

Ironworkers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Ironworkers [NOC 2021: 72105]

May also be called:

- *metal building systems erector*
- *structural metal fabricator & fitter*
- *ornamental ironworker*
- *reinforcing ironworker*
- *structural steel erector*

1. What Would I Do?

Ironworkers make, put up, hoist, install, repair and service structural ironwork, precast concrete, concrete reinforcing materials, curtain walls, ornamental iron and other metals used in construction of buildings, bridges, highways, and other structures and equipment.

As an ***Ironworker*** your duties include:

- read blueprints and specifications to lay out work
- unload and position steel units so each piece can be hoisted as needed
- put up and install scaffolding, hoisting equipment and rigging
- align and weld or bolt steel units in place
- set up structural and architectural precast concrete and metal components for buildings, and other structures

- install ornamental and other structural metalwork such as curtain walls, metal stairways, railings and power doors
- position and secure steel bars or metal mesh in concrete forms to reinforce concrete structures

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Ironworkers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/ironworkers>
- **Careers in Construction – Ironworkers**
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/ironworkerstructural-metal-fabricator-and-fitter>
- **Career Cruising – Profile for ‘Ironworker’**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Available from the VPL Digital Library

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

You should be:

- *strong & physically fit*
- *comfortable with heights*

You should have:

- *good hand-eye coordination*
- *good vision*
- *agility and good balance*

You work outdoors in all kinds of weather and the work is physically demanding. You often work at extreme heights, using safety devices such as safety belts, scaffolding, and nets. There is risk injury from operating equipment and machinery, and working in potentially hazardous locations such as bridges and towers.

Sources:

- WorkBC & Career Cruising Career Profiles

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

The **median** annual salary for ironworkers working full-time in BC is \$76,145. The **median** hourly wage is \$36.51/hour.

JobBank Canada provides the hourly wages for Ironworkers in BC regions:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	25.00	36.51	45.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	25.00	35.58	44.95
Thompson–Okanagan Region	25.00	37.34	46.49
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	24.60	36.66	49.00

Source: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/6366/BC>

The pay can be quite good. However, due to the seasonal nature of ironwork, there can be long stretches of unemployment.

Many ironworkers are members of the *International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers (Ironworkers Local 97)*, which means your wages and benefits are negotiated by union representatives. Very few ironworkers are self-employed.

More information:

- **Ironworkers Local 97**
<https://joinlocal97.com/>

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

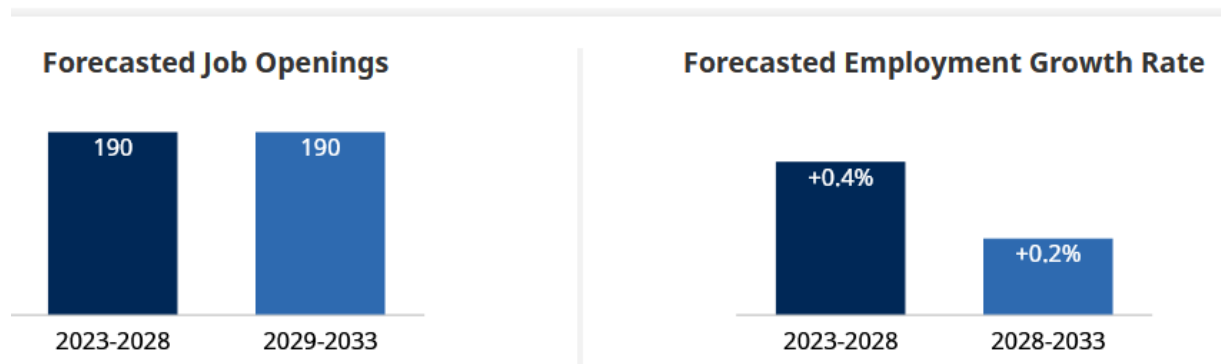
4. What Is the Job Outlook In BC?

There are currently 1,970 people employed as Ironworkers in BC. Over 75% of these jobs are located in the Mainland/Southwest region of the province.

Employment Outlook

Forecasted Job Openings (2023-2033)

380



BuildForce Canada forecasts that job prospects in BC will range from “balanced” (employers are recruiting qualified workers; new entrants and workers from outside the province must compete for available jobs) to “limited” (competition among job seekers exists, with some qualified workers unemployed and seeking work) over the next 10 years.

Sources: WorkBC & Careers in Construction (BuildForce Canada)

5. How do I become an Ironworker?

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

Completion of secondary school is usually required.

Trade certification is not mandatory to be an ironworker in B.C., but it will likely increase your job opportunities. You can become certified by completing a two to three year apprenticeship program through **Skilled Trades BC** (<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>).

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

Challenge Certification/Recognition of Prior Experience:

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

More information:

- **Skilled Trades BC**
 - **Ironworker – Generalist**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/ironworker-generalist>
 - **Ironworker – Reinforcing**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/ironworker-reinforcing>
 - **Newcomers & International Tradespersons**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/get-certified/newcomers-international-tradespersons>
- **Red Seal Program**
<https://www.red-seal.ca>

- **Ironworkers Local 97 – Apprenticeships**
<https://joinlocal97.com/become-an-ironworker/>
- Find opportunities for Registered Ironworker Apprenticeships in the following designations:
 - Ironworker – Foundation/Generalist
 - Ironworker – Reinforcing

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Ironworkers work for:

- *construction ironwork contractors*
- *large construction companies*
- *large manufacturing companies*

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

- **Talent Central Construction Jobs**
<https://talentcentral.ca>
- **Indeed.ca**
<https://ca.indeed.com/Iron-Worker-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
- **WorkBC Job Postings**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>

- **STEP – Skilled Trades Employment Program** – BC Construction Association
<https://stepbc.ca/job-seeker/>
Connects BC employers to entry-level workers or new apprentices

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 directories to produce lists of employers who are in this industry. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **BC Construction Association**
<https://bccassn.com/about-bcca/regional-associations/>
Search the members' directories for: Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Southern Interior, and Northern Regional
- **Business In Vancouver Book of Lists Biggest Construction Companies in BC**
Available at the Central Library, 338.9711 B97B
- **Canadian Institute of Steel Construction CISC**
<https://www.cisc-icca.ca/members-associates-directory/>
member & associates directory; search by province
- **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 “construction” 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

- **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?

Ironworkers usually start at apprentice level then can move up to journeyperson. With enough experience as a journeyperson, you can progress to being a supervisor or foreperson.

Source:

Career Cruising – Profile for 'Ironworker'

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Skilled Trades BC**

<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>

- **Careers in Construction** (BuildForce Canada),

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/ironworkerstructural-metal-fabricator-and-fitter>

- **Ironworkers Local 97, International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers**

<https://joinlocal97.com/>

- **Ironworkers Shop Local 712, International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers**
<https://www.iw712.org/>
- **BC Construction Association**
<https://bccassn.com/>
 - **Integrating Newcomers Program - BC Construction Association**
<https://bccassn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/>
- **BC Building Trades**
<https://bcbuildingtrades.org/>
- **Fastest Growing Industries: Construction**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/industry-profiles/fastest-growing-industries-construction>
- **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>

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>.