

# Medical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Working as a Medical Laboratory Technologist and Technician [NOC 2021: 32120 & 33101/ NOC 2016: 3211 & 3212]

### ***Job Description***

***Medical laboratory technologists*** conduct a variety of medical laboratory tests to assist in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease. Medical laboratory technologists may specialize in particular areas, such as clinical chemistry, clinical microbiology, hematology, histotechnology, transfusion science, diagnostic cytology and clinical genetics.

As a ***medical laboratory technologist*** you perform the following duties:

- Set up, operate and maintain laboratory equipment
- Do chemical analyses of blood, urine, cerebro-spinal fluid or other body fluids; study blood cells and other tissues to determine their relation to various physiological and pathological conditions
- Prepare tissue sections to demonstrate special cellular tissue elements or other characteristics for microscopic examination
- Set up, operate and maintain laboratory equipment
- Do chemical analyses of blood, urine, cerebro-spinal fluid or other body fluids; study blood cells and other tissues to determine their relation to various physiological and pathological conditions

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- Prepare tissue sections to demonstrate special cellular tissue elements or other characteristics for microscopic examination
- May establish procedures for the analysis of specimens and for medical laboratory experiments
- Do blood group, type and compatibility tests for transfusion purposes
- May establish procedures for the analysis of specimens and for medical laboratory experiments

**Medical laboratory technicians** conduct routine medical tests and set up, clean and maintain equipment.

As a *medical laboratory technician* you perform the following duties:

- Collect blood or other samples from patients
- Conduct routine laboratory tests and sample analyses
- Log patient samples and prepare them for testing
- Set up, clean and maintain medical laboratory equipment

Sources:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical Laboratory Technologists**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers> [search Medical LaboratoryTechnologists]
- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical Laboratory Technicians**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers> [search Medical Laboratory Technicians]

### **Industry Overview**

There is currently a shortage of medical laboratory technologists and technicians in B.C. There is an increased demand for *general medical laboratory technologists*. You may be in particularly high demand if you are willing to move to rural and remote communities in BC.

You may find new job opportunities in hospitals and medical laboratories that provide contracted diagnostic services. New job creation for clinical genetics technologists is also expected as a result of the growth of molecular testing.

