

# Bus Drivers, Transit & Subway Operators

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## Bus Drivers, Transit & Subway Operators [NOC 2021: 73301 / NOC 2016: 7512]

***Bus Drivers, Transit & Subway Operators  
may also be called:***

- *school bus driver*
- *sightseeing tour driver*
- *tour bus driver*
- *motor coach driver*
- *streetcar operator*
- *conductor, bus / streetcar*
- *operator, light rail / subway / trolley*
- *shuttle driver - auto dealership / car rental*

### 1. What Would I Do?

**Bus drivers:**

- work for urban transit systems, school boards or transportation authorities and private transportation companies

**Streetcar, subway and light rail transit operators:**

- work for urban transit systems

**Bus drivers and streetcar operators' duties can include:**

- drive buses or streetcars to transport passengers along established routes to local destinations, or intercity or long distance destinations

- drive sightseeing tour buses to transport passengers locally or over long distances
- drive buses equipped for wheelchair accessibility, and aid passengers in boarding
- provide passengers with information on fares, schedules and stops
- collect fares, issue and validate transfers, check bus passes
- conduct pre-trip and post-trip inspections of vehicle
- may provide information on points of interest during sightseeing tours
- may load and unload passengers' luggage and express freight

**School bus drivers' duties can include:**

- drive school buses to transport children between school and home or on excursions
- ensure children's safety when boarding and leaving buses and crossing street while bus is stopped
- maintain control of student activities during travel to prevent distractions or behaviours that could compromise safety

**Subway train and light rail transit operators' duties can include:**

- operate subway or rail transit vehicles as part of two-person crew
- observe signals at crossings and arrival and departure points
- operate controls to open and close transit vehicle doors
- report delays, malfunctions and accidents to control unit
- ensure passenger safety and welfare in emergencies, and direct passengers during evacuation procedures

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Bus Drivers, Transit & Subway Operators**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx> [search bus drivers]
- **Career Cruising** (profiles for 'Bus Driver' and 'Transit Operator')  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>  
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

***Bus Drivers, Transit & Subway Operators should have:***

- excellent driving skills
- good communication skills and interpersonal skills to interact with passengers
- organization and time-management skills for co-ordinating passenger pick-ups
- a thorough knowledge of the areas they drive in

***You should be:***

- able to concentrate despite distractions
- able to follow instructions carefully
- able to think and act quickly in various situations
- patient

Most people entering these occupations can expect to work part time through evenings, weekends and sometimes holidays before working full time. Split shifts are also common. Those who have been in the industry longer can expect more regular shifts and full-time hours (40 hours per week).

***Public transit operators*** are more likely to be part of a union and work full time. ***School bus drivers*** usually only work part time.

You may also have to handle difficult passengers from time to time.

Sources: WorkBC Career Profile & Career Cruising

## 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median salary for bus drivers, transit & subway operators is \$55,060 a year. According to WorkBC, hourly wages can range from \$18 - \$34.50.

In BC's regions, you can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	18.00	26.40	34.50
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	17.55	25.00	27.61
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	17.00	25.67	32.34
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	19.00	29.92	34.60
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	21.17	25.50	33.80
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.65	25.00	31.68
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	20.00	26.30	33.00

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

Full-time transit operators usually get benefits as well. This can include health coverage, pension plans, and paid vacation time. You may also get free rides on your transit system.

You may be part of union, and your wages and benefits are negotiated by union representatives

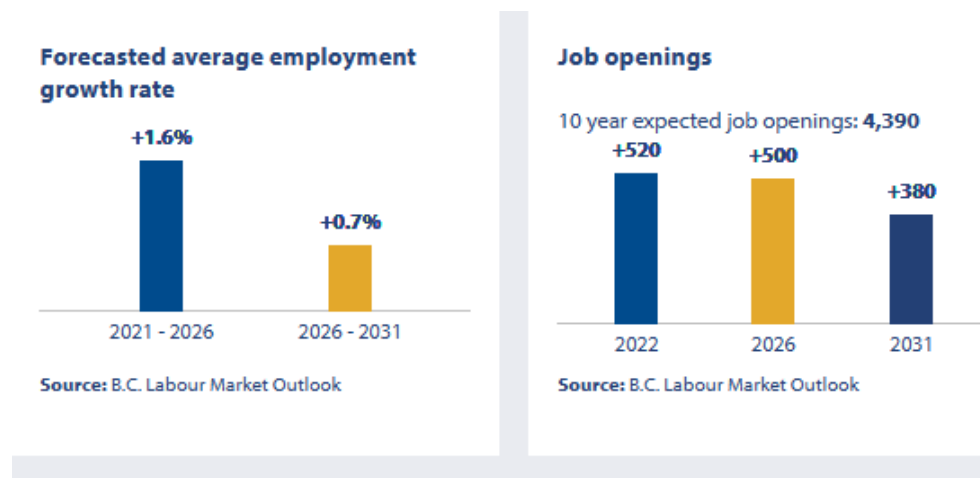
Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

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

**Jobbank Canada** reports that the employment outlook is good for bus drivers in British Columbia for the 2021-2023 period.

