dormitory deductions in writing.
- False experience, fake certificates, or using another person’s training card can seriously damage future employment and immigration status.

**Official Support Reminder** Before signing a contract, verify the exact work, visa pathway, and employer conditions with the relevant official channels. For safety or labor issues, preserve evidence such as payslips, messages, schedules, photos, and hospital records.

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