

# Steel Erector interview questions

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## What to expect

Steel erector interviews typically combine practical and safety-focused questions to assess your ability to work at height, interpret plans, and operate rigging equipment safely.

- **Process:** Questions about how you sequence steel erection tasks, from reading plans to final alignment.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for examples of past work, such as fixing alignment issues or working with crane crews.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical site situations, often involving safety hazards or unexpected problems.
- **Technical:** Questions on bolting, welding, rigging, and interpreting structural drawings.
- **Safety:** Questions on working at heights, hazard control, and site safety procedures.

The interview usually begins with a chat about your tickets and experience, then moves to technical questions about steel erection and rigging. You might be asked to describe a recent project or solve a site scenario. Some employers include a practical assessment on site to see you handle tools and equipment.

## 1. Walk me through how you approach erecting a steel frame from receiving the plans to final alignment.

### Why they ask

This process question tests your methodical approach and knowledge of steel erection sequence.

### How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through: planning, setting out, hoisting, aligning, bolting, and checking.

#### Example answer

*"First, I review the plans and specifications to understand the layout and any special requirements. I check the site and ensure the crane and rigging gear are ready. I set out the gridlines using a total station. Then I coordinate with the crane crew to hoist the columns and beams into position. I align them with drift pins and temporary bolts, then use a laser level or total station to check verticality and alignment. Once everything is within tolerance, I torque the bolts or weld as required, and finally I do a visual check against the drawings."*

## 2. Tell me about a time you had to fix an alignment error on a steel structure.

### Why they ask

Behavioural question to see how you troubleshoot and communicate.

### How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

#### Example answer

*"On a commercial build, after hoisting a beam, we found it was out of alignment by a few millimetres. I checked the drawings and realised a column base plate was slightly off. I informed the supervisor and we used a come-along to adjust the beam into position. I then re-checked with the total station and confirmed it was within tolerance. We bolted it up and the inspection passed without delay."*

## 3. You are on a site and notice a crane lift is unsafe due to unstable ground. What do you do?

### Why they ask

Scenario question to assess safety judgement and ability to speak up.

**How to structure your answer**

Judgement under pressure: stop, assess, report, and act.

**Example answer**

*"I would immediately signal the crane operator to stop the lift. I would then assess the ground conditions and identify the issue, such as soft soil or inadequate outrigger pads. I would report it to the supervisor and the crane operator, and not proceed until the ground is made safe, for example by using proper crane mats or repositioning the crane. Safety is the priority, and I would not hesitate to halt work."*

#### **4. What checks do you perform before bolting a steel connection?**

**Why they ask**

Technical question to test your knowledge of bolting and alignment.

**How to structure your answer**

Technical checklist: alignment, hole condition, bolt type, torque.

**Example answer**

*"First I check that the members are aligned and the holes line up. I inspect the holes for any burrs or damage and ensure they are the correct size. I confirm the bolt grade and length match the drawings. I make sure the contact surfaces are clean and free of paint or debris that could affect the connection. Then I install the bolts and torque them to the specified tension, using a torque wrench or impact wrench as required."*

#### **5. How do you manage working at heights while erecting steel?**

**Why they ask**

Safety question to assess your approach to fall prevention.

**How to structure your answer**

Safety protocol: hazard assessment, controls, equipment.

**Example answer**

*"Before I start, I check the site for fall hazards and ensure there is a safe system of work. I use fall protection such as a harness and lanyard attached to a suitable anchor point, or I work from an elevating work platform if that is safer. I make sure the area below is clear and barricaded. I also check the weather, especially wind, because it affects crane lifts and working at height. I keep my tools secured so they do not fall."*

#### **6. How do you interpret structural drawings to determine steel layout?**

**Why they ask**

Process and technical question to see if you can read plans.

**How to structure your answer**

Walk-through of reading plans: title block, gridlines, member sizes, connections.

**Example answer**

*"I start with the title block and general notes to understand the scope. Then I look at the gridlines and dimensions to set out the positions. I check the member sizes and grades on the drawing. I also review the connection details to see how the members bolt or weld together. I cross-reference with the specifications for any special requirements. If anything is unclear, I ask the engineer or supervisor before proceeding."*