

Gas Fitters & Pipefitters

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Gas Fitters [NOC 2021: 72302 / NOC 2016: 7253] & Pipefitters [NOC 2021: 72301 / NOC 2016: 7252]

Gas Fitters may also be called:

- gas servicer
- gas technician

Pipefitters may also be called:

- steamfitters
- marine pipefitter

1. What Would I Do?

Gas Fitters install, inspect, repair and maintain gas meters, regulators, gas lines and gas appliances and heating units. **Pipefitters** design, assemble, install, maintain, troubleshoot and repair pipes carrying water, chemicals and fuel in heating, cooling, lubricating and other process piping systems. **Steamfitters are** pipefitters who specialize in high-pressure liquid or gas piping; you install, repair, and replace heavy pipes that can withstand higher pressure, and carry substances such as steam.

Some main tasks for all fitters (**Gas Fitter / Pipefitter / Steamfitter**):

- Read and interpret blueprints to determine the type and size of pipe to use
- Measure, cut, and assemble the pipes

- Weld, braze, solder and thread joints to join pipes and make sections of piping system
- Install and secure the pipes, supports, valves and control systems; test for leaks and other problems

Gas Fitters also:

- install and maintain gas meters and regulators and gas lines between gas unit and gas meter
- install, maintain and service gas heating units and their components, such as burners, valves and automatic controls
- repair and service gas appliances
- attend to gas escape calls and help with the investigation of gas fires and explosions

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profiles**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
 - *Steamfitters, Pipefitters & Sprinkler System Installers*
 - *Gas Fitters*
- **Career Cruising**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profiles for Steamfitter & Pipefitter]
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
- **Careers in Construction**
 - *Gas Fitter*
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/gasfitter>
 - *Steamfitter/Pipefitter*
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/steamfitterpipefittersprinkler-system-installer>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

As a pipefitter/steamfitter/gas fitter, you are physically fit, comfortable with heights, able to read blueprints, and have good hand-eye coordination and good stamina.

Gas Fitters may work indoors or outdoors. You often work independently, but will interact with customers on most maintenance and repair jobs.

Pipefitters/Steamfitters may work both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor work environments may be noisy and dirty, and you may be exposed to unfavourable weather conditions. Some workers may be required to travel or temporarily relocate to remote locations while working on particular projects.

Gas fitters, pipefitters and steamfitters are often required to work at heights from scaffolds and ladders. You may also be required to carry heavy items, such as pipes, during their workday. Work may also be conducted in cramped and awkward spaces.

Sources:

- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for Pipefitter & Steamfitter)
- WorkBC Career Profiles
- Careers in Construction, Profiles: Gas Fitter and Steamfitter/pipefitter

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for *pipefitters and steamfitters* is \$80,421. The median annual salary for *Gas Fitters* is \$70,910.

Annual income varies depending on the number of hours you work in a year. The amount of work available is largely determined by the economic situation of the area. In addition to salary, full-time employees may also receive benefits such as paid vacations, medical and dental benefits, and pension plan contributions.

Sources: WorkBC Career Profiles & Career Cruising

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In BC's regions, **Pipefitters and Steamfitters** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	22.50	38.71	47.00
Kootenay Region	26.20	40.00	47.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	21.00	35.81	47.19
Northeast Region	23.75	30.00	40.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	25.00	40.14	51.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	24.83	40.52	46.35

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

Gas Fitters can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	31.00	35.00	43.98
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	31.00	35.00	43.98
Thompson–Okanagan Region	31.00	35.00	43.98

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

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

The demand for **steamfitters and pipefitters** in B.C. is driven largely by the construction industry. About one-half of new openings will result from new job growth. This industry has experienced rapid growth in its commercial and industrial sectors, creating a demand for skilled workers.

The demand for **gas fitters** in B.C. is driven largely by the construction and utility industries to complete residential, commercial, institutional and industrial projects.

In northern B.C., many steamfitters, pipefitters and gas fitters work in resource-based industries, such as forestry and mining, oil and gas.

