



2021 Women in Building Services: Jennifer Zhao, Shawmut Design and Construction

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Name: Jennifer Zhao

Title: Assistant Superintendent

Company Name: Shawmut Design and Construction

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a detective who had MacGyver and MythBusters traits. I was really into mystery novels and TV shows and found solving crimes fascinating. But I also wanted to set myself apart with skills which included creating tools out of ordinary items and using science to think of all possibilities to help solve the mystery. In many ways, I feel being a construction superintendent encompasses my childhood dream profession—my role requires me to be detail-orientated, creatively build a space with tools and specific materials, and constantly problem solve.

What led you to your current profession?

I studied civil engineering in college, and in my freshman year I told my classmate I was not going to join the “dark side”—construction. But as time passed and I started interning at different companies, I realized how fast I could truly learn how to build if I worked in construction. I found Shawmut’s Construction Management Skills Training program and after rotating through different construction roles, I decided the field would be my home. I have not left since, and while it is tough at times, I love being in an environment where I can problem solve, collaborate with a diverse group of people, and get my cardio in.

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