

Painters & Decorators

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Painters & decorators [NOC 2021: 73112 / NOC 2016: 7294]

Painters and decorators may also be called:

- construction painter
- maintenance painter
- painter and decorator apprentice
- paperhanger
- residential painter

1. What Would I Do?

You apply paint, wallpaper, fabric and other finishes to interior and exterior surfaces of buildings and other structures.

Your duties can include:

- read specifications to estimate the amount of paint/materials required
- prepare and clean surfaces by scraping, sanding, power washing and steam-cleaning
- remove old wallpaper and loose paint
- repair cracks and holes in walls, sandpaper and apply sealer
- mix and thin paint to get desired colour and texture
- apply paint or other materials using paint brushes, rollers or spray guns

- measure, cut and apply wallpaper or fabric to walls
- set up scaffolding and swing stages
- advise customers on colour selection, paint finishes and choice of wall coverings

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Painters & decorators**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/painters-and-decorators-except-interior-decorators>
- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Painter)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

You should be:

- *accurate and detail-oriented, precise and patient*
- *creative with a good understanding of colour and proportion*
- *able to distinguish slight colour variations*
- *comfortable working at heights*
- *physically fit*

Painters & decorators work indoors and outdoors and on construction sites. You may work alone or with a team of other construction professionals.

The work can be physically demanding – you may stand for long periods of time, often with arms raised over your head. You often work at heights from ladders and scaffolding, and many of the materials used emit hazardous fumes or suspended particles.

Sources:

- CareersinConstruction.ca:
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/painter-and-decorator>
- Work BC Career Profile

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for painters & decorators is \$49,012.

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	17.50	24.00	31.20
Kootenay Region	17.00	24.00	30.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	17.00	24.69	32.75
Thompson–Okanagan Region	18.00	23.75	29.21
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	18.00	23.00	30.00

Source: Job Bank, Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Your earnings depend on experience, hours worked, and location. Those who reach the level of master painter and those who go into business for themselves as contractors tend to earn the most.

Depending on your employer, you may receive benefits such as paid sick days, and dental coverage. You must provide your own benefits if you are self-employed.

Some painters are members of unions. This means your wage ranges and benefits are negotiated by union representatives on your behalf.

Sources:

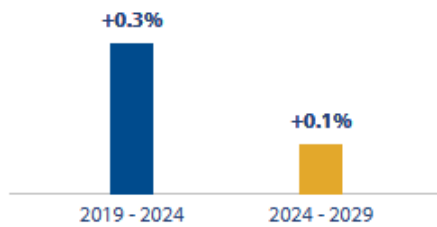
- WorkBC Career Profiles & *Career Cruising* database (Profile for Painter)

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

There are currently 8,300 people employed as painters & decorators in BC. Most jobs are in the Mainland/Southwest (65%) and Vancouver Island (18%) regions. Industry analysts forecast there will be 2,990 new jobs in this occupation between 2019 and 2029.

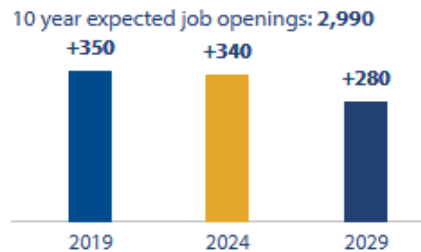
Employment Outlook

Forecasted average employment growth rate



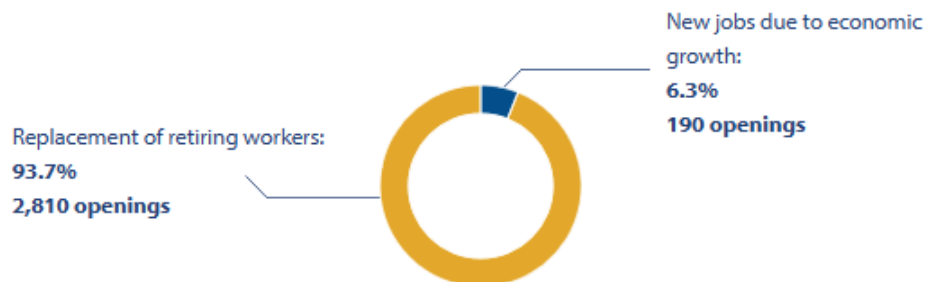
Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Composition of job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

Source: WorkBC Career Profiles

5. How Do I Become a Painter and Decorator

*Painter and decorator is an Inter-provincially recognized Red Seal trade.
With a Red Seal, you can work in this trade anywhere in Canada.*

Completion of Grade 10 is the *minimum* education requirement. However, completion of secondary school is preferred.

Trade certification is not mandatory but it will likely increase your job opportunities. You can become certified by completing a three to four year apprenticeship program through BC's Industry Training Authority (ITA).

Once you complete the apprenticeship program and successfully pass the Interprovincial Red Seal exam (the final exam for this trade), you become certified as a painter and decorator. You also automatically receive the Red Seal endorsement.

Challenge Certification/Recognition of Prior Experience:

If you have significant work experience as a painter and decorator *but have never been certified in Canada*, you may apply to challenge the certification. This includes completing 8,100 hours of work in the trade and successfully writing the Interprovincial Red Seal exam.

More information:

- **Industry Training Authority – Painter and Decorator**
<https://www.itabc.ca/program/painter-and-decorator>
- **Red Seal Program**
<https://www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4m.2-eng.html>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Painters and decorators work in a variety of settings including:

- *construction industry*
- *painting & building contractors*
- *may be self-employed*

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
- **WorkBC Job Postings**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP)**
<https://www.stepbc.ca/>

Finding "Hidden Jobs"

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will 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 painters in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **British Columbia Construction Association Directories**
<https://www.bccassn.com/membership/>
- **Home Builders' Association Vancouver Membership Directory**
<https://havan.ca/find-a-professional/>
- **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 "painters" 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

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.*

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.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**
<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**
<https://govolunteer.ca/>
- **Habitat for Humanity**
<https://www.habitatgv.ca/> (can volunteer at construction sites or at ReStores)

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 education and experience, you may progress to supervisory positions or you may start your own business.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP)**

<https://www.stepbc.ca/>

STEP is a no-fee employment program that helps newcomers get jobs in the construction industry

- **Careers in Construction**

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-finder>

- **BC Construction Association Integrating Newcomers**

<https://www.bccasn.com/jobs-&-careers/bcca-integrating-newcomers/default>

- **FAST BC – Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent**

<https://fastbc.org/working-in-trades/>

FAST is a free online employment preparation program helping newcomers get a head start in their Canadian careers

- **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>

- **BC Fastest Growing Industries – Construction**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/industry-profiles/fastest-growing-industries-construction>

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>.



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