

Construction Trades Helpers & Labourers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Contents

1. What Would I Do?	2
2. Am I Suited For This Job?.....	3
3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?	4
4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?	5
5. How Do I Become A Construction Trades Helper / Labourer?	6
6. How Do I Find A Job?.....	7
7. Applying for a Job	10
8. Where Can This Job Lead?.....	10
9. Where Can I Find More Information?	11

Construction Trades Helpers & Labourers **[NOC 2021: 75110 / NOC 2016: 7611]**

May also be called:

- construction craft worker
- carpenter helper
- flagperson / /flagger
- roofer helper
- plumber helper
- demolition worker

1. What Would I Do?

Construction Trades Helpers / Labourers carry out a range of practical tasks to help tradespersons on construction sites and in quarries and surface mines. Your duties can change daily and vary according to the type of site you are working on.

Some of your main tasks include:

- load and unload construction materials, and move materials to work areas
- put up and take down concrete forms, scaffolding, ramps, catwalks shoring and barricades at construction sites
- mix, pour and spread materials such as concrete and asphalt
- help tradespersons such as carpenters, bricklayers, cement finishers, roofers and glaziers in construction activities
- help heavy equipment operators secure special attachments to equipment

- guide operators as they move equipment
- assist in lining up pipes and work on other activities during oil and gas pipeline construction
- help with drilling and blasting rock at construction sites
- remove rubble and waste at construction sites

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Construction Trades Helper & Labourer**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- **Career Cruising (Profile for Construction Labourer)**
<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?

Construction Trades Helpers & Labourers:

- *should enjoy working outdoors*
- *should be physically fit and strong and have excellent stamina*
- *enjoy using hand and power tools*

You should be prepared to work in all kinds of weather. You must be able to work well as part of a team and be able to follow instructions. A good base knowledge of power tools and machinery is helpful.

Worksites are dirty and noisy, and there is some risk of cuts and scrapes, falls, and strains. You may be expected to work at heights on ladders and scaffolding. Being safety conscious is essential.

The standard work week for trades helpers and labourers is 40 hours (8 hours a day, 5 days a week). As with many careers in construction, there are peak periods that will require you to work overtime.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the annual median salary for **construction trades helpers / labourers** is approximately: \$41,712. Your wages are affected by location, employer, and the amount of work you can find each year.

In BC's regions, construction trades helpers / labourers can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	16.00	20.00	31.00
Cariboo Region	15.65	20.00	30.00
Kootenay Region	16.00	20.00	31.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	17.00	20.77	30.00
North Coast Region	16.00	20.00	31.00
Northeast Region	17.00	24.00	31.72
Thompson–Okanagan Region	17.00	20.00	27.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	15.65	19.00	31.00

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

Some construction labourers belong to a union. This means that your wage rates and benefits are negotiated on your behalf by union representatives.

Unionized workers may also have access to benefits, such as life and health insurance, and paid sick leave.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

There are currently 23,800 people employed as construction trades helpers in BC. Industry sources say that new technologies and opportunities to learn are important for individuals in this job.

