

Veterinarians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Veterinarian

[NOC 2021: 31103/ NOC 2016: 3114]

Job Description

Veterinarians prevent, diagnose and treat diseases and disorders in animals. You also advise clients on the general care of animals. You may specialize in the care and treatment of either small or large animals.

As a **Veterinarian** you perform some or all of the following duties:

- Examine animals and diagnose problems or diseases
- Treat sick or injured animals
- Vaccinate animals to prevent diseases and illnesses
- Provide obstetrical and dental services
- Provide advice about animal care to owners
- May be responsible for overall operation of animal hospital or clinic
- May conduct veterinary research
- May enforce government regulations in disease control and food production

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

Industry Overview

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association reports a serious shortage of veterinarians across Canada. According to the Canadian Occupational Projection System, the number of job openings for veterinarians is expected to total 5,000

between 2022 to 2031, while the number of job seekers is expected to total only 4,300.

Growth for veterinarians has been driven by pet owners spending more on animal care and technological and medical advancements enabling better care for animals. Employment opportunities are also available for those willing to handle large animals or work in rural and isolated areas.

Many veterinarians work as employees for several years before forming partnerships or starting new practices. The cost of setting up a new business in veterinary medicine can be as high as \$500,000.

Veterinarians also provide expertise in the area of disease outbreak identification and control. You may help to ensure food safety for humans during food production from animal sources.

Job Outlook in BC

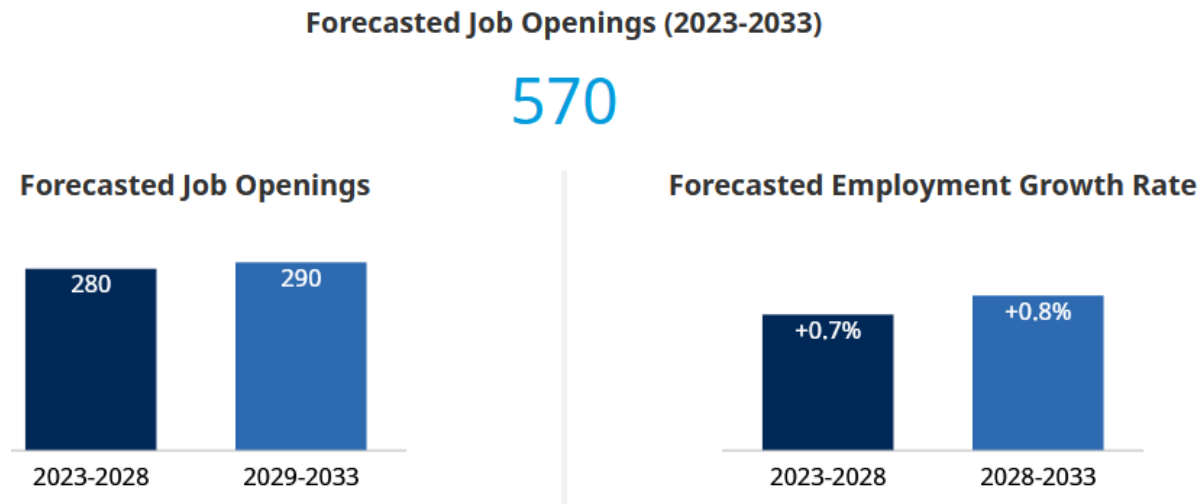


Chart from WorkBC

Regional Outlook: 2023-2033

Region	Employment in 2023	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings 2023-2033
Vancouver Island	380	0.6%	140
Lower Mainland / Southwest	800	0.9%	330
Thompson-Okanagan	195	1.3%	80
Kootenay	50	-1.1%	10
Cariboo	35	-0.3%	10

You can learn more about working as a Veterinarian in BC from:

- **WorkBC, Career Profiles**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/veterinarians>
- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Veterinarian)
Available from the VPL Digital Library
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>
- **Canadian Veterinarian Medical Association, Veterinary Workforce Shortage**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-and-outreach/priority-areas/veterinary-workforce-shortage/>

Types of Employers

The majority of veterinarians work in private practices. You may also work for the government or private industry in areas such as animal disease research, zoo consultation, or meat and milk inspection (at packing plants and dairies). Some teach in veterinary schools.

Salary

The median annual salary for veterinarians working full-time in BC is \$125,136. If you own a successful private practice, you may earn more. Veterinary surgeons and researchers typically earn the highest salaries.

