

Elmwood Kitchens

***MIKE UPSHALL***



## CNC Operator

CNC operators set up, program and operate one or more woodworking machines to fabricate or repair wooden parts for furniture, fixtures or other wood products.



**WMC CFB**

Wood Manufacturing Council  
Conseil des fabricants de bois

Mike Upshall is a CNC Operator with **Elmwood Kitchens** in St. Catharine's, Ontario. He first became interested in working with wood when he took a woodworking course in high school.

In grades 11 and 12, Mike competed in the **Skills Canada cabinetmaking competition**. His skills ultimately earned him an opportunity with OUAP for a co-op. From there, he got into Elmwood as part of his grade 12 co-op program, working in cabinetmaking for the last 6 months of school. Mike then moved on to the **Conestoga College Cabinetmakers Apprenticeship Program**. He studied for four years, during which time he went to school for two months, then worked for ten. Following his program, Mike challenged the final exam at the local apprenticeship office and received the credential of **Licensed Cabinetmaker**.

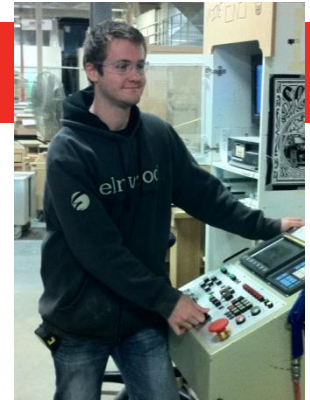
In order to write the final exam, the candidate needs to have work experience in all the different aspects of cabinetmaking. To fulfill this requirement, Mike worked in the spray booth, on

*"I enjoy working on computers and working with the warmth of wood."*

developing special cabinets, on the CNC and in final assembly. It was this diversity of training that allowed Mike to realize his interest in working as a CNC Operator.

There are many aspects of his job that Mike enjoys, such as seeing the final product after designing it on the computer and working with different types of materials, such as exotic wood. The most exciting aspect is seeing something transform from a piece of wood into a cabinet. Mike's diverse experience allows him to help out in other areas of the shop when not on the CNC. He can often be found putting on doors or drilling in other departments.

For those looking to explore a career in wood, Mike has a few recommendations. If you are in high school, start with a co-op program – it gets you into the industry



and onto the job site. If you are out of school, Mike I would suggest looking into a 6-month or 1-year college course in cabinetmaking or a construction trade. This provides background knowledge and will hopefully open the door to a job placement.

Someone who can understand the mathematics, especially if working on the CNC machine, would do well in this line of work, says Mike. An individual also needs to be good with a tape measure and have an eye for detail to see if the wood is damaged.

Mike says, "It's a fun job and you get satisfaction at the end of the day after seeing what you've built." He plans to continue working as a CNC Operator.

**Job Title:** CNC Operator

**Key Skills:** CNC operation, cabinetmaking and math skills

**Education**

**and Experience:** Cabinetmakers Apprenticeship Program, Conestoga College



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