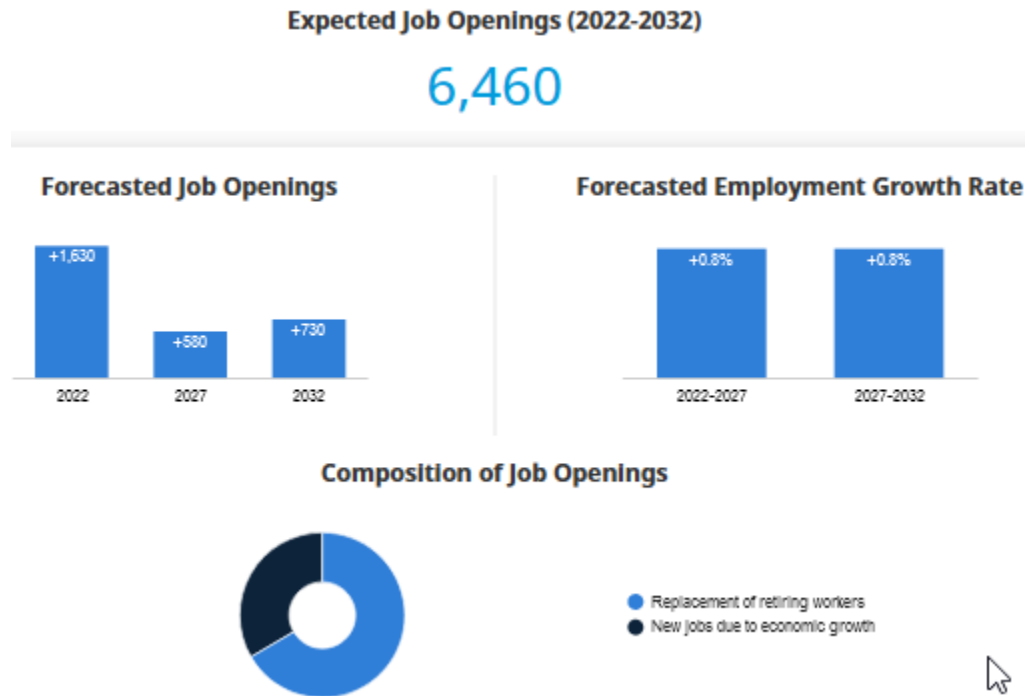


Chart from WorkBC

Source: WorkBC

5. How Do I Become A Construction Trades Helper / Labourer?

Although there are no formal requirements to work as a **Construction Trades Helper/Labourer**, employers may prefer you to have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Some previous experience may be requested by employers. On the job training may be provided.

You can work towards voluntary certification as a **Construction Craft Worker** – this requires completion of a two year education and apprenticeship program through SkilledTradesBC. Requirements to enter the program include **minimum** of Grade 10 Math, English and Science; Grade 12 graduation is preferred.

The program includes approximately 8 weeks of technical training (over 2 years) and 4000 hours of work based training.

Construction Craft Worker is an Inter-provincially recognized Red Seal trade. With a Red Seal, you can work in this trade anywhere in Canada.

More information:

- **SkilledTradesBC – Construction Craft Worker (Labourer)**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/construction-craft-worker-labourer>
- **Red Seal Program**
<https://www.red-seal.ca>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Construction trades helpers / labourers & Construction Craft Workers work in a variety of settings including:

- *Residential construction*
- *Commercial & industrial construction*
- *Road, sewer and bridge construction*
- *Heavy construction projects in the mining and LNG (liquefied natural gas) industry*

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

- **Construction Job Centre**
<https://www.constructionjobcentre.ca>
- **Vancouver Regional Construction Association VRCA – Job Centre**
<https://vrca.ca/jobs-careers/>
- **Indeed.com**
<https://ca.indeed.com/>
- **BC JobConnect**
<https://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 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 construction trades helpers / labourers in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **British Columbia Construction Association Member Directories**
<https://bccassn.com/about-bcca/regional-associations/>
- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**
<https://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members/>
- **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 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.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**

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

- **Volunteer Connector**

<https://www.volunteerconnector.org/>

- **Habitat for Humanity**

<https://www.habitatgv.ca/applytovolunteer>(can volunteer at construction sites or at ReStores)

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?

Depending on your area of expertise and skill, you may transfer into positions in carpentry, concrete masonry, or scaffolding.

With experience and additional training, you can also move into more senior positions, including supervisory roles such as foreperson.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

<https://www.stepbc.ca/job-seeker/>

STEP is a no-fee employment program that helps skilled workers get jobs in the construction industry

- **SkilledTradesBC**

<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>

- **Careers in Construction**

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca>

- **BC Construction Association**

<https://bccassn.com/>

- **Vancouver Regional Construction Association**

<https://vrca.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/>.