

# Security Guards

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Working as a Security Guard

**[NOC 2021: 64410/ NOC 2016: 6541]**

### ***Job Description***

Security guards protect buildings and areas from theft, fire, vandalism, and illegal entry. Specific duties depend on where you work.

As a security guard, you may do the following:

- control access to establishments
- operate security control-room equipment
- patrol assigned areas to guard against theft, vandalism and fire
- maintain order and resolve conflicts
- ensure safety and emergency procedures are followed
- issue passes and direct visitors to appropriate areas
- check age identification of patrons
- perform security checks of passengers and luggage at airports

Sources:

WorkBC Career Profile <https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>

Career Cruising (Profile for Security Guard) <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

### ***Industry Overview***

There is currently a shortage of security guards in BC. Many new graduates quickly move to higher paying jobs outside of the industry, so job opportunities are regularly available.

## Security Guards

### *A guide for newcomers to British Columbia*

If you have previous experience working as a security guard, in law enforcement, or in the armed forces you will have greater employment prospects. Experience using closed circuit camera monitoring equipment and software also increases your chance of employment.

There is a growing demand for guards with advanced security solutions training and threat/risk assessment skills.

Most jobs are in large urban centres such as the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island regions. There may also be higher growth in port areas of BC due to changes to the Marine Security Act by Transport Canada.

### **Job Outlook in BC - Security Guards and Related Occupations**

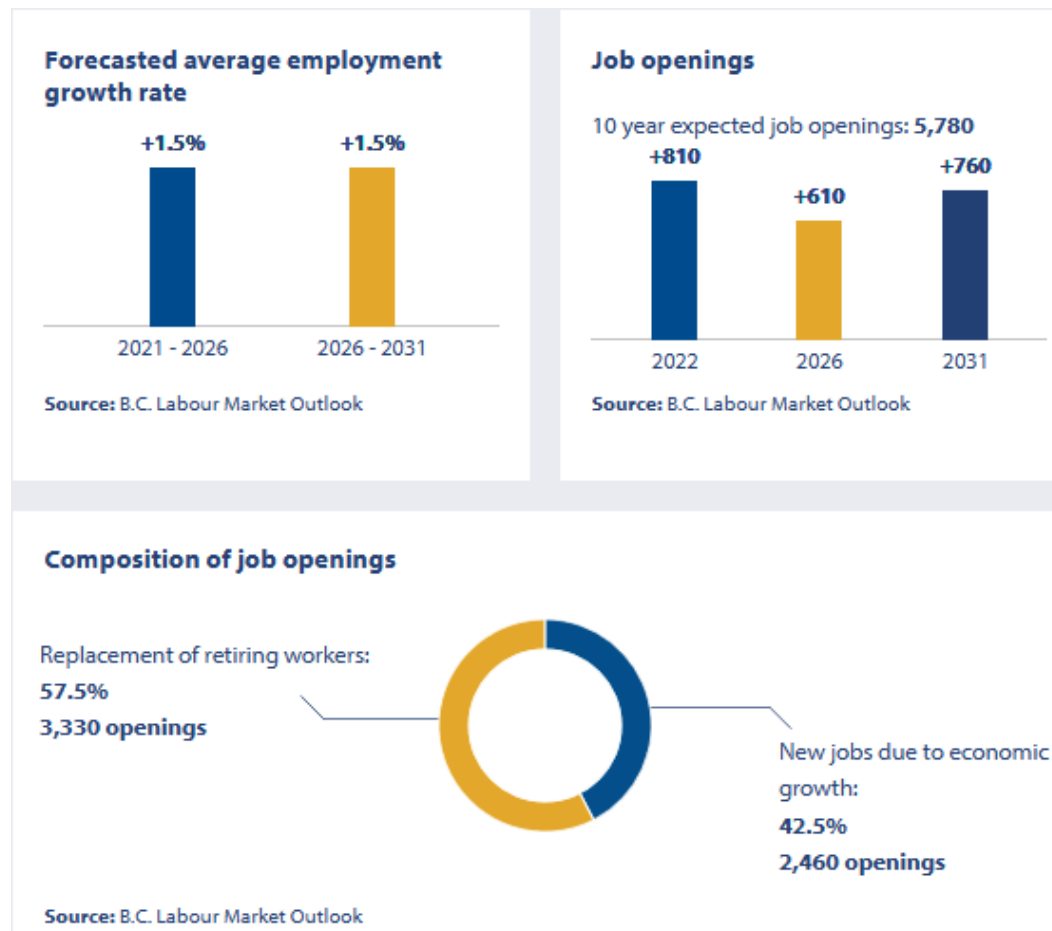


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2021-2031:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Employment in 2021</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment Growth</b>	<b>Expected Number of Job Openings</b>
Vancouver Island	2,170	1.7%	1,010
Lower Mainland / Southwest	10,590	1.4%	3,980
Thompson-Okanagan	1,190	1.9%	560
Kootenay	220	0.4%	60
Cariboo	450	1.0%	80
North Coast & Nechako	200	0.9%	40
Northeast	190	2.1%	40

You can learn more about working as a Security Guard in BC:

- **WorkBC Career Profile**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/security-guards-and-related-security-service-occupations>
- **Security Officer. Justice Institute of BC**  
<https://www.jibc.ca/career/security-officer>
- **Career Cruising** [Profile for Security Guard]  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Available from the VPL Digital Library

### ***Types of Employers***

Security guards are employed by security agencies or directly by businesses, governments, and various other organizations. You may work in a wide variety of establishments, including:

- airports
- museums or galleries
- office buildings
- factories
- hotels
- hospitals
- construction sites
- retail stores, banks, and more

## **Salary**

The annual median salary for Security Guards working full-time in BC is \$37,541. Your salary depends on employer, location and experience.

