

Heavy Equipment Operators & Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Heavy Equipment Operators [NOC 73400] & Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics [NOC 72401]

Heavy Equipment Operators may also be called:

- backhoe operator
- bulldozer operator
- excavator operator
- grader operator
- side boom tractor operator

Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics may also be called:

- construction equipment mechanic
- diesel mechanic
- farm equipment mechanic
- heavy mobile logging equipment mechanic
- heavy mobile mining equipment mechanic
- heavy-duty equipment technician
- tractor mechanic

1. What Would I Do?

Heavy Equipment Operators

You operate heavy equipment used in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, oil and gas pipelines, buildings and other structures. You may also work in mining or forestry.

Your duties can include:

- operate heavy equipment such as backhoes, bulldozers and graders to lift, move or place equipment or materials
- run bulldozers or other heavy equipment to clear brush and stumps prior to logging activities
- operate heavy paving and surfacing equipment during highway and road construction
- run power shovels to excavate rock or other materials from mines, quarries or construction pits

Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics

You repair, adjust, overhaul and maintain heavy-duty equipment used in transportation, construction, forestry, manufacturing, farming, mining, landscaping and land clearing. This includes bulldozers, graders, tractors, forklifts and wheeled and tracked vehicles of all types.

Your duties can include:

- check heavy equipment for proper performance
- diagnose faults or malfunctions using computerized testing equipment
- adjust equipment and repair or replace defective parts using hand and power tools
- test repaired equipment for proper performance and make sure that work meets manufacturer specifications
- clean, lubricate and perform other routine maintenance work on equipment

More information:

- WorkBC Career Profiles for Heavy Equipment Operators
<https://www.workbc.ca/index.php/career-profiles/heavy-equipment-operators>
- WorkBC Career Profile for Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics
<https://www.workbc.ca/index.php/career-profiles/heavy-duty-equipment-mechanics>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Heavy Equipment Operators must have mechanical ability, excellent reflexes, good vision and depth perception and work well under pressure.

Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics must have mechanical ability, good problem-solving skills, hand eye coordination, physical strength and stamina and work well with your hands.

Heavy equipment operators - you often work in hazardous locations such as construction sites and underground sites where you may be exposed to dust, noise and vibration.

Heavy duty mechanics – you may work outdoors at construction, mining and logging sites, where you are exposed to weather of all kinds. You may work indoors in workshops and production plants. Work sites can be dirty, dusty and noisy. You are required to lift heavy parts and tools, and stand or lie in awkward positions

Source:

- Career Cruising – Profiles for Heavy Equipment Operator & Heavy Equipment Technician.
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

Heavy duty equipment operators:

In British Columbia, the average median salary is \$64,654, the median hourly rate is: \$31.00/hour. In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	23.50	31.00	38.34
Cariboo Region	23.50	32.00	36.00
Kootenay Region	22.00	32.12	44.00
Lower Mainland-Southwest Region	24.00	33.00	38.34
Nechako Region	21.52	34.00	41.00
North Coast Region	21.52	34.00	41.00
Northeast Region	25.00	32.00	39.00
Thompson-Okanagan Region	20.19	30.00	39.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	22.00	30.00	38.00
Canada	19.00	27.90	38.00

Source: JobBank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/15029/BC>

The construction industry slows down during the winter in colder climates which can affect your annual earnings. You may only find full-time construction work for part of the year.

If you work for government agencies or large companies you may also receive benefits such as dental coverage, paid vacation and sick days. If you belong to a union your wages and benefits are negotiated on your behalf by union representatives.

Heavy duty equipment mechanics:

In British Columbia, the median annual salary is \$79,253. The median hourly rate is: \$38.00. In BC’s regions you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	24.04	38.00	48.00
Cariboo Region	22.00	34.62	44.00
Kootenay Region	35.00	43.50	55.09
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	25.00	36.00	43.00
Nechako Region	24.04	38.00	48.00
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	20.71	37.50	45.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	21.90	40.00	50.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	26.00	36.00	55.00
Canada	20.00	33.00	46.78

Source: JobBank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/7481/BC>

Your salary varies depending on the size of shop you work in, and whether you are located in a rural or urban area. In any shop, you are typically expected to provide your own hand tools, and mechanics may have invested thousands of dollars in them.

