

# Veterinary Technicians & Animal Health Technologists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## Veterinary Technicians & Animal Health

### Technologists [NOC 2021: 32104 / NOC 2016: 3213]

***May also be called:***

- *Veterinarian assistant*
- *animal operating room attendant*
- *veterinary technician supervisor*
- *registered veterinary technician (RVT)*
- *animal care technologist*
- *laboratory animal technologist*
- *registered animal health technologist*
- *veterinary technologist*

## 1. What Would I Do?

*Animal health and veterinary technologists and technicians* provide technical support to veterinarians by caring for animals and assisting in the diagnosis and treatment of animal health disorders.

Duties may include:

- provide nursing care and rehabilitation therapy for animals
- handle, restrain and care for animals undergoing treatment and surgery

- produce radiographs, collect samples and perform other laboratory tests to assist in diagnosis of animal health problems
- assist veterinarian with animals before, during and following surgery
- prepare surgical equipment, give and monitor anesthetics, and clean up after surgery
- prepare and give medications and vaccines under direction of veterinarian
- provide wound and bandage care
- do specialized procedures such as animal identification and hoof trimming
- talk to clients about animal health care including nutrition and home care
- do laboratory research
- do routine animal dental procedures, and help veterinarians with animal dentistry
- May do office management and clerical duties

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Animal Health Technologists & Veterinary Technicians**

<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/animal-health-technologists-and-veterinary-technicians>

- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Veterinary Technician')

Available from the VPL Digital Library

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

### **Animal Health Technologists & Veterinary Technologists & Technicians should be:**

- able to follow direction and conduct medical tests
- detail oriented and understanding of the importance of following procedures
- patient and compassionate
- you should have a love of animals
- have good computer skills

## Veterinary Technicians & Animal Health Technologists *A guide for newcomers to British Columbia*

Animal Health Technologists & Veterinary Technologists & Technicians work indoors in veterinary clinics, which are often noisy. Emergency call-out work may sometimes be required.

Stress is often associated with treating abused animals or putting down animals. The work can also be physically demanding since you have to lift, hold or restrain animals, risking bites or scratches.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

### 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

WorkBC reports that the *median* annual salary for Animal Health Technologists & Veterinary Technicians in BC is \$38,271 with a median hourly wage of \$18.35.

In BC regions, you can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	15.20	18.35	25.30
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	15.20	18.35	25.30
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.20	18.35	25.30
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	15.20	18.00	26.50

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

Many employers offer additional benefits, including health, dental, and disability insurance and continuing education.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

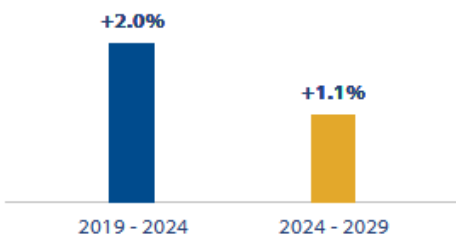
## 4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

There is high demand for animal health technologists and veterinary technicians in BC. Spending on veterinary services has doubled over the last 10 years due to the increasing number of pets in North America. Also, pet owners consider their pets to be a member of the family and are more willing to spend money for involved veterinary procedures to extend the life of their animals. Many new job openings will also come from the need to replace those who retire.

Recent outbreaks of diseases in farm animals are also increasing the demand for veterinary diagnostic services and the services of animal health and veterinary technologists and technicians

### Job Outlook in BC

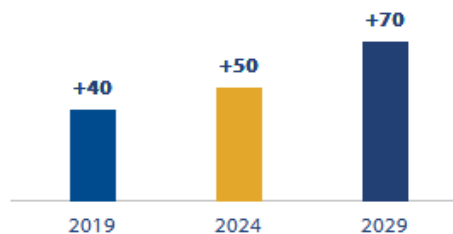
#### Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

#### Job openings

10 year expected job openings: **610**



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

#### Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:  
**41.7%**  
**250 openings**



New jobs due to economic growth:  
**58.3%**  
**350 openings**

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: WorkBC

## 5. How do I Become a Veterinary Technician & Animal Health Technologist?

### ***Education:***

Completion of a two- or three-year veterinary or animal health technology diploma or a related program is required.