If you are hired by a security agency, you generally receive a lower salary and fewer benefits than if you are hired directly by businesses, government agencies, or other organizations. Guards who are certified to carry firearms often earn more than those who are not.

In addition to a salary, you may receive benefits such as paid vacation days, health and dental benefits if you work in a full-time job.

If you are employed by a government agency you may belong to a union, which means your salary rates and benefits are negotiated on your behalf by union representatives.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

In BC regions you can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	15.65	18.00	30.00
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	17.00	21.60	30.00
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	15.65	17.00	22.69
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	15.65	18.30	30.30
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	18.00	18.61	21.00
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	18.00	18.61	21.00
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	15.65	18.00	30.00
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.65	18.00	30.00
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	15.65	17.00	28.00

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

## **Working Hours**

Most security guards work full time, typically working 40 hours per week. However, many job opportunities are seasonal, so you may be employed only part of the year. You may be required to work shifts that include evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays.

## **2. Skills, Education and Experience**

### **Skills**

- strong observation and communication skills
- ability to make quick decisions during emergency situations and work in stressful situations
- comfortable working alone
- ability to stick to procedures, routines and regulations
- ability to act in a disciplined, honest and ethical manner
- physically fit, good hearing and vision

### **Education and Experience**

To work as a Security Guard in BC you require:

- Completion of grade 12 (***preferred by employers but not mandatory***)
- Licensing under the Security Services Act
- A criminal background check
- Completion of the Basic Security Training (BST) course with a grade of 60 percent or higher on the final exam for each course

Additional training requirements vary depending on your employer.

Source: WorkBC

## Qualifications

### ***This occupation is regulated in British Columbia***

You must obtain a valid **BC Security Worker Licence** in order to work as a security guard in BC.

There are a number of requirements before obtaining a security worker licence including:

- Complete *Basic Security Training (BST)*
- Comply with the Security Services Act “Code of Conduct”
- Consent to a Criminal Record check
- Provide fingerprints and photograph
- Complete a Mental Health Condition Report if receiving treatment for any mental health condition
- Supply proof of Canadian Citizenship or Landed Immigrant status
- Be sufficiently fluent in the English language to communicate with the public while carrying out duties
- Must be at least 19 years old

For more information on licensing see:

- **Security Worker License. BC Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General, Security Programs Division**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/security-services/security-industry-licensing/workers>

- **Basic Security Training. Justice Institute of BC (JIBC)**

<https://www.jibc.ca/areas-of-study/security/basic-security-training-bst>

JIBC develops and offers the *Basic Security Training* course and oversees all approved security schools in British Columbia.

### ***Internationally Trained Security Guards***

If you were trained as a security guard outside of Canada, a full assessment of your credentials is likely needed. For more information on applying for certification, contact:

- **Securities Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General**  
[securitylicensing@gov.bc.ca](mailto:securitylicensing@gov.bc.ca)

## **3. Finding Jobs**

You will find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional association publications.

### ***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and 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/>  
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards
- **WorkBC**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Find-Jobs/Jobs.aspx#/job-search>

### ***Professional Associations' Career Resources***

- **Commissionaires BC Job Board**  
<https://commissionaires.bc.ca/careers/>
- **Canadian Security Association Job Board**  
[https://www.canasa.org/canasa/EN/Membership/Job\\_Board/CANASA/Membership\\_Pages/Job\\_Board.aspx](https://www.canasa.org/canasa/EN/Membership/Job_Board/CANASA/Membership_Pages/Job_Board.aspx)



## ***Identifying the Right Position***

When you browse job advertisements, you will find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For security guards look for these related job titles

- bodyguard (except police)
- bouncer
- commissionaire
- gate attendant – security
- night guard

Source: National Occupational Classification (NOC) <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>

## ***Creating a List of Potential Employers***

You can use directories to produce lists of companies in the Lower Mainland or BC. Contact them directly to find out if they are hiring.

- **Canadian Security Association Directory of Members**

<https://www.canasa.org/canasa/EN/>

Directory of Members is found under the "Membership" tab

- **Security License Verification. Government of BC**

<https://justice.gov.bc.ca/security/utilities/>

Select "All BC Security Businesses"

- **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 "Security" 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.*

## 4. Applying for a Job

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

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

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides, which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Networking for Employment**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **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>

## 5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

### *Industry Associations*

Associations for security services in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are usually required for membership.

- **Canadian Security Association (CANASA)**  
<https://www.canasa.org/CANASA>
- **ASIS International. Canada**  
<https://asiscanada.ca/>
- **Association of Professional Security Agencies (APSA Canada)**  
<https://apsacanada.wordpress.com/>
- **Commissionaires BC**  
<https://commissionaires.bc.ca>
- **Justice Institute of BC – Security**  
<https://www.jibc.ca/areas-of-study/security>

### *Industry Journals*

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library:

- **Canadian Security**  
Available at VPL Central Library 658.4705 C21  
and online at: <https://www.canadiansecuritymag.com/>

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch, Vancouver Public 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>*