Sources:

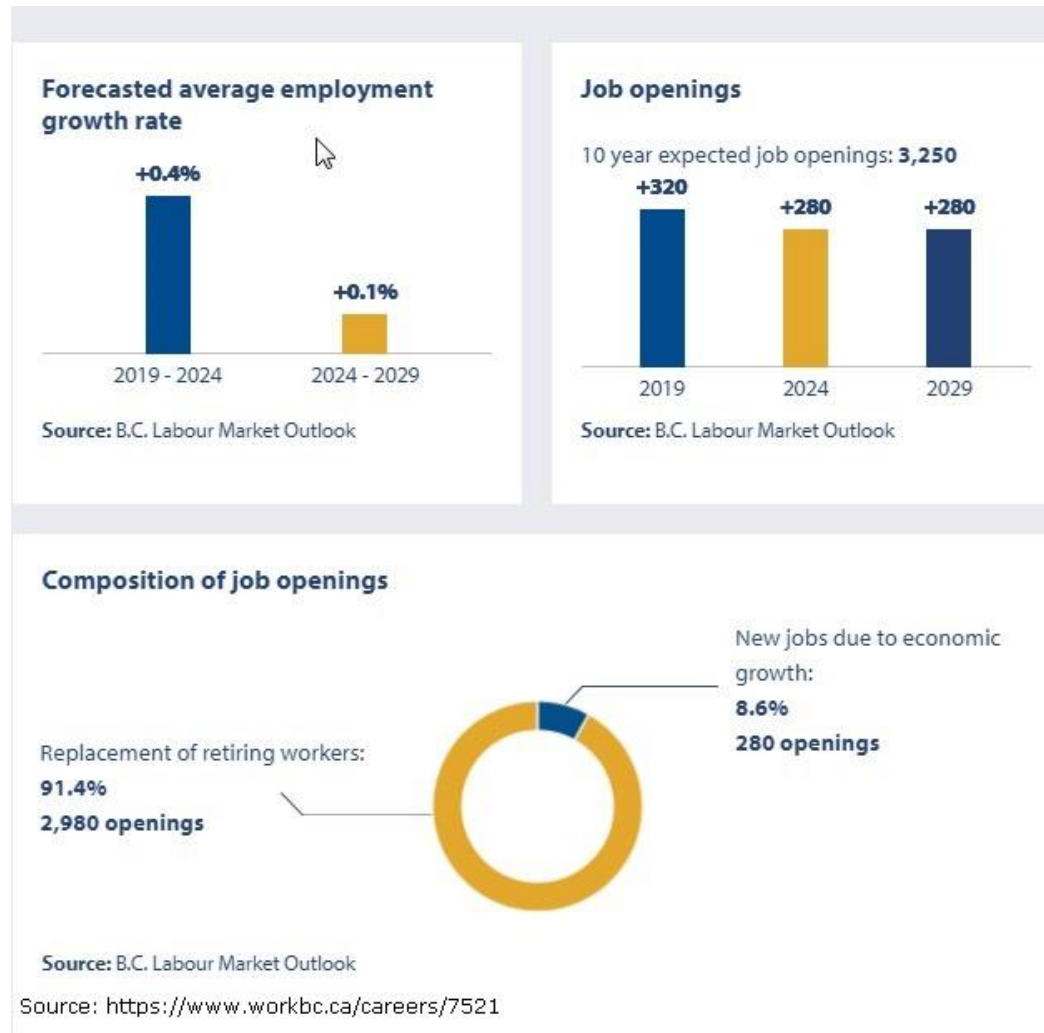
- WorkBC Career Profiles <https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- Career Cruising – Profiles for Heavy Equipment Operator & Heavy Equipment Technician <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
 Available from the VPL Digital Library

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Employment opportunities are expected to be good for **Heavy Equipment Operators**, particularly in the non-residential sector.

