

Butchers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Retail & Wholesale Butchers [NOC 2021: 63201 / NOC 2016: 6331]

Industrial Butchers [NOC 2021: 94141 / NOC 2016: 9462]

May also be called:

- Meat Cutter
- Industrial Meat Cutter
- Meat Trimmer
- Sausage Maker
- Meat Boner

1. What Would I Do?

There are three main types of butchers:

- The first type of butcher works for wholesalers and supermarket chains. You cut large pieces of meat into steaks and chops, shape and tie roasts, and grind beef for sale as chopped meat. You may also package, price and attractively display meat items
- The second type of butcher works in meat shops or markets and has direct contact with customers. You help customers choose meats and prepare special requests. You also weigh the meat, price it, and prepare specialty cuts.

- The third type of butcher works in meatpacking plants, where you slaughter large animals such as cattle and pigs, and cut the large segments of meat into smaller portions. You may work on an assembly line, and be responsible for a particular cut of meat. This type of work involves little contact with the public.

All types of butchers are responsible for ensuring meat quality, and maintaining approved sanitation and safety programs.

Your duties as a **Butcher & Meat Cutter** include:

- cut, trim and prepare standard cuts of meat, poultry, fish and shellfish according to customer orders
- grind meats and slice cooked meats using power grinders and slicing machines
- prepare displays of meat, poultry, fish and shellfish
- shape, lace and tie roasts and other meats, poultry or fish

Your duties as an '**Industrial butcher**' may include:

- skin, clean and trim carcasses and remove bones from meat
- split carcasses into smaller portions for handling
- cut meat and poultry into specific cuts for institutional, commercial or wholesale use
- slaughter livestock using stunning devices and knives
- may slaughter cattle, calves and sheep as set out by religious laws

More information:

- **WorkBC Profile for Butchers, Meat Cutters – Retail & Wholesale**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx> [Search Butchers]
- **WorkBC Profile for Industrial Butchers & Meat Cutters**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx> [Search Industrial Butchers]
- **Career Cruising (profile for 'butcher')**
<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?

Butchers must:

- *keep work areas clean and sanitary*
- *follow safety procedures*
- *be able to work with machinery in a challenging environment*
- *have familiarity with food handling, food safety, food preparation and presentation*
- *have good vision and hand-eye coordination*
- *physical strength and stamina*
- *have excellent personal hygiene*

As a butcher you'll be on your feet for most of the workday. You require physical strength for lifting heavy pieces of meat, so general good health is essential. Good hand-eye coordination is also important as you will work with sharp instruments such as knives and saws in addition to other meat cutting machines.

You may work behind the scenes in a refrigerated room preparing cuts of meat for display, or behind a retail counter sharing your expert knowledge and filling orders.

Butchers who work in smaller stores have more varied work and more contact with the public than those in large wholesale firms, so good customer service is important.

It's a good career choice for someone who likes a fast-paced environment, likes working with people, and enjoys working as part of a team.

Sources:

- Go2HR: Meatcutter
<https://www.go2hr.ca/special-order-meatcutter-training-in-demand>
- Meatforce: Canadian Professional Meat Cutters Association (CPMCA)
<https://meatforce.ca> and <https://meatforce.ca/careers/retail-meat-cutter/>
Career Cruising (profile for 'butcher')

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the annual **median salary** for **butchers and meat cutters** is \$35,455, with hourly wages ranging from \$15.20 to \$27. The annual **median salary** for **Industrial butchers and meat cutters** is \$41,712, with hourly wages ranging from \$15.20 to \$24.

Your wage depends on experience, skill level, type of butcher and region of the province.

In BC's regions, **retail butchers** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	15.20	19.00	26.65
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	15.20	18.00	27.10
Thompson–Okanagan Region	15.20	19.00	26.65
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	15.20	19.00	26.65

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

In BC's regions, **industrial butchers and meat cutters** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	15.20	20.00	23.75
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	18.46	20.00	24.00

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

Many butchers receive benefits along with their pay such as vacation time, paid sick leave, and dental coverage. Butchers who work at grocery stores or plants are often in a union. These workers have their wage rates and benefits negotiated for them by union representatives.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

In British Columbia, there is a high demand for butchers in all areas of this industry.

