



# IMMIGRANTS & THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



## THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The construction industry in Burnaby, Metro Vancouver and British Columbia has experienced two decades of impressive growth, with no end in sight. The industry offers immigrants a wide range of employment opportunities, from entry-level labourers through skilled trades.

In this profile we look at businesses involved in constructing, repairing, and renovating buildings, undertaking engineering projects, and subdividing and developing land. The sector also develops a diverse range of energy and transportation infrastructure. Businesses or people in this industry may work independently or as sub-contractors.

In 2021, 215,800 British Columbians were employed in construction, representing 8.1% of provincial employment. Of the almost one million job openings forecast for B.C. in the 10 years leading up to 2031, about 8% (75,900) are expected in the sector. About 77% will replace retiring workers, with the other 23% to accommodate industry growth. Fully two-thirds of the jobs (75,900) will be located in the area described by Statistics Canada as Mainland:Southwest—essentially Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, but also including the Sunshine Coast and Whistler corridor.

<https://bccasn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/>

## THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IN BURNABY

Located near the geographic centre of Metro Vancouver, Burnaby provides an accessible and relatively affordable place to live, while offering many employment opportunities. The City of Burnaby continues to emphasize high-quality design and construction in new urban developments to ensure the overall quality of the community.

As one of the fastest-growing major municipalities in Canada, Burnaby's active real estate market has a major economic impact on Burnaby's economy. Burnaby is expecting a significant increase in residential and commercial buildings and continues to set a record pace for construction. As of November 15, the City had issued 1,133 building permits in 2022 for a value of over \$2 billion.

The City of Burnaby is planning for numerous large-scale industrial and transportation projects, while residential and commercial construction is also forecast to remain strong, leading to continued growth in employment.



# THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IN METRO VANCOUVER AND B.C.

Many immigrants working in the construction industry choose Burnaby as a place to live, due to its easy access to jobs throughout Metro Vancouver and the rest of British Columbia.

Currently there are reasons for optimism for the province's construction industry, but also some cautionary notes.

On one hand, all official forecasts point to continuing high population growth and construction demand. For example, the provincial government's WorkBC arm projects 75,900 job openings in the sector between 2021 and 2031, with 50,800 of those in Mainland: Southwest.

On the other hand, British Columbia Construction Industry statistics indicated a 2% drop in employment between 2021 and 2022. However, this was mostly due to supply chain disruptions, permitting delays and labour shortages, which in turn resulted in significant wage increases.

The general view remains that employment opportunities will continue to be strong, due to demographic considerations, population growth and the following list of very large, long-term projects currently underway.

Source: WorkBC Labour Market Outlook (2021 Edition)

## LARGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN BC:

1. Burnaby Hospital Redevelopment Phase I - \$577 million
2. The Broadway Subway Project - \$2.83 billion
3. LNG Canada Terminal - \$40 billion
4. Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion - \$12.6 billion
5. Four-Laning Highway 1 between Kamloops to Alberta - \$837 million
6. Site C Clean Energy Project - \$16 billion

## WHERE THE JOBS ARE:

The provincial government's WorkBC arm attempts to anticipate the kind of jobs that will be most in demand and where they will occur.

Geographically, the chart below shows the regions where jobs are most likely to be located. On a regional basis, openings are forecast to be roughly proportionate to population, with southern areas slightly favoured. For example, Mainland/Southwest is home to just over 60% of the province's population, but accounts for 67% of projected job openings.



# CONSTRUCTION IN BURNABY

Census 2021 shows 58.2% of Burnaby's labour force was employed, and 7.3% (9,805) of them worked in the construction sector, slightly lower than the 8% for Greater Vancouver area.