Due to the seasonal nature of this occupation, your employment opportunities may vary depending on the time of the year.

Heavy Equipment Operators – Employment Outlook

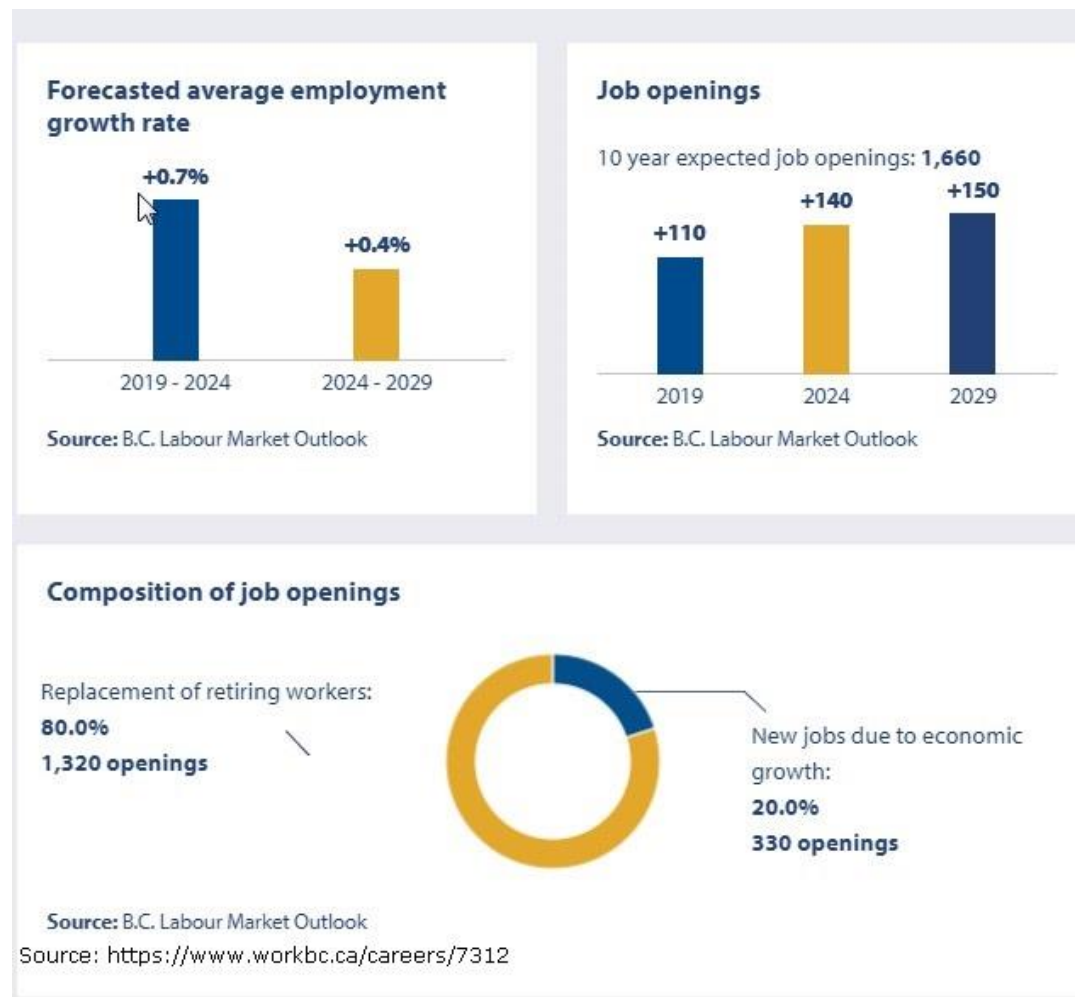


Employment opportunities will be good for **Heavy-Duty Equipment Mechanics**. Demand is driven by activity in a wide variety of industries, such as transportation, mining, oil and gas, and construction. This broad employment base helps to vary your work opportunities.

Heavy-duty equipment mechanics with up-to-date electronics training are expected to be in greatest demand.

