

Automotive Service Technicians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Automotive Service Technicians [NOC 2021: 72410 / NOC 2016: 7321]

May also be called:

- car mechanic
- brake systems mechanic
- motor vehicle mechanic
- tune up specialist

1. What Would I Do?

Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers inspect, diagnose, repair and service mechanical, electrical and electronic systems and components of cars, buses and light and commercial transport trucks.

Automotive Service Technicians' duties include:

- adjust, repair or replace parts or sections of automotive systems (i.e., fuel systems, brakes, steering and suspension, engines and drive trains, emission control and exhaust, cooling and climate control, and electrical and electronic systems), using hand tools and other specialized automotive repair equipment
- inspect motor operation, road test motor vehicles, and test systems using computerized and other testing devices to diagnose faults

Truck and transport and truck-trailer mechanics' duties include:

- Adjust, repair or replace parts and sections of commercial transport truck systems including chassis, frame, cab, body, engine and drive train, air brakes, steering, and fuel, hydraulic, electrical and electronic systems
- Adjust, repair or replace parts and components of truck-trailer systems including structural, brake and electrical systems.

Mechanical repairers' (motor vehicle manufacturing) duties include:

- inspect and test mechanical units, such as engines, transmissions, axles and brake systems to locate faults and malfunctions
- diagnose malfunctions and determine with supervisors whether to repair or replace units
- test and adjust units to performance specifications, repair or replace mechanical units or components, and complete reports to record the work done and any problems that occurred

More information:

- **Trades Training BC**
<https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/Trades/Automotive-Trades/Automotive-Service-Technician>
- **WorkBC Career Profile for Automotive Service Technicians**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Automotive Service Technician')
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Important skills:

- *good hand-eye coordination*
- *mechanical aptitude and interest*
- *logical thinking and decision making*
- *able to keep up to date with changing technology*
- *physically fit*
- *communication skills*

The work can be physically demanding. You spend a great deal of time on your feet, and will often be required to bend, crawl, lift and reach.

Technicians usually work indoors and can expect a work environment that includes noise, fumes, odours, hazardous materials, and confined spaces.

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile
- Career Cruising database (Profile for 'Automotive Service Technician')

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the annual **median** salary is \$53,397. Your wages are affected by your experience and area of expertise.

Full-time automotive service technicians may receive benefits. Common benefits include dental coverage, paid sick days, and paid vacation.

Sources: *Career Cruising & WorkBC*

In BC's regions, you can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	16.00	25.00	38.00
Cariboo Region	17.00	26.30	38.06
Kootenay Region	17.00	25.00	36.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	16.00	25.00	39.00
Nechako Region	18.00	26.50	35.00
North Coast Region	17.25	27.00	39.74
Northeast Region	19.00	29.00	44.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	16.00	25.00	36.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	16.00	25.50	36.29

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis>

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

JobBank Canada reports that for the 2021-2023 period, the employment outlook is expected to be fair. Many new job opportunities will come up as people leave the industry or retire. New jobs will also come from the need to serve a growing population.

New and used car sales rebounded in the first half of 2021, and a global microchip shortage is causing delays for new vehicles. As automobile usage increases, there is expected to be a sustained demand for careers that service vehicles.

One growth area is with shops that service vehicles after the warranty has expired. These shops do oil changes or provide fast, low-cost maintenance on brakes and mufflers, for example.

Keeping up to date on new technology for motor vehicles and repair equipment is important in this career. Workers with specialized, up-to-date skills are in greatest demand.