Building Permits and Value		
Year	Permits	Value
2022	1,133	2.11 billion
2021	1,092	1.02 billion
2020	1,007	1.45 billion
2019	1,116	1.22 billion
2018	1,520	1.69 billion
2017	1,649	1.05 billion

## NOTABLE CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS IN BURNABY

- Beedie Group: <http://www.beediegroup.ca/careers>
- Bosa Development Corp.: <http://www.bosadevpm.ca/>
- Belpacific Excavating & Shoring Limited Partnership: <https://www.belpacific.com/careers>
- Casa Madera Hardwood Floors Inc.: <http://www.casamaderafloors.com/>
- Dominion Masonry Ltd.: <http://www.dominionmasonry.com/contact.html>
- Gisborne Holding Ltd.: <https://www.gisborne.com/employment/>
- Houle Electric Limited: <https://www.houle.ca/overview/>
- Harbourview Electric Ltd.: <https://harbourviewelectric.com/employment/>
- Kiewit Canada Group: [https://kiewitcareers.kiewit.com/?utm\\_source=kiewit.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=domain\\_redirect](https://kiewitcareers.kiewit.com/?utm_source=kiewit.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=domain_redirect)
- Marine Roofing Ltd.: <https://marineroofing.com/contact/>
- Minhas Holding Inc.: <https://minhasholdingsinc.ca/contact-2/>
- Scott Construction Ltd: <https://www.scottconstructiongroup.com/careers/>
- T. Q. Construction Ltd.: <http://www.tqconstruction.ca/about-us>
- Ventana Construction Corporation: <https://www.ventanaconstruction.com/careers>

	Total labour force (15 years +)	Construction	% municipal share of Greater Vancouver Construction labour force
Greater Vancouver	1,435,305	114,600	100%
Vancouver	386,760	20,765	18%
Surrey	300,730	30,510	27%
<b>Burnaby</b>	<b>133,720</b>	<b>9,805</b>	<b>9%</b>
Richmond	105,145	5,290	5%
Coquitlam	79,140	6,805	6%





## HIGH OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS

The construction sector employs people in a wide range of occupations, involving different types of skills.

- Many are certified tradespeople and other skilled workers such as carpenters, electricians, and painters and decorators.
- Also common are trades helpers and labourers, and positions in management, business, finance and administration (e.g., contractors, supervisors).
- Construction workers may also be involved in operating, maintaining, and installing equipment.
- Skilled administrative and business occupations make up a smaller portion of the industry.



## RELATED REGULATORY BODIES AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Professional associations provide information about credentials and industry conditions.

- Architectural Institute of British Columbia [www.aibc.ca](http://www.aibc.ca)
- BC Industry Training Authority <https://www.itabc.ca/>
- British Columbia Technology Industry Association <https://wearebctech.com/>
- BC Construction Employers Building Relationships <https://www.clra-bc.com/>
- BC Construction Association [www.bccassn.com/](http://www.bccassn.com/)
- BC Construction Safety Alliance <https://www.bccsa.ca/>
- BC Infrastructure Benefit <https://www.bcib.ca/>
- BC Centre for Women in Trades <https://bccwitt.ca/>
- Construction Forecasts <https://www.constructionforecasts.ca/en>
- Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC <http://www.apeg.bc.ca/>
- Trades Training BC <https://www.tradestrainingbc.ca/>
- Vancouver Regional Construction Association <https://vrca.ca/>



## OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES AND PROFILES

The following websites provide a searchable selection of occupational guides.

- WelcomeBC – Work in BC <https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C>
- WorkBC Explore Careers <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre – Vancouver Public Library <http://pwp.vpl.ca/siic/>
- National Occupational Classification 2021 - <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>



# INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT CONSTRUCTION IN BC:

Some things you may not know about construction in B.C.