You will also have an advantage finding work in the trucking industry if you have skills using new technologies to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of diesel engines.

Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics – Employment Outlook



Sources:

- Careers in Construction – Heavy Equipment Operator:
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/heavy-equipment-operator>
- BuildForce Canada – Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
<https://www.buildforce.ca/en/career-finder/>
- WorkBC Career Profiles
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>

5. How Do I Become a Heavy Equipment Operator or Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic?

Heavy Equipment Operator

Although there are no formal requirements to work as a ***Heavy Equipment Operator***, employers prefer:

- a high school diploma or its equivalent
- completion of a one to two year apprenticeship program **OR** some high school, college or industry courses in heavy equipment operating **combined** with on-the-job training

You may also start out as a labourer or truck driver, and learn on the job from experienced heavy equipment operators.

More information:

- **SkilledTradesBC – Heavy Equipment Operator**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/heavy-equipment-operator>

Heavy duty equipment mechanic

Heavy duty equipment technician/mechanic 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 generally required to work as a heavy-duty equipment mechanic.

Although trade certification is not mandatory, it will likely increase your job opportunities. You become certified by completing an apprenticeship program through SkilledTradesBC.

Upon completion of the apprenticeship program, as well as successfully passing the

Interprovincial Red Seal exam, you become certified as journeyperson. Once you pass the Interprovincial exam (the final exam for this trade), you automatically have a Red Seal endorsement.

Challenge Certification/Recognize Prior Experience

If you have extensive experience working as a heavy duty equipment mechanic you may also be certified through the challenge process. This includes completing 9,540 hours of work in the trade and successfully writing the Interprovincial Red Seal exam.

More information:

- **SkilledTradesBC**

<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/heavy-duty-equipment-technician>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Heavy equipment operators work in a variety of settings including:

- *construction and logging companies*
- *heavy equipment contractors*
- *government agencies*
- *oil & gas pipelines*
- *cargo-handling*

Heavy duty equipment mechanics may work in:

- *mining companies*
- *construction companies*
- *farm equipment manufacturers*
- *heavy equipment dealers*
- *rental and service companies*
- *railway 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

- **Builders Life TalentCentral**
<https://talentcentral.ca/job-postings>
- **Construction Canada JobBoard**
<https://www.constructioncanada.net/jobboard/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **WorkBC Job Postings**
<https://www.workbc.ca/>
- **Job Bank**
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob>

Finding “Hidden Jobs”

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below 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 *heavy equipment operators* and *heavy duty equipment mechanics* in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **British Columbia Construction Association Membership Directories**
<https://www.bccassn.com/about-us/regional-associations/>

- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**

<https://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members/>

- **Daily Commercial News- Construction Directory**

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/construction-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 "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

****You can also try entering "heavy equipment" or "paving" to locate more companies.**

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/>

- **Habitat for Humanity**

<https://www.habitatgv.ca/applytovolunteer> (can volunteer at construction sites or at ReStores)

For additional tips see the guides published on the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre

Website: <https://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>

- **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?

Heavy equipment operators: you may progress to supervisory positions with experience (for example, foreperson, construction superintendent).

Heavy-duty equipment mechanics: you may specialize in specific types of machinery such as combines or tracked vehicles, or in diesel engines, fuel injection, hydraulics or electronics.

With experience, you may advance to senior positions, such as supervisor or service manager, or you may open your own businesses.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

<https://stepbc.ca/>

STEP is a no-fee employment program can help you get jobs in the construction industry

- **Integrating Newcomers Program** – BC Construction Association

<https://www.bccassn.com/jobs-&-careers/bcca-integrating-newcomers/default>

- **Vancouver Regional Construction Association VRCA**

<https://vrca.ca/jobs-careers/>

- **BuildForce Canada**

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

- **BC Construction Association**

<https://bccassn.com/>

- **Careers in Energy**

<https://careersinenergy.ca/>

- **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>

- **Industry Profiles: Construction, Oil & Gas, and Transportation**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guides/industry-profiles>

**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>



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