Many experienced butchers are due to retire in the next few years. Changing consumer tastes for specialty meats, high-end butcher shops and naturally-raised products are also increasing demand for trained meat cutters.

Employment Outlook, Butchers & Meatcutters

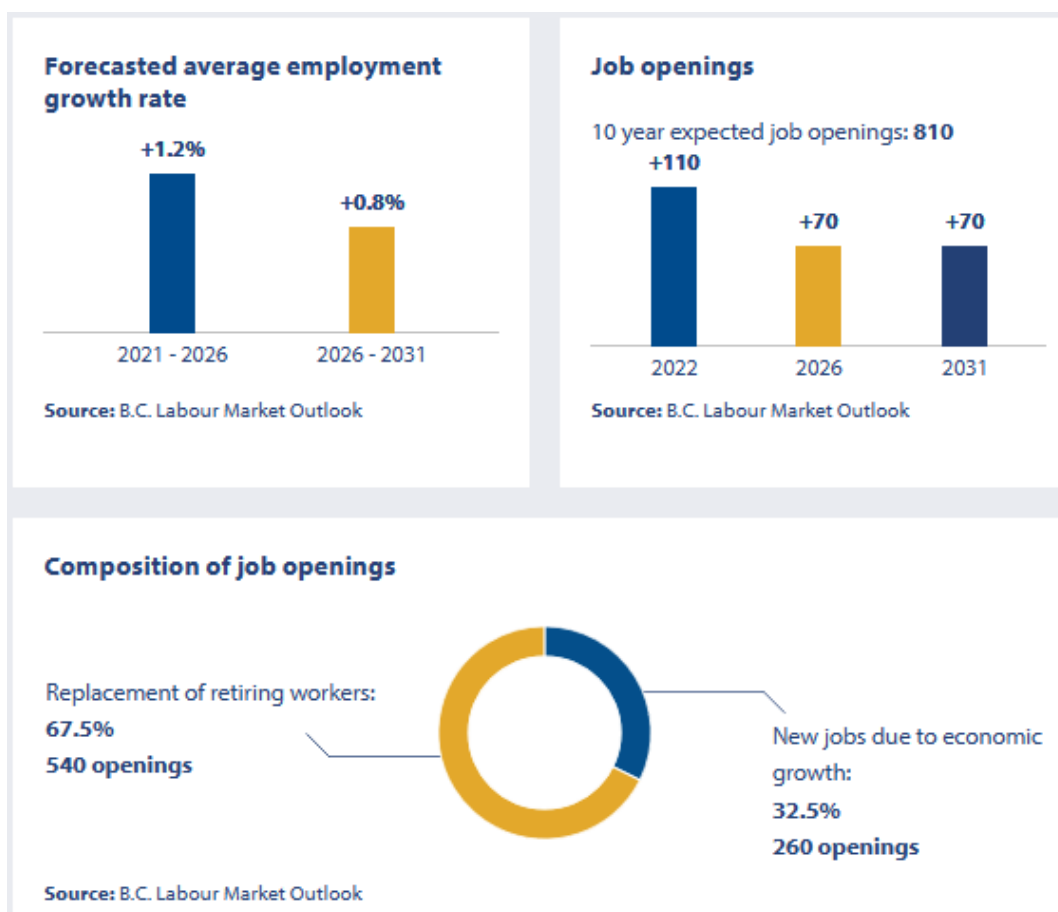
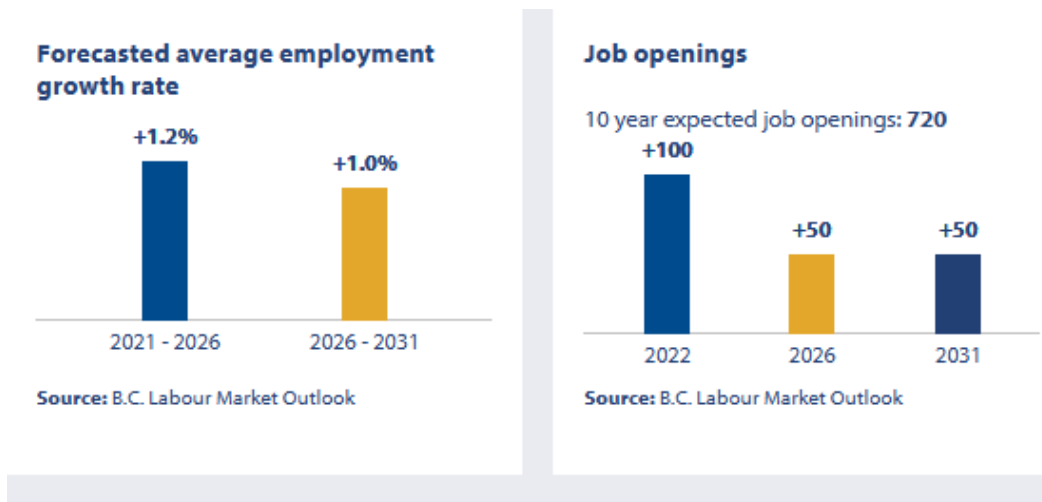