- In 2021, British Columbia's construction sector accounted for 9.7% of the province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for a total contribution of \$25.4 billion.
- Skilled worker shortages in British Columbia's construction sector continue to be a major issue, with a potential shortfall of more than 25,000 workers by 2028.
- The average weekly wage in British Columbia's construction sector was \$1,334 in October 2022, higher than the provincial average by 10%.
- The construction workforce has traditionally been male dominated, with only 14.6% of those employed in the sector being female in 2021.
- In 2021, 65.4% of the workforce in the construction sector was in the 25 to 55 years age range. Young workers (15-24 years) accounted for 14.3% of the construction workers, and workers over the age of 55 accounted for 20.3%.
- Majority of the construction labour force work full-time.
- Construction trades helpers and labourers accounted for 7.1% of the sector's workers in 2021.
- Self-employment is much more common in construction than in most other industries. About 30% of construction workers are self-employed, double the average for all industries in the province.
- Residential, commercial and institutional buildings are most likely to be built in the more densely populated areas of the province, while many heavy or engineering construction projects occur in more sparsely populated areas.
- November 30 is National Construction Day, when the sector "celebrates the dedicated, hard-working people instrumental in building and connecting our communities through infrastructure.

## HOW THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR COMPARES AS A JOB GENERATOR BY 2021



## RECRUITING IMMIGRANTS TO THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The construction sector is currently experiencing significant skills and labour shortages, which enhance employment opportunities, even as they threaten the industry's ongoing health. Traditionally many immigrants entered the sector as entry-level labourers—and demand remains high—but efforts to recruit skilled tradespeople have greatly increased. Pre-arrival, immigrants may wish to investigate the Integrating Newcomers program operated by the B.C. Construction Association. It attempts to match immigrants in the trades with construction companies seeking those trades and assigns immigrants a career coach to help ease credentials and relocation issues and aid them in finding the best fit.



# B.C. LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK

The British Columbia Labour Market Outlook (2021 Edition) provides a list of high-opportunity occupations for the Mainland / Southwest region, as shown in the table below.

Occupation	Provincial median hourly wage (2020)	Job openings in B.C. (2021-2031)
Civil engineers (NOC 2131)	\$41.83	3,375
Senior managers - construction, transportation, production and utilities (NOC 0016)	\$49.32	2,836
Electrical and electronics engineers (NOC 2133)	\$44.38	1,190
Mechanical engineers (NOC 2132)	\$37.50	1,699
Engineering managers (NOC 0211)	\$50.00	1,229
Purchasing managers (NOC 0113)	\$44.71	1,181
Architects (NOC 2151)	\$36.06	1,138
Utilities managers (NOC 0912)	\$61.30	553
Geological engineers (NOC 2144)	\$48.10	305
Other professional engineers, n.e.c. (NOC 2148)	\$43.27	292
Aerospace engineers (NOC 2146)	\$42.50	125
Home building and renovation managers (NOC 0712)	\$22.75	6,511
Construction managers (NOC 0711)	\$40.38	5,701
Electronic service technicians (household and business equipment) (NOC 2242)	\$26.00	2,392
Contractors and supervisors, heavy equipment operator crews (NOC 7302)	\$35.00	1,519
Contractors and supervisors, mechanic trades (NOC 7301)	\$39.65	694
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics (NOC 7312)	\$38.00	635

Click here to explore more career profiles in this sector, from job duties and wages to projected demand in your region. (<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>)



## JOB OPENINGS IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Region	Job Openings 2021-2031
B.C.	75,900
Mainland/Southwest	50,800
Vancouver Island/Coast	9,900
North Coast & Nechako	1,100
Cariboo	900
Kootenay	1,000
Northeast	1,400
Thompson-Okanagan	10,700

### TOP CONSTRUCTION TRADES OCCUPATIONS IN TERMS OF DEMAND OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS TO 2031:

- Carpenters
- Construction trades helpers and labourers
- Heavy equipment operators (except crane)
- Painters & decorators (except interior decorators)
- Construction electricians
- Construction millwrights
- Welders & related machine operators
- Plumbers
- Heavy-duty equipment mechanics
- Industrial electricians

Click here to explore more career profiles in this sector, from job duties and wages to projected demand in your region.

(<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>)

## USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

### Key Employment Programs and Services

#### WorkBC Employment Service Centres

- Burnaby – Edmonds <https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres/Mainland-Southwest/