In addition to a salary, most full-time veterinarians receive health and dental benefits, paid sick days, and paid vacations. If you are self-employed, you must provide your own benefits.

Sources: Work BC & Career Cruising

Job Bank Canada Wage Reports provides annual wage range for Veterinarians:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	38.48	60.00	88.94
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	38.48	60.00	88.94
Thompson–Okanagan Region	38.48	60.00	88.94
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	38.48	60.00	88.94

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

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency publishes the salary ranges for veterinarians employed by the federal agency.

- For more information on the salary range for this group, please visit the following link: <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/about-cfia/job-opportunities/hr-information/rates-pay> [see “Veterinary Medicine Group”]

Working Hours

You generally work 8 to 10 hours a day, up to approximately 50 to 60 hours a week. You may work nights and weekends to accommodate the schedules of pet owners.

It is common for a large animal veterinarian to be called out to a farm for an emergency in the middle of the night.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Work well with others in a team environment
- Good with people
- Problem solving
- Observant
- Decisive

- Hard-working

Education and Experience

In order to work as a veterinarian you require:

- two years of pre-veterinary university studies or completion of a college program in health science

AND

- a four to five year university degree in veterinary medicine
- completion of national certification exams
- a provincial license to practice

Entry into research positions may require post-graduate study

Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

You must be registered with the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC) to work as a veterinarian. There are 5 different classes of registration with CVBC.

If you wish to be registered with the CVBC, you generally must:

- complete a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree or equivalent from an institution recognized by the Canadian Veterinary Medicine Association;
- successfully complete the National Examining Board (NEB) examinations and receive a *Certificate of Qualification** (see below for exception);
- complete the practical training required as part of the program of study;
- be legally entitled to work in Canada;
- demonstrate to the College that you are of suitable character and conduct
- demonstrate English Language proficiency

Further details about registration:

- **The College of Veterinarians of British Columbia**
<https://www.cvbc.ca/registration/>

Internationally Trained Veterinarians

Provisional Supervised Active (PSA) Registration with the College of Veterinarians of BC is available to veterinarians who do not yet have a Certificate of Qualification (CQ) granted by the National Examining Board. PSA registration in the Private Practice is intended as a transitional form of registration that enables you to work under the supervision of a fully registered veterinarian while you prepare for and complete the Pre-Surgical Assessment and Clinical Proficiency Exam. It is intended for internationally-trained veterinarians who received their training at a veterinary college not accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association. PSA registration is granted for a maximum of 2 years.

More information:

- **The College of Veterinarians of British Columbia**
<https://www.cvbc.ca/registration/registration-application/>
- **National Examining Board (NEB) examinations**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/resources/national-examining-board>
- **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/education-and-events/assessment/national-examining-board/>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, electronic sources, and through professional associations.

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

- **Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Job Postings for Graduates**
<https://wcvm.usask.ca/students/dvm-program/dvm-employment/dvm-employment-all.php>
- **Canadian Animal Health Institute, Job Opportunities**
<https://cahi-icsa.ca/careers>
Job opportunities with companies that make animal health products
- **The Vet Recruiter**
<https://thevetrecruiter.com/category/location-jobs/canada/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, BC Chapter, Classified Ads**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/sbcv/classified-ads/>

Identifying the Right Position

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

For veterinarians, look at these related job titles:

- Animal Pathologist
- Dentist, Veterinary
- Internist, Veterinary
- Physiologist or Virologist, Veterinary
- Radiologist, Veterinary
- Veterinary Pharmacologist
- Veterinary Surgeon

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of potential employers. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC)**
<https://www.cvbc.ca/online-registry/>
- **Canadian Animal Health Institute Resource Directory**
 - Associate Members: <https://cahi-icsa.ca/associate-members>
 - Full Members: <https://cahi-icsa.ca/members>
- **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 "veterinary" 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

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

- **College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC)**
<https://www.cvbc.ca/>
- **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/public-resources/careers-in-veterinary-medicine/>
- **BC Chapter, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/sbcv/>
- **Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan**
<https://wcvm.usask.ca/>

Industry Journals

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

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- **Canadian Veterinary Journal** / Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
Available at the Central Library, 636.08905 C21 and online at:
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/journals-and-classified-ads/the-canadian-veterinary-journal/>
- **West Coast Veterinary Magazine**
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/sbcv/west-coast-veterinarian-magazine/>

**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>*