

Longshore Workers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Longshore Workers [NOC 2021: 75100/ NOC 2016: 7451]

Longshore Workers may also be called:

- *longshoreman/woman*
- *dockworker*
- *dock hand*
- *wharf worker*
- *ship loader operator*
- *stevedore*
- *tanker loader*
- *marine cargo lumper*
- *loader, barge / boat / tanker*
- *stower*

1. What Would I Do?

Longshore Workers transfer cargo throughout dock area and onto and from ships and other vessels.

Your duties may include:

- operate industrial trucks, tractors and other mobile equipment to transfer cargo (such as containers, crated items, automobiles and pallet-mounted machinery) around dock and within the range of cranes and hoists
- operate winches or other hoisting devices to load and unload cargo onto and from ships and other vessels

- operate mechanical towers to load vessels with materials such as coal and ore
- operate equipment to transfer bulk materials, such as grain, to the hold of vessels
- connect hoses and operate equipment to transfer liquid materials into storage tanks on vessels
- perform other activities such as fastening cargo aboard ships, opening and closing hatches, cleaning holds of ships

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Longshore Workers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Longshore Workers should have:

- good spatial perception; the ability to recognize distance or depth
- good hand eye coordination
- good vision
- good hearing

You should be:

- physically fit & strong
- able to do shiftwork

Longshore workers are outdoors in various weather conditions; you work on docks around cranes and towers; you work with heavy equipment, instruments, and machinery.

Source: WorkBC

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for **Longshore Worker** is \$87,595. According to WorkBC, hourly wages can range from \$25 to \$47.

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

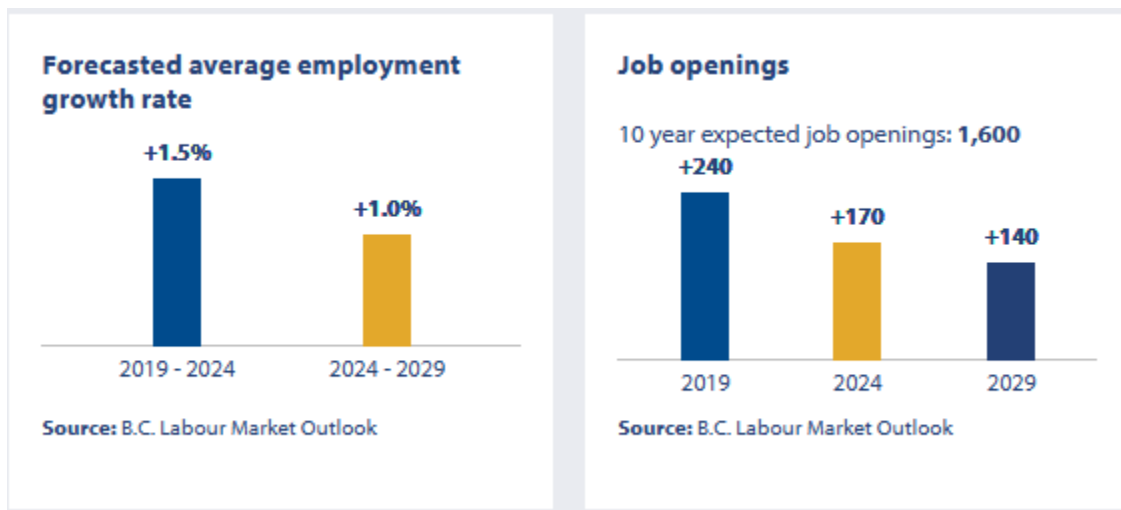
Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	25.00	42.00	47.32
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	25.00	42.00	47.32
Nechako Region	17.00	41.00	45.00
North Coast Region	17.00	41.00	45.00

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

Source: WorkBC

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

JobBank Canada reports that for 2019-2021 period, the employment outlook is expected to be good for Longshore Workers in BC. There are 1,600 expected job openings between 2019 and 2029.