Source: Work BC Career Profiles

## **Job Outlook in BC**

### **Medical Laboratory Technologists**



Chart from WorkBC

## Medical Laboratory Technicians

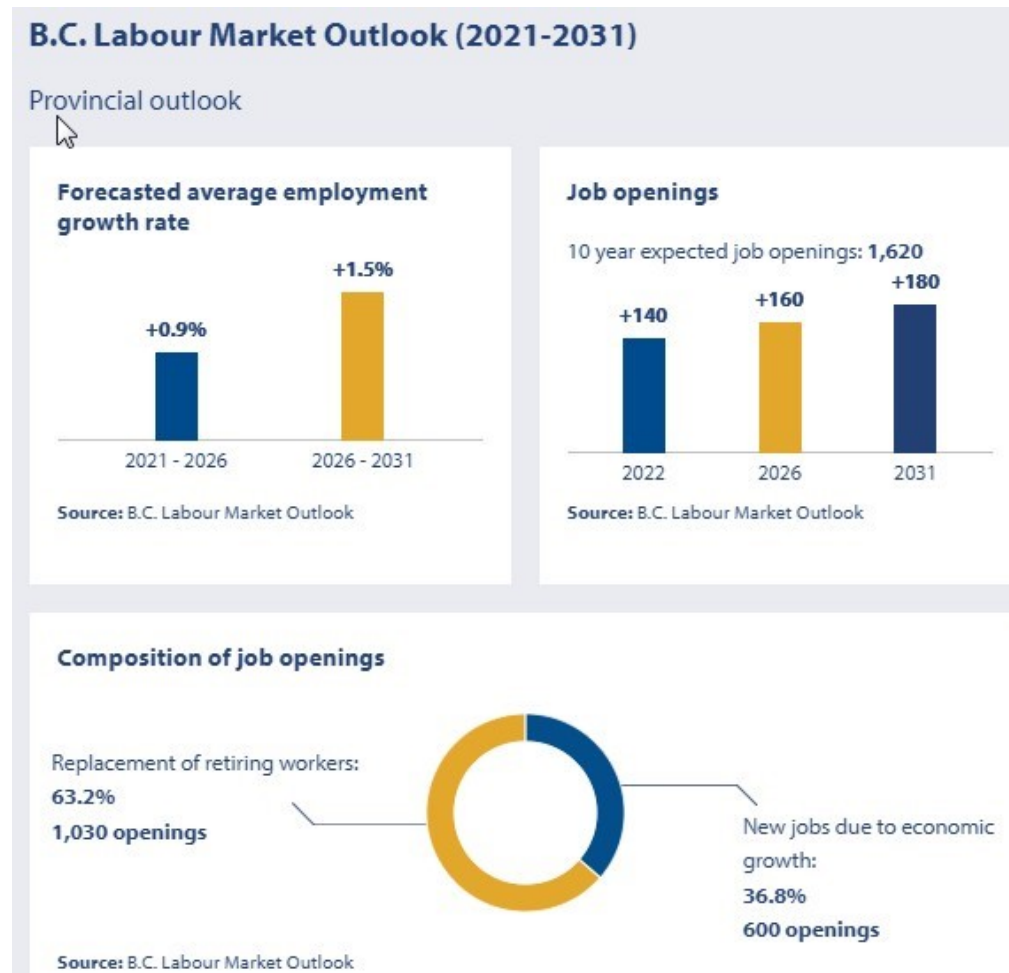


Chart from WorkBC

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

<b>Region</b>	<b>Employment in 2021</b>	<b>Average Annual Employment Growth 2021-2031</b>	<b>Expected Number of Job Openings 2021 - 2031</b>
Vancouver Island			
▪ Technologists	670	1.1%	310
▪ Technicians	750	1.3%	280
Lower Mainland / Southwest			
▪ Technologists	2090	1.3%	870
▪ Technicians	2840	1.4%	1070
Thompson-Okanagan			
▪ Technologists	510	1.2%	220
▪ Technicians	600	1.2%	220
Kootenay			
▪ Technologists	120	0.3%	40
▪ Technicians	100	0.3%	30
Cariboo			
▪ Technologists	140	-0.2%	20
▪ Technicians	180	-0.4%	20
North Coast & Nechako			
▪ Technologists	100	0.1%	20
▪ Technicians	80	-0.1%	10
Northeast			
▪ Technologists	70	-0.4%	10
▪ Technicians	30	-0.3%	\
			0

You can learn more about working in BC from the following sources:

- **Work BC Career Profiles** <https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>  
 [search Medical LaboratoryTechnologists OR Medical Laboratory Technicians]
- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Medical Lab Tech'  
 Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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### Types of Employers

**Medical laboratory technologists and technicians** work in many settings including:

- Hospitals
- Medical laboratories & clinics
- Canadian Blood Services
- Research institutes
- Universities and government research laboratories

### Salary

The median annual salary for **medical laboratory technologists** working full-time in BC is \$73,476.

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	22.00	35.00	42.50
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	22.00	35.00	42.50
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	23.41	35.00	39.00
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	22.00	35.00	42.50
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	20.00	35.00	38.70
<a href="#">Canada</a>	23.94	35.00	44.51

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

The median annual salary for **medical laboratory technicians** is \$50,054.

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	22.05	25.00	37.00
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	23.00	26.00	37.00
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	22.05	25.00	37.00
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	21.00	24.33	37.70
<a href="#">Canada</a>	18.55	27.47	40.00

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

In addition to a salary, most full-time medical laboratory technologists and technicians receive benefits, such as paid sick days, vacation time, and dental coverage.

### **Working Hours**

Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians work 35 – 40 hours per week. Your working hours vary depending on the type of laboratory. You may work rotating shifts of days, evenings and nights, including weekends and holidays.