However, future demand for this occupation is uncertain as working from home is increasingly common, resulting in a reduction of commutes by workers who were previously using public transit.

## Employment Outlook, 2021-2031



### Composition of job openings



Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- JobBank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/outlook-occupation/23319/BC>

## 5. How do I become a Bus driver, transit or subway operator?

Certification is not required to be a Bus driver or transit operator in BC. However, you must have a valid Class 5 BC driver's license or Canadian equivalent.

Employers also require some secondary school education, and a high school diploma is generally preferred.

There are usually a lot of applicants for these jobs. Post-secondary education, excellent communication and people skills are an advantage when applying for this job.

Other requirements may include:

- a Class 2 driver's license with airbrake endorsement and at least one to five years of safe driving experience may be required
- on-the-job training that may take up to three months to complete
- basic first aid, which may be included in on-the-job training
- medical examination
- criminal record check

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

***Certification:***

***Voluntary*** certification as a **Certified Professional Bus Operator CPBO** is available through the *Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada MCPCC*.

Requirements include:

- training received through an Accredited Training Program, OR evidence of completed training, which meets the National Occupational Standards
- minimum three years bus operator experience

More information:

- **Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada MCPCC**  
<https://www.buscouncil.ca/certification/en/index-bus-operator.php>

## 6. How Do I Find A Job?

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

- *Work for bus companies, local governments, and school boards*

### **Bus drivers:**

- *work for urban transit systems, school boards or transportation authorities and private transportation companies*

### **Subway, light rail transit & streetcar operators:**

- *work for urban transit systems*

### **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**

- **Translink** – Public Transportation Services including Coast Mountain Bus Company, Skytrain, West Coast Express Rapid Transit and HandyDart  
<https://www.translink.ca/about-us/careers.aspx>  
<https://www.translink.ca/about-us/careers/bus-operator-opportunities> (Bus Driver Career Opportunities)
- **Indeed.ca**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)  
<https://ca.indeed.com/Bus-Driver-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>  
<https://ca.indeed.com/Tour-Driver-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>
- **Talent.com**  
<https://ca.talent.com/>



- **BC JobConnect**

<https://www.bcjobconnect.ca> \*\*must have permanent resident number\*\*

newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers

### ***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 bus companies. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **go2HR Tourism Companies**

<https://www.go2hr.ca/companies>

Filter by Sector – Transportation

- **Personnel Guide to Canada's Travel Industry**, *online directory of Canadian companies in the hospitality, travel and tourism industry*

<http://www.personnelguide.ca/>

- try browsing through 'Motor Coach Tour Operators'
- also available in print at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resource, 338.479 P46

- **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 'bus' and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings (you can also try 'tour bus' or 'school bus'). 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**

- **Volunteer BC**

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

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<http://govolunteer.ca/>

- **Meals on Wheels Programs – Volunteer Drivers**

Many communities throughout BC offer a 'meals on wheels' program that delivers hot nutritious meals to those who cannot cook for themselves. *Meals are delivered by volunteer drivers.* For example,

- **Vancouver Health & Home Care Society of BC, Meals on Wheels,**

<https://www.carebc.ca/volunteering.html?gclid=CIfxt9H57ckCFZRffgodexwM8Q>

- **Burnaby: Meals on Wheels**

<http://burnabymeals.ca/volunteer-or-donate/>

- **Surrey / North Delta: Meals on Wheels**

<https://www.sndmow.com/>

- **Seniors on the Move Volunteer Drive Programs**

<https://www.seniorsonthemove.org/volunteer-ride-programs>

*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?

Advancement into supervisory or management positions, or into non-driving occupations such as dispatcher, safety officer or driving trainer, is possible with additional training or experience.

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada MCPCC: Drive a Bus**  
<https://www.buscouncil.ca/driveabus/eng/>
- **Motor Coach Canada**  
<https://www.motorcoachcanada.com/>

- **Passenger Transportation, Government of British Columbia**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/vehicle-safety-enforcement/services/passenger-transportation>
- **ICBC Driver Licensing**  
<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/types-licences/Pages/Licence-classes-and-types.aspx> [click on 'Commercial Licenses' and then scroll down to 'Class 2']

### **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 <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.*