

Crane Operators

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Crane Operators

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May also be called:

- boom truck operator
- tower crane operator
- hoist operator
- dragline operator
- hydraulic crane operator
- mobile crane operator

1. What Would I Do?

You operate cranes to lift or move machinery, equipment and other large objects at construction sites, ports, railway yards, mines and other industrial locations. In BC there are three main types of cranes that you can operate:

Tower Crane Operator: you operate a non-moving crane with an extremely long vertical mast. Tower cranes are used in construction of large structures such as bridges and hi-rise buildings.

Boom Truck Crane Operator: you operate a large construction vehicle that has a crane at the rear of the truck in order to lift heavy items onto the truck bed.

Mobile Crane Operator: you operate a crane designed to travel to different parts of a job site.

You will perform some of the following duties:

- operate mobile, tower or hydraulic cranes to lift equipment and materials
- do pre-operational inspection and calculate crane capacities and weight to prepare for rigging and hoisting
- run pile driving cranes to provide support for buildings and other structures
- operate cranes equipped with dredging attachments to dredge waterways
- operate gantry cranes to load and unload ship cargo at port side
- run locomotive cranes to move objects and materials at railway yards
- run offshore oil rig cranes to unload and reload supply vessels
- operate cranes mounted on boats or barges to lift, move and place equipment
- run dragline cranes to expose coal seams and ore deposits at open pit mines

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Crane Operator**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- **BC Association for Crane Safety**
<https://bccranesafety.ca/crane-classifications/>
- **Career Cruising [Profile for Crane Operator]**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Crane Operators must

- be able to handle the stress of responding to hand signals and/or radio instructions while manipulating multiple controls in situations that often have slim margins for error
- be mechanically inclined
- be comfortable with computers
- have good hand-eye coordination and good vision
- have good depth perception

You need to be able to handle stress and be willing to work long, hard hours. You need to be able to get along well with others, think for yourself and work independently. It also helps to come from a background where you are already used to being around heavy equipment.

Sources:

- BC Association for Crane Safety <https://bccranesafety.ca/learn/>
- WorkBC Career Profile for Crane Operator

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the annual median salary for crane operators is \$64,654. Your wage depends on the type of crane you operate, number of hours worked and region of the province.

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

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	22.10	39.00	47.00
Kootenay Region	22.10	39.00	47.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	24.00	35.66	48.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	26.00	42.00	52.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	25.00	40.49	49.00

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

If you work full-time you may receive benefits such as dental coverage and vacation. Many crane operators belong to a union. This means that your wage rates and benefits are negotiated on your behalf by union representatives.

Like most construction jobs, opportunities are often great one year and poor the next. One year an operator may make a lot of money, while earnings the next year might be much less.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Over the long term, employment growth is expected to be average for crane operators. Employment demand depends largely on growth in the construction industry. Government funding for capital projects is expected to be an important source of industrial and engineering construction work, which may positively affect job opportunities.

Technological advances, such as the increased use of robotics and computer controls, will likely affect skill requirements, but will not change the overall demand for crane operators.

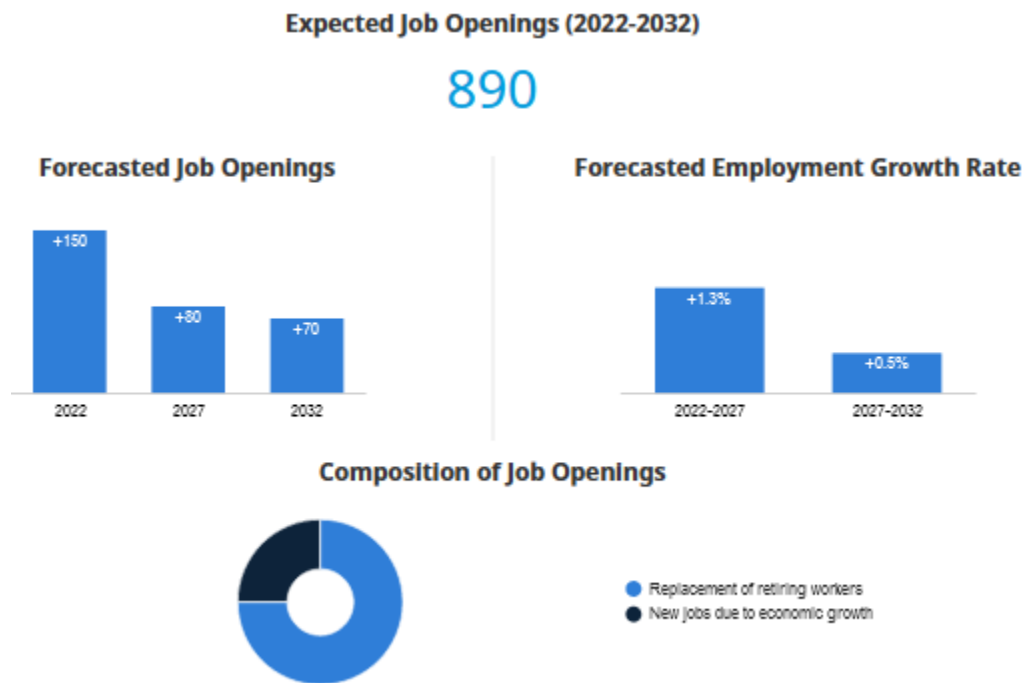


Chart from WorkBC

5. How Do I Become A Crane Operator?

To operate a crane in BC you must have a valid operator's certificate.

Most crane operators need to have documented proof that they are either certified or currently registered for assessment that will lead to certification by the **British Columbia Association for Crane Safety (BCACS)** in order to work in B.C. This regulation applies to: operators of boom trucks, mobile cranes, tower cranes and self erecting tower cranes.

The BCACS issues certificates to operators after they have successfully completed a competency assessment. No specific training program is required. However, to be eligible for certification, individuals should have completed either a three-year apprenticeship program through **SkilledTradesBC** or have a combination of work experience in the trade and some college or industry courses. In addition to SkilledTradesBC, competency assessments may also be performed by **Fulford Certification** <https://fulford.ca/>

There are 11 different crane operator certification categories depending on the type and lifting capacity of the crane you are operating.

Mobile and Tower crane operators are eligible for Interprovincial Standards Red Seal qualification through SkilledTradesBC. Red Seal qualification allows you to work in any province or territory in Canada.

For more information about apprenticeship programs and certification see:

- **BC Association for Crane Safety. Certification**
<https://bccranesafety.ca/get-certified/>
- **SkilledTradesBC**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/find-your-trade>

- **Fulford CraneSafe Certification**
<https://fulford.ca/bc-yukon/>
- **Red Seal Certification**
<https://www.red-seal.ca/>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where do Crane Operators Work?

Crane operators work in variety of businesses including:

- construction
- mining
- transportation and warehousing
- manufacturing
- railway companies
- cargo handling

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/>
- **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

- **WorkBC Job Postings**

<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs>

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 crane operators 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 "crane" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

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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**

<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, you can move up and become a supervisor or foreman. You may also choose to become an estimator or dispatcher. Occasionally people buy their own equipment and go into business for themselves as independent owner-operators.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

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

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

- **SkilledTradesBC**

<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>

- **BC Crane Safety Association**

<https://bccranesafety.ca/>

- **Careers in Construction**

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/crane-operator>

- **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/>.