Source: WorkBC Career Profiles

Employment Outlook for Gas Fitters

Expected Job Openings (2022-2032)

420

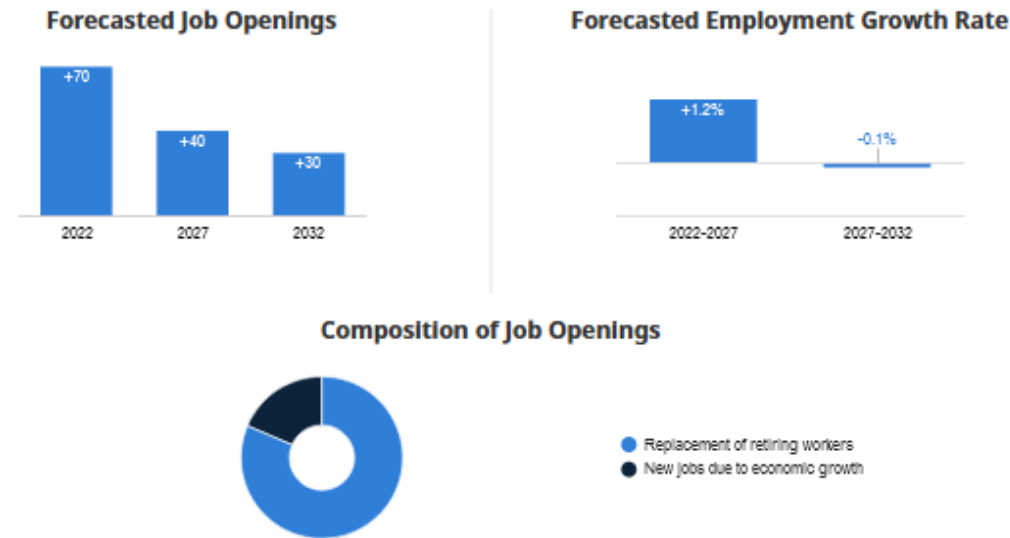


Chart from WorkBC

Employment Outlook for Pipefitters

Expected Job Openings (2022-2032)

820

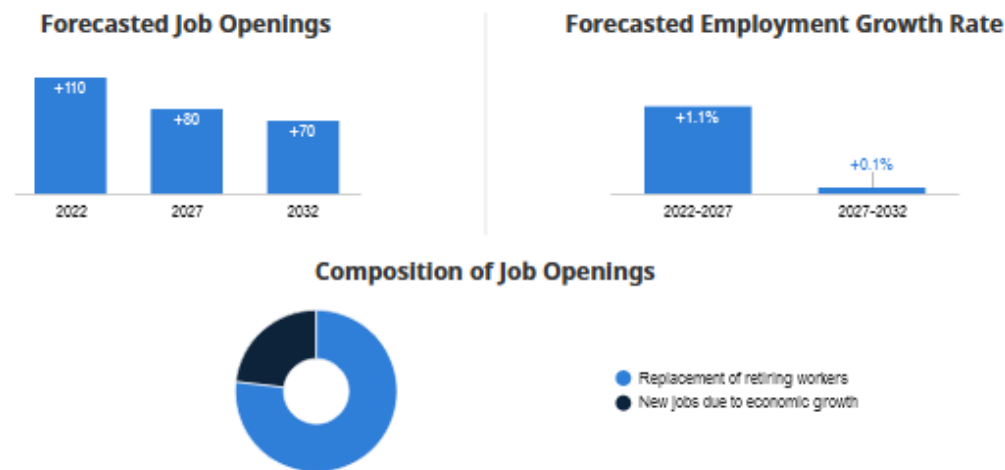


Chart from WorkBC

5. How Do I Become A Steamfitter, Pipefitter or Gas Fitter?

The B.C. government recently introduced a skilled trades certification requirement for steamfitters/pipefitters and gas fitters. This means you must become certified or register as an apprentice with *Skilled Trades BC* to be legally able to work in these trades.