In BC, programs are offered by:

- **Thompson Rivers University**

<https://www.tru.ca/science/diplomas-certificates/vtech.html> [veterinary technology and animal welfare programs, includes both on campus and distance education programs]

- **Douglas College**

<https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/explore-programs-courses/faculties/science-and-technology/veterinary-technology> [veterinary technology program]

### ***Registration / Certification:***

*Although registration as a Registered Veterinary Technologist is voluntary, it is often required by employers.*

In B.C. registration as a Registered Veterinary Technologist (RVT) is provided by the *BC Veterinary Technologists Association (BCVTA)* (<https://www.bcvta.com/>). Registration is available to animal health technologists and veterinary technologists/technicians who have completed an accredited training program and passed the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE).

For more information see:

- **BC Veterinary Technologists Association (BCVTA)**

<https://www.bcvta.com/how-do-i-become/> [becoming a Registered Veterinary Technologist – RVT]

<https://www.bcvta.com/vtne-information/> [Veterinary Technician National Examination – VTNE]

- **AASB Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE)**

<https://www.aavsb.org/vtne/> [American Assoc. of Veterinary State Boards]

### ***Internationally Trained Technicians & Technologists***

BCVTA uses a third party, International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) to evaluate Animal Health Technologists / Veterinary Technologists & Technicians trained outside of North America.

For more information, see ICAS:

- **Professional Registration**

<https://www.icascanada.ca/professional-registration.aspx>

- **Application Form**

<https://www.icascanada.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/oavt%20and%20ahta%20bc%20application%20form.pdf>

Sources: WorkBC & BC Veterinary Technologists Association

## **6. How Do I Find A Job?**

### ***Where would I work?***

- *veterinary clinics*
- *animal hospitals*
- *animal shelters*
- *humane societies*
- *zoos*
- *animal research laboratories*
- *pharmaceutical companies and government*

### ***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**

- **BC Veterinary Technologists Association - BCVTA**  
<https://www.bcvta.com/archive-job-posts/>
- **Registered Veterinary Technologists and Technicians Of Canada - RVTTC**  
<https://rvttcanada.ca/career-opportunities/>
- **Indeed.ca**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)  
<https://ca.indeed.com/Veterinary-Technician-jobs-in-British-Columbia>  
<https://ca.indeed.com/Animal-Health-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
- **Talent.com**  
<https://ca.talent.com/>

### **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.

- **College of Veterinarians of British Columbia (CVBC)**  
<https://www.cvbc.ca/online-registry/> [search for veterinary clinics and practices in BC]
- **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).

### **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://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**  
<https://govolunteer.ca/>
- **BC SPCA (Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)**  
<https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/volunteer/>
- **Critter Care Wildlife Society**  
<https://www.crittercarewildlife.org/volunteer>  
<https://www.crittercarewildlife.org/what-we-do> [internship opportunities]
- **Wildlife Rescue Association of BC**  
<https://www.wildliferescue.ca/what-we-do/volunteering/>
- **Volunteer for Animal Organizations in British Columbia**  
[https://www.canadian-universities.net/Volunteer/Animals-British\\_Columbia.html](https://www.canadian-universities.net/Volunteer/Animals-British_Columbia.html)

## **Municipal Animal Shelters**

You can also search for your local municipal animal shelter; contact them to see if they need volunteers. Go to: <https://bc.211.ca/> [try searching for 'animal shelter' or 'animals']

*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 experience, veterinary and animal health technologists and technicians may progress to supervisory positions.

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

Associations for animal and veterinary technicians and technologists in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **BC Veterinary Technologists Association**  
<https://www.bcvta.com/>
- **Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)**  
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/resources/aht-vt-careers>
- **Registered Veterinary Technologists And Technicians Of Canada (RVTTTC)**  
<https://rvttcanada.ca/>

### *Industry Journals*

- **West Coast Veterinary Magazine**  
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/sbcv/west-coast-veterinarian.aspx>

***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>.*