

Surface Mining, Quarrying, & Construction Drillers & Blasters / Oil & Gas Well Drillers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Surface Mining, Quarrying & Construction Drillers & Blasters [NOC 2021: 73402/ NOC 2016: 7372] / Oil & Gas Well Drillers [NOC 2021: 12102/ NOC 2016: 8232]

Drillers & Blasters may also be called:

- surface mining blaster
- construction blaster
- construction driller
- foundation drill operator
- open-pit blaster
- open-pit driller
- rotary drilling machine operator

Oil & gas well drillers may also be called

- assistant driller
- directional drilling operator
- downhole tool operator
- drill stem tester
- service rig operator

Source: National Occupational Classification (NOC)
<https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>

1. What Would I Do?

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers operate heavy drilling machines to drill holes in open-pit mines, quarries and at construction sites.

Blasters work mostly in mining and construction. You use materials such as dynamite to open new quarries and mine shafts or to create controlled openings in rock for construction projects.

Oil and gas well drillers operate equipment to drill deep into the earth to extract oil and natural gas.

As a **Driller (Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction)** you:

- set up drill rigs at drilling sites
- operate rotary drilling machines to:
 - bore large blast holes in open-pit mine or quarry
 - drill blast holes in rock at road or other construction sites
 - drill holes for building foundations or pilings
- repair and maintain drilling equipment

As a **Blaster (Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction)** you:

- examine blast areas to determine amount of explosives needed and where to put them
- place explosives and attach detonators
- oversee the explosion and make sure all explosives are detonated

As an **Oil & Gas Well Driller** you:

- operate and maintain drilling equipment
- direct the activities of the rig crew and the operation of the rig equipment

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profiles for:**
 - **Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/drillers-and-blasters-surface-mining-quarrying-and-construction>
 - **Oil & Gas Well Drillers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/oil-and-gas-well-drillers-servicers-testers-and-related-workers>
- **Careers in Construction – Driller/Blaster**
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/drillerblaster>
- **Career Cruising database** (*Profiles for Surface Drillers, Explosives Specialist and Oil & Gas Well Drilling Crews*)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>
Available from the VPL Digital Library

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

*As a **surface driller**, you are physically fit and strong and mechanically inclined.*

*As a **blaster**, you are able to remain calm under pressure, have good hand-eye coordination & vision.*

*As an **oil & gas well driller**, you need mechanical and analytical ability, good hand-eye coordination, physical strength & stamina.*

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters work outdoors in all types of weather and inside heavy equipment. You may be exposed to flying particles, falling objects, explosives in dangerous locations and loud noises.

Oil & Gas Well Drillers often work in remote locations. You work outdoors, often in extreme weather conditions. You may be exposed to dust, loud noises and fumes from drilling rigs.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, your median annual salary is:

- \$69,784 for **Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters**. You may be paid by the hour, by the foot drilled, or by a combination of the two. If you work for companies on a full-time basis you may receive benefits such as dental coverage, paid sick days and vacation. Self-employed drillers must provide your own benefits.
- \$83,424 for **Oil & Gas Well Drillers**. Your salary depends on the number of hours worked and drilling activity can fluctuate greatly. In addition to your wage you usually receive living allowances when you have to work in a remote location. Full-time crew members may also receive benefits, such as dental coverage and paid sick leave.

In BC's regions, **Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	27.00	33.46	39.81
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	27.00	33.46	39.81
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	29.73	34.00	36.36

Oil & Gas Well Drillers can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	22.91	40.00	42.80
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	22.91	40.00	42.80
Northeast Region	22.91	40.00	42.80
Thompson–Okanagan Region	22.91	40.00	42.80

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

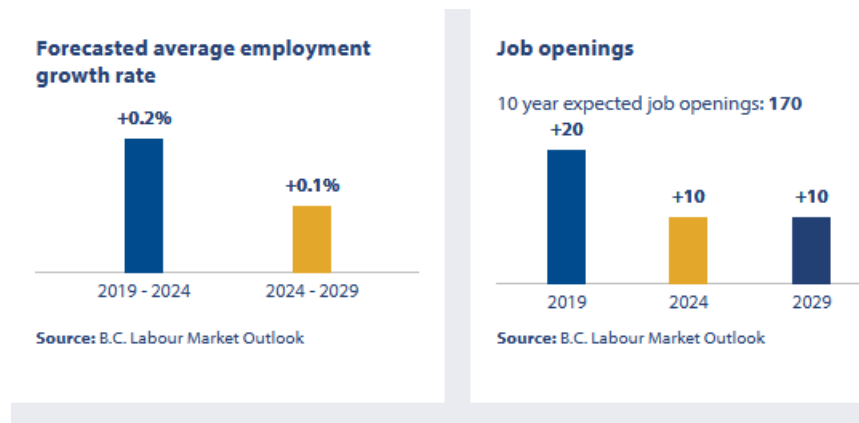
Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Drillers and Blasters

The Construction Sector Council predicts the job outlook for Drillers & Blasters in BC will fluctuate from good to balanced over the next 9 years.