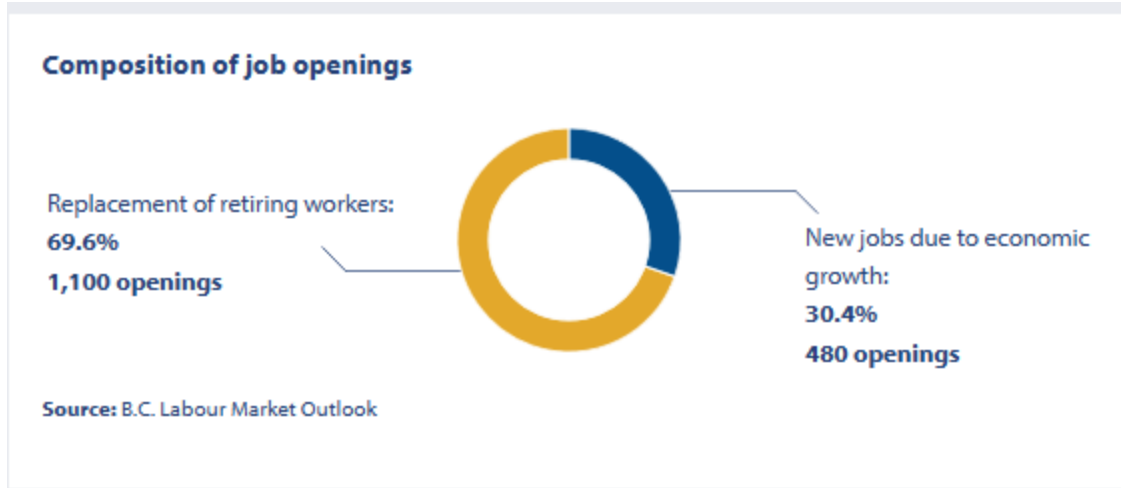


Chart from Work BC

Sources: Work BC & JobBank Canada Employment Outlook

<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/outlookreport/occupation/8368>

5. How do I become a Longshore Worker?

In BC, there is no certification required to work as a longshore worker. However, secondary school graduation is usually needed, especially in order to advance to foreman/forewoman or supervisory positions. Completion of training programs may also be required.

- the **recruitment process** for general longshore employees is determined by the needs of each port and represents the first step by which workers enter the dispatch system.
- applications for recruitment for general longshore work are accepted **only as needed** by each individual *Local of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union - ILWU*
 - for a list of ILWU Locals in BC, see: <https://ilwu.ca/about/locals/>
 - for an example of one Local's hiring process, see: <https://ilwu500.org/jobs-training/>

- after the ILWU accepts applications, it supplies them to the *BCMEA - BC Maritime Employers Association*, <https://www.bcmea.com>. The ILWU and BCMEA conduct recruitments.
- after recruitment, as a “new hire” you are assigned “casual” status with the ability to pick-up casual shifts from a local Dispatch Hall. You will start with general longshore work.
- while working as casual, you may be trained on a variety of equipment or in specific skill sets required to load and unload cargo.
- you may be “casual” for up to ten years and working part time shifts before progressing to sworn union member of the ILWU.

Minimum requirements [*from BC Maritime Employers Association*]

- Canadian citizen or landed immigrant (permanent resident).
- proficient in speaking and writing English
- good eyesight and excellent color and peripheral vision
- candidates must pass a comprehensive medical exam and be able to complete an industry related physical fitness test
- candidates must have sufficient valid identification to secure a Facility Access Pass (Port Pass); you may also require a Marine Transport Security Clearance (MTSC)

More information:

- **Port of Vancouver, Marine Transportation Security Clearance**
<https://www.portvancouver.com/about-us/security-emergency/marine-transportation-security-clearance/>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

- *marine cargo handling companies*
- *shipping agencies*
- *shipping lines*

Finding Advertised Jobs

Longshore jobs are only posted for individuals who are already **active longshore workers** (either “casual” or “union members”). See for example:

<https://ilwu500.org/jobs-training/>

Online Job Postings

All longshore workers are hired **only** through Locals of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU). You may find some job postings that use skills related to longshore work, for example, in heavy equipment operation, inventory management, and other industrial and shipping-oriented occupations. Look for jobs such as ‘dock work’, ‘forklift driver’, ‘crane operator’ or ‘shipping’ in these sources:

- **International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) Locals**

<https://ilwu.ca/about/locals/>

- **Indeed.ca**

https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

<https://ca.indeed.com/Dock-Worker-jobs-in-Western-Canada>

<https://ca.indeed.com/Forklift-Driver-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>

<https://ca.indeed.com/Crane-Operator-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>

<https://ca.indeed.com/Shipping-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>

- **WorkBC**

<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>

- **BC Jobs.ca**

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

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

All longshore workers are hired **only** through Locals of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU); you may find some jobs for ‘dock work’ or other related work (e.g. container loading) in these sources:

- **Canada Transportation.com** (marine freight)

http://www.canadatransportation.com/Marine_Freight_British_Columbia_zwU.htm

- **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 "marine cargo handling" 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.

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. Working as a volunteer is a good way to gain "Canadian experience."

Although *all* longshore workers are hired **only** through Locals of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU), volunteering may help you in the ILWU's recruitment process. 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. Look for volunteer work that uses skills related to longshore work, for example, heavy equipment operation, inventory management, and other industrial and shipping-oriented occupations

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**

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

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<https://govolunteer.ca/>

- **Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society**

<https://foodbank.bc.ca/volunteer/> volunteer positions in warehouse and food distribution

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?

With the right kind of experience and enough years working on the docks, you may progress into positions as 'foreman' or 'head foreman'.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **BC Maritime Employers Association – BCMEA**
<https://www.bcmea.com/>
- International Longshore and Warehouse Union
<https://ilwu.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>

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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