Steamfitters and **Pipefitters**

- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- Certification as a Steamfitter/Pipefitter is required. This includes completion of a four-year apprenticeship program and successfully passing the final certification exam to earn a *Certificate of Qualification*. Work experience and in-class instruction are part of apprenticeship programs. To apprentice, you must be sponsored by an employer.

More information:

- **Steamfitter/Pipefitter, Skilled Trades BC**
<https://www.skilledtradesbc.ca/program/steamfitter-pipefitter>

Gas Fitters

- Grade 10 or equivalent is required to work as a gas fitter in B.C. Completion of secondary school is preferred.
- Certification as *Gas Fitter Class A* [installation and alteration of any gas system, no loads or limits] or *Class B* [installation and alteration of any gas system, with limits] is required. This involves completing a two-year apprenticeship program in Gas fitters A and B.
- In addition, all gas fitters must hold a Class A or Class B gas fitter licence issued by Technical Safety BC.

More information:

- **Gas Fitter – Class A, Skilled Trades BC**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/program/gasfitter-class>

- **Gas Fitter – Class B, Skilled Trades BC**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/program/gasfitter-class-b>
- **Gas Fitter Certification, Technical Safety BC**
<https://www.technicalafetybc.ca/technologies/gas/gas-certification>
- **Gas Fitter Licence, Technical Safety BC**
<https://www.technicalafetybc.ca/technologies/gas/gas-licences>

Steamfitters/Pipefitters and Gas Fitters with significant experience in the trade may be able to challenge the certification exam to earn the Certificate of Qualification without completing a formal apprenticeship.

If you were trained outside of Canada and have never received certification from a Canadian jurisdiction you will likely need a full assessment of your qualifications. Contact Skilled Trades BC for more information:

- **Skilled Trades BC**
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/>

Steamfitters/Pipefitters and Gas Fitters [Class A] are Inter-provincially recognized Red Seal trades. With a Red Seal, you can work in this trade anywhere in Canada.

- **Red Seal Trades**
<https://www.red-seal.ca>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Steamfitters and pipefitters work in:

- *the maintenance departments of factories, manufacturing plants, commercial buildings or by pipefitting contractors*
- *may work on residential construction projects*

Gas Fitters work in:

- *gas utility companies and gas servicing companies*

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

- **Trades Training BC Job Board**
<https://jobs.tradetrainingbc.ca/>
- **Construction Jobs Centre**
<https://www.constructionjobcentre.ca/page/home.aspx>
- **Mechanical Contractors Association of BC (MCABC)**
<https://mcabc.org/jobs/find-a-job/>
- **WorkBC Jobs**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs>
- **Indeed.com**
<https://ca.indeed.com/>

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 steamfitters, pipefitters and Gas Fitters in Vancouver, the Lower Mainland or throughout BC. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**
<https://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members/>
- **Mechanical Contractors Association of BC (MCABC) Directory**
<https://mcabc.org/who-we-are/member-directory/>
- **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 “*gas fitters*” or “*steam fitters*” 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/>

- **Habitat for Humanity**

Volunteer at Habitat ReStores or Habitat Construction Sites

<https://www.habitatgv.ca/applytovolunteer/>

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>

- **Finding Apprenticeship Opportunities**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/finding-apprenticeship-opportunities>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **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, **steamfitters and pipefitters** can advance to supervisory positions or establish their own businesses.

With experience and additional training, **gas fitters** can move into supervisory positions, including foreman, maintenance manager or service manager. Some may decide to be self-employed and start their own contracting businesses.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

<https://www.stepbc.ca/>

STEP is a free employment program can help you find work in the construction industry

- **Careers in Construction**

<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-finder>

- **Careers in Energy**

<https://careersinenergy.ca/>

- **United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA)**

- **Local 170** <https://ualocal170.com/>
- **Local 324** <https://www.ualocal324.com/>

- **Trades Training BC**

<https://www.tradestrainingbc.ca/tradeprogams>

- **UA Piping Industry College of BC**

<https://uapicbc.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>