Employment Outlook, Automotive Service Technicians

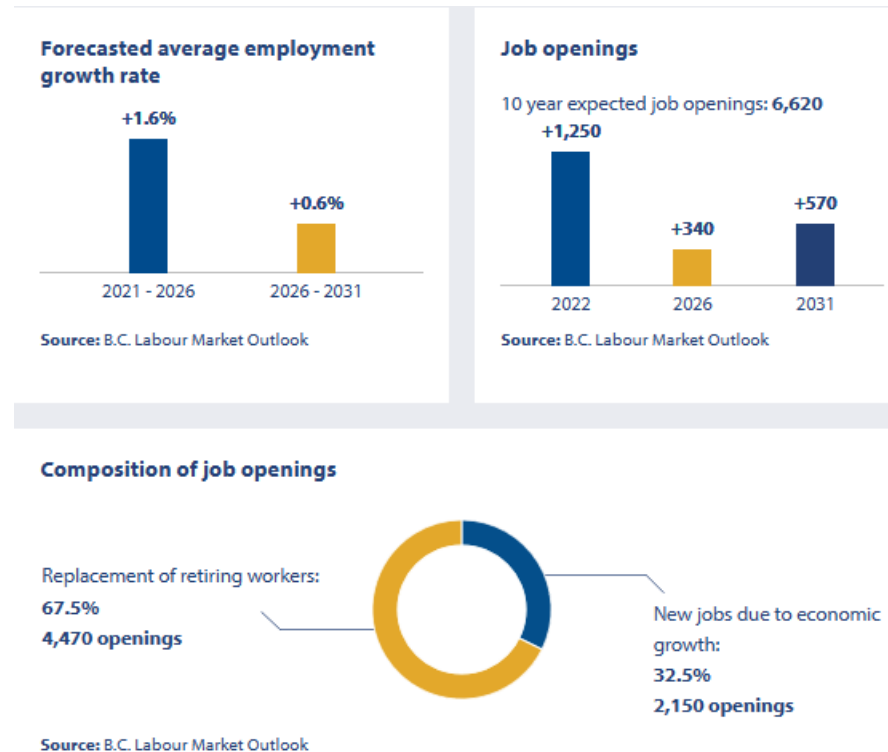


Chart from WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

Sources:

- Work BC <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- Job Bank Canada Trend Analysis <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis>

5. How Do I Become an Automotive Service Technician?

Automotive Service Technician is an Inter-provincially recognized Red Seal trade. With a Red Seal, you can work in this trade anywhere in Canada.

In BC certification as an automotive service technician is not mandatory. However certification is required by many employers and will likely increase your employment opportunities.

You can become a certified technician by completing an *Apprenticeship Program*. The program is comprised of Levels 1-to-4 of progressive technical training. Each level takes approximately 7 weeks to complete and certification can be achieved at any level. You require an employer to sponsor you in order to enrol in the Apprenticeship Program.

If you have extensive experience working as an automotive service technician but have never been certified in Canada you may apply to challenge the certification.

Foundation programs, where available, provide those who don't have work experience or employer sponsorship with the opportunity to gain the required skills to enter the occupation. Register directly with a training provider to enrol in a Foundation program.

- <https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/Trades/Automotive-Trades/Automotive-Service-Technician/Foundation-Schedules>

More information:

- **Industry Training Authority**
<https://www.itabc.ca/program/automotive-service-technician-ast-1-2-3-and-4>
- **Trades Training BC**
<https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/Trades/Automotive-Trades/Automotive-Service-Technician>
- **Equity Seeking Groups in Trades Training, Industry Training Authority of BC**
<https://www.itabc.ca/young-adults-and-equity-seeking-groups-trades-training>
- **Red Seal Program**
<https://www.red-seal.ca/eng/trades/.1.5t.4t.2ch.shtml>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

- motor vehicle dealers
- garages
- truck and trailer dealerships
- fleet maintenance companies
- service stations
- automotive specialty shops
- transportation companies
- retail establishments that have automotive service shops
- motor vehicle manufacturing companies

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
<https://ca.indeed.com/Automotive-Service-Technician-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>
- **Auto Careers BC**
<http://www.autocareersbc.ca>
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>
- **WorkBC Job Postings**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **BC JobConnect**
<https://bcjobconnect.ca/>

****must have permanent resident number****

newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers

Finding "Hidden Jobs"

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below help you with finding jobs in this "hidden" job market.

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use company directories to produce lists of employers who employ automotive service technicians in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Automotive Retailers Association Members Locator**
<https://www.ara.bc.ca/find-a-member/>
- **International Automotive Technicians Network Member Directory**
<https://iatn.net/directory/canada/british-columbia>
- **Automatic Transmission Rebuilders Association Shop Finder**
<https://www.atra.com/ShopFinder>
- **Reference Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "*automobile repair*" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience.

Use the library catalogue <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

With experience you may move up to foreperson, shop supervisor, service advisor or service manager. Some technicians open their own garage or automotive specialty shop.

With additional training it is also possible to move into occupations such as automotive instructor, truck and transport mechanic or heavy duty equipment technician.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Automotive Industries Association of Canada**
<https://www.aiacanada.com/career-resources/>
- **Automotive Retailers Association**
<https://www.ara.bc.ca/>
- **Industry Training Authority British Columbia**
<https://www.itabc.ca/>
- **Careers in Trades**
<https://careersintrades.ca/>
- **Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) BC**
<https://fastbc.org/>

The FAST Program helps newcomers launch their careers in Canada, and Canadian employers find skilled immigrant talent

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.