

# Structural Metal and Platework Fabricators & Fitters

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## Structural Metal and Platework Fabricators and Fitters [NOC 2021: 72104/ NOC 2016: 7235]

***May also be called:***

- metal fabricator
- plater
- shipfitter
- steel fabricator
- structural steel fitter

### 1. What Would I Do?

You make and install parts made from sheet metal for buildings, bridges, tanks, boilers, and other similar structures.

Your duties include:

- read blueprints and determine the type and amount of material needed
- construct patterns and templates as guides for layouts
- fasten the pieces together with welds, bolts, and other devices
- move materials to storage areas or construction site
- assemble and install the pieces at the construction site
- set up and operate various heavy-duty metalworking machines including computerized equipment

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Structural Metal and Platework Fabricators and Fitters**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/structural-metal-and-platework-fabricators-and-fitters>
- **Career Cruising database** (Profile for Sheet Metal Worker).  
Available from the VPL Digital Library  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
- **CareersinConstruction.ca**  
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/ironworkerstructural-metal-fabricator-and-fitter>

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

***You should:***

- *be strong and physically fit*
- *be comfortable working at heights*
- *pay close attention to detail and exercise absolute precision to create safe structures*
- *have good hand eye coordination*

You generally work outside in all kinds of weather. However, if you work at great heights you do not work during wet, icy or extremely windy conditions because of safety risks.

If you fabricate structural metal in fabricating shops or factories, you work indoors where it may be dirty and noisy, with strong odours.

This work can be physically demanding. You have to do considerable bending, lifting, standing, climbing and squatting. In addition, you often have to place and attach heavy metal components.

Sources: WorkBC & Careers in Construction

### 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary is \$66,739. Your wages vary depending on your contract, company, location and whether you are working for a union.

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	21.00	32.00	42.00
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	20.00	32.00	40.38
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	22.00	30.00	40.50
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	21.00	33.62	43.04

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

Source: WorkBC Career Profiles

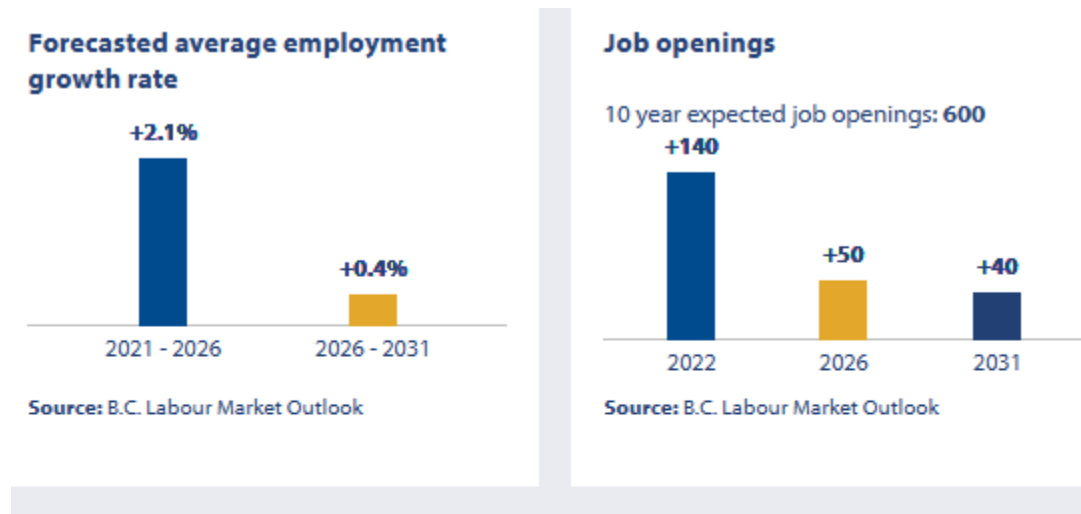
### 4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

It is expected that more than half of the upcoming jobs in BC will result from new job creation. You may find work in the construction industry as major investments are planned for B.C.'s transportation infrastructure, including roads, rails, ferries, bridges, ports and airports.

Within the manufacturing industry, shipbuilding and ship repair is a significant sector for employment. Some activity in this sector has moved offshore to take advantage of low-cost suppliers. However, there are still some specialty niches in the province.

'Careers in Construction Canada' predicts that employment will range from good to balanced between 2022 to 2027.

### Employment Outlook



### Composition of job openings



Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC & Careers in Construction

## 5. How do I become a Metal Fabricator/Fitter?

*Metal fabricator [fitter] 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* to be metal fabricator [fitter] in B.C., but it will likely increase your job opportunities. You can become certified by completing a four year apprenticeship program.

Once you complete the apprenticeship program and successfully pass the Interprovincial Red Seal exam, you become certified as journeyman. After passing the Interprovincial exam (the final exam for this trade), you also automatically have a Red Seal endorsement through BC's Industry Training Authority (ITA).

### **Challenge Certification/Recognition of Prior Experience:**

If you have significant work experience as a metal fabricator *but have never been certified in Canada*, you may apply to challenge the certification. This includes completing 9,600 hours of work in the trade and successfully writing the Interprovincial Red Seal exam.

More information:

- **Industry Training Authority – Metal Fabricator/Fitter**  
<https://www.itabc.ca/program/metal-fabricator-fitter>
- **Red Seal Program**  
<https://www.red-seal.ca/>

## 6. How Do I Find A Job?

### ***Where would I work?***

*You may work in a variety of settings including:*

- *sheet metal fabrication and welding shops*
- *manufacturers of structural steel & boilers*
- *heavy machinery & transportation equipment manufacturing*
- *shipbuilding companies*
- *welding, ironwork and sheet metal work contractors*

### ***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***

- **Construction Job Centre**  
<https://www.constructionjobcentre.ca/>
- **Indeed.com**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)
- **WorkBC Job Postings**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **BC JobConnect**  
<https://www.bcjobconnect.ca> \*\*must have permanent resident number\*\*

### ***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 metal fabricators/fitters in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **British Columbia Construction Association Membership Directories**  
<https://bccassn.com/about-bcca/regional-associations/>
- **Canadian Institute of Steel Construction – Membership**  
<https://www.cisc-icca.ca/members-associates-directory/>
- **Mechanical Contractors' Association of BC**  
<https://mcabc.org/who-we-are/member-directory/>
- **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 "metal fabricators" 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.*

### **Volunteer opportunities**

- **Volunteer BC**

<https://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<https://govolunteer.ca/>

- **Habitat for Humanity**

<https://www.habitatgv.ca/applytovolunteer/>

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?

Some structural metal and platework fabricators and fitters may also be certified as skilled welders.

With experience, you may progress to supervisory positions.

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

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

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

- **Careers in Construction**

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en>

- **BC Construction Association**

<https://bccassn.com/>

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

<https://fastbc.org/skilled-trades>

Free online employment preparation program that helps newcomers get a head start in their Canadian careers

- **BC Construction Association Integrating Newcomers Program**

<https://bccassn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/>

- **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>

- **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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