Source: WorkBC Careers Profiles

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

### **Skills**

- must be detail oriented and able to follow strict procedures
- require a high level of accuracy, both in work procedures and in maintaining concise records
- good communication and interpersonal skills



- ability to work both independently and as part of a team

Source: WorkBC

## ***Education and Experience***

To work as a ***medical laboratory technologist or technician*** you require:

- completion of a two or three year medical laboratory education program approved by the British Columbia Society of Laboratory Science  
<https://www.bcsls.net/schools-and-lab-programs>
- certification by the BC Society for Medical Laboratory Science and/or Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science is not mandatory, but is usually required by employers

## ***Qualifications***

***This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia.***

However, many employers prefer you to be certified by the BC Society for Medical Laboratory Science (for *medical laboratory technicians*) or Canadian Society for Medical Science (for *medical laboratory technologists*). To learn about certification see:

**British Columbia Society for Medical Laboratory Science**

<https://www.bcsls.net/certification>

**Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS)**

<https://www.csmls.org/>

## ***Internationally Trained Medical Laboratory Technologists***

If you wish to become a certified as a member of the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science you must:

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- apply for a prior learning assessment (PLA). The PLA evaluates your education, training and work experience and compares it to the national standard.
- write the CSMLS National Certification Examinations (if your PLA assessment is satisfactory)

For more information see:

### **CSMLS Internationally Educated Technologist Certification Process**

<https://www.csmls.org/Certification/How-To-Become-Certified/Internationally-Educated-Medical-Laboratory-Techno.aspx>

### **BC Health Careers**

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

## **3. Finding Jobs**

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' 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***

- **BC's Provincial Health Authorities**

BC's health authorities provide health services in all BC regions

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

- <https://careers.vch.ca/>

- **Fraser Health Authority**

- <https://careers.fraserhealth.ca/>

- **Interior Health Authority**

- <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers>

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- **Northern Health Authority**  
<https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
- **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)**  
<http://www.phsa.ca/careers>
- **Island Health Authority**  
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
- **First Nations Health Authority**  
<https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>
- **BC Health Careers | Job Search**  
<https://www.bchealthcareers.ca/#job-search>
- **Indeed.ca**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)

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

- **BC Society of Laboratory Science**  
<https://www.bcsls.net/careers-page>
- **Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science Job Bank**  
<https://secure.csmls.org/iMIS/E/two.aspx>  
Job postings from across Canada. [Available to members only]

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

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

For **medical laboratory technologists**, look for these related job titles:

- Immunology Technologist
- Clinical Laboratory Technologist
- Cytotechnologist
- Histology Technologist
- Histopathology Technologist
- Tissue Technologist – Medical Laboratory

For **medical laboratory technicians**, look for these related job titles:

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- Clinical laboratory technician
- Biochemical technician
- Medical laboratory assistant
- Pathology assistant
- Phlebotomist

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

You can use directories to produce lists of hospitals, medical laboratories and pharmaceutical businesses in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Business in Vancouver – Book of Lists**

Biggest Life Sciences Companies in BC.

Available online at <https://biv.com/lists> and at the Central Library,  
338.9711 B97b

- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**

Available at the Central Library

362.11025 C21a

- **Guide to Canadian Health Care Facilities**

Available at the Central Library

362.105 C212ca

- **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 "laboratories" 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. 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).*

## 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***

Medical laboratory associations in BC and Canada can provide assistance and information. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **BC Society of Laboratory Science (BCSLS)**  
<https://www.bcsls.net/>
- **Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS)**  
<https://www.csmls.org/>
- **Allied Health Jobs BC**  
<https://alliedhealthjobsbc.ca/>

### ***Industry Journals***

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

- **Canadian Healthcare Technology**  
Available online at  
<https://www.canhealth.com/>
- **Canadian Journal of Medical Laboratory Science**  
Available in print at Central Library, 610.5 C2122

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, 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..>*