Employment Outlook - Drillers and blasters



Composition of job openings

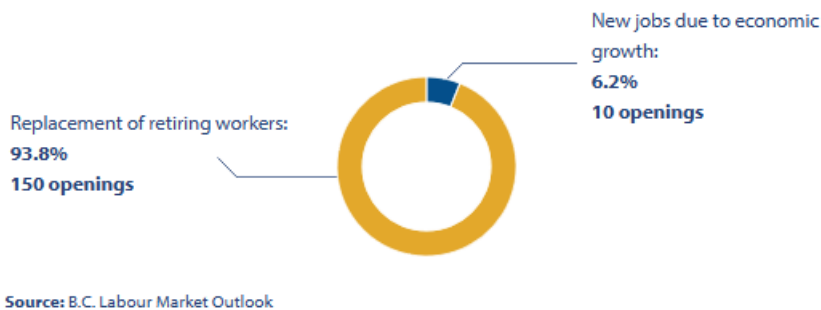


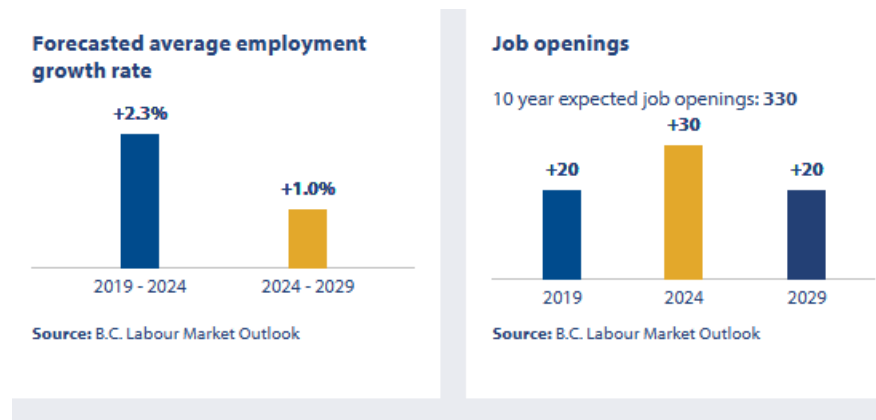
Chart from WorkBC

Oil & Gas Well Drillers

Industry experts forecast there will be 330 new positions for oil & gas well drillers in BC between 2019 and 2029.

Employment Outlook

Oil and gas drillers and related occupations



Composition of job openings



Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles, Careers in Construction

5. How Do I Become A Driller or a Blaster?

Surface Drillers

- Certification is not mandatory to work as a surface driller in BC, but trades training as a Heavy Equipment Operator may be recommended by some employers
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/heavy-equipment-operator>
- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- Experience as a heavy equipment operator may be required
- On the job training under the supervision of experienced workers is usually provided

Blasters

- In BC, anyone working as a blaster must be certified with WorksafeBC
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/education-training-certification/blasting>
- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- On the job training is usually provided
- Experience as a blaster helper in surface mining and quarrying or construction may be required

Oil & gas well drillers

You usually require

- 3 – 6 months of formal training and at least four years of relevant work experience
- Completion of health and safety courses through Energy Safety Canada or an affiliated partner <https://www.energysafetycanada.com/Training>

Sources:

- WorkBC, SkilledTradesBC <https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>, Careers in Construction

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters work for:

- *mining, quarrying and construction companies*
- *drilling and blasting contractors*

Oil & gas well drillers work for:

- *drilling and service rig contractors*
- *petroleum-producing 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 and careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **WorkBC Jobs**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **Indeed.com**
<https://ca.indeed.com/>
- **Rigzone**
<https://www.rigzone.com/oil/jobs/>
- **Northeastern BC Job Search**
<https://www.employmentconnections.bc.ca/>

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 drillers and blasters in Vancouver or throughout BC. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Member Directory. Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors**
<https://thehitch.ca/member-directory/>

- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**
<https://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members/>
- **Mining Association of BC Membership Directory**
<https://www.mining.bc.ca/membership>
- **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

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/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<https://govolunteer.ca/>

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?

Surface Drillers and blasters may progress to supervisory positions with experience.

Drillers and blasters often perform both drilling and blasting activities.

Oil and gas well drillers may advance to rig management or other management positions. You may also move into drilling-related equipment sales or rig training, regulatory or safety positions.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Canadian Association of Energy Contractors**
<https://caodc.ca/>
- **CareersinConstruction.ca**
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-finder>
- **Careers in Energy**
<https://careersinenergy.ca/>
- **Mining Association of BC**
<https://www.mining.bc.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 Profile: Oil & Gas**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/industry-profiles/oil-and-gas>
- **Industry Profile: Mining**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/industry-profiles/mining>

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>.