Chart from WorkBC Career Profile

Employment Outlook, Industrial Butchers



Composition of job openings



Chart from WorkBC Career Profile

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles
- Go2HR
- Meatforce.ca: Canadian Professional Meat Cutters Association (CPMCA)

5. How Do I Become A Butcher?

Butchers usually require:

- completion of high school
- completion of a meat cutting training program
- or***
- completion of a meat cutting apprenticeship *may be required*
- successful completion of BC FoodSafe program may be required

In some cases on-the-job training may be provided instead of formal education.

You can find employment as a butcher without prior training. However, many employers prefer to hire applicants with some post-secondary training in meat cutting. Another way to enter the trade is through a 1 to 3-year apprenticeship.

In British Columbia, trade certification for butchers is available, but *not mandatory*. For more information about apprenticeship programs and certification see:

- **Industry Training Authority - Meatcutter**
<https://www.itabc.ca/program/meatcutter>
- **Training & Education. Meatforce.ca:** Canadian Professional Meat Cutters Association (CPMCA)
<https://meatforce.ca/education/>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where do Butchers Work?

Butchers work in a variety of settings including:

- Retail supermarkets & grocery stores
- Independent meat shops (butcher shops)
- Wholesalers
- Meat processing and packing plants

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

- **Meatforce.ca:** Canadian Professional Meat Cutters Association (CPMCA)
<https://meatforce.ca/careers/job-postings/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **Neuvoo.ca**
<https://neuvoo.ca/>
- **Go2HR Jobs**
<https://www.go2hr.ca/jobs>
- **BC JobConnect**
<https://www.bcjobconnect.ca> **must have permanent resident number**

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 butchers in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Directory of Retail Chains in Canada**

Includes contact information for large supermarket chains in BC.

Available at the Central Library. C380 D5983

- **Go2HR – Company Directory**

<https://www.go2hr.ca/companies> [search Butcher]

- **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 "butcher" **OR** "meat cutting" and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings. 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.

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search 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 <http://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**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

People entering this occupation usually find employment in entry-level positions (i.e., clean-up or delivery person) in a large organization. If you are reliable and good with customers, you may be considered for an apprenticeship.

Qualified butchers and meat cutters who have experience may progress to supervisory positions in large organizations, including department managers, in-store supervisors, operations managers or company managers. It is also possible to do specialty consulting, become the owner-operator of a smaller store or custom meat operation, or work as a meat inspector in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Industrial meat cutters may progress to inspecting, testing and grading jobs.

Sources:

- WorkBC and Career Cruising

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Canadian Professional Meat Cutters Association**
<https://meatforce.ca/>
- **Retail Meat Processing Program. Thompson Rivers University**
<https://www.tru.ca/culinary-arts/meatcutter.html>
- **Industry Training Authority of BC**
<https://www.itabc.ca/>
- **Equity Seeking Groups in Trades Training, Industry Training Authority of BC**
<https://www.itabc.ca/young-adults-and-equity-seeking-groups-trades-training>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

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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/>.



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