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W: www.irishpressings.com
E: mail@irishpressings.com
T: +353 74 95 60810

Job Description

Job Title: Prototype Toolmaker / Prototyper
Department: Tool Room / Engineering
Location: Gweedore Business Park, Derrybeg, Co. Donegal
Reports To: Tool Room Manager / Engineering Manager
Employment Type: Full-Time, Permanent

Role Overview

This is a skilled, hands-on role for an experienced, time-served toolmaker with a proven background in prototype development within a metal stamping and fabricated assembly environment. The Prototyper sits at the intersection of engineering and production, taking concepts from drawing or CAD data through to validated prototype parts and assemblies — often working from immature or evolving data, and always delivering sound, measurable results.

The successful candidate will be a true all-rounder: equally comfortable at the press brake, the CNC machine, the welding bench, or on the floor hand-forming a complex profile. They will have the technical judgement to identify issues early, the communication skills to translate prototype findings into actionable tooling improvements, and the self-reliance to drive a build through to completion with minimal supervision.

Key Responsibilities

Prototype Build & Development

- Build prototype stamped, formed and welded assembled parts from first-off data through to validated, dimensionally compliant prototypes
- Execute manual and CNC machined components as required within the prototype build sequence
- Carry out assembly, fitting and welding of prototype components, including the build and use of welding assembly jigs
- Perform development and correction loops, iterating the part and process until a robust prototype solution is achieved
- Work directly from CAD models and engineering drawings, including immature or ambiguous data, applying sound engineering judgement to resolve gaps or inconsistencies

Tooling & Process Improvement

- Interrogate dimensional results from prototype builds and identify the correct improvement route as it applies to both the part and the production tooling
- Clearly communicate tooling improvement recommendations to the tool design and production teams based on issues encountered during the prototype phase
- Support the transition from prototype to production by ensuring lessons learned are captured and fed back into tool builds and process documentation

Machining & Forming

- Operate CNC machining centres and conventional machine tools (lathe, mill, grinder) to manufacture prototype components and tooling elements
- Utilise press brake, forming equipment and hand-forming techniques for low-volume and one-off prototype parts
- Apply finishing operations as required to meet part and surface specification

Quality & Documentation

- Interrogate dimensional and inspection results, interpreting CMM or manual measurement data to guide corrective action
- Maintain accurate records of prototype builds, correction loops, material used and revision status
- Ensure all work is carried out in accordance with health and safety requirements and company quality standards

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Person Specification

Essential

- Time-served, apprenticeship-trained toolmaker with a recognised trade qualification — journeyman certificate, Red Seal, City & Guilds, NTTF Diploma or equivalent national trade certification
- Minimum 5 years' post-qualification hands-on experience in a prototype, tool room or precision manufacturing environment
- Demonstrable all-round skill set spanning CNC machining, press brake / forming, fitting, welding, and finishing
- Proven ability to work directly from CAD data and engineering drawings, including at early or ambiguous stages of design
- Strong working knowledge of stamping tools, prototype tool builds and CNC machining processes

- Experience building and using welding assembly jigs
- Solid understanding of the full prototype development process — from first concept through correction loops to validated part sign-off
- Strong problem-solving ability with a practical, hands-on approach to resolving build challenges
- Able to work independently and on own initiative, managing build priorities without close supervision
- Good communication skills — able to clearly articulate technical findings and improvement recommendations to engineering and tooling colleagues

Desirable

- Experience in an automotive or industrial metal stamping / fabricated assembly environment
- Familiarity with GD&T and the interpretation of tolerance and fit requirements in a prototype context
- Exposure to welded assembly validation and jig qualification processes
- Experience with dimensional analysis tools (CMM, measurement reports) and translating results into corrective actions
- Welding qualification (MIG, TIG or equivalent)

Key Competencies

- **Technical Depth** — broad, hands-on toolmaking expertise developed through a full apprenticeship and sustained practical experience
- **Adaptability** — able to shift between disciplines, machine types and build challenges as the prototype evolves
- **Engineering Judgement** — capable of making sound decisions from incomplete data and communicating the rationale clearly
- **Attention to Detail** — rigorous approach to dimensional accuracy and part quality at every stage of the build
- **Initiative** — self-directed and motivated; gets the job done without waiting to be told
- **Communication** — translates hands-on findings into clear, actionable feedback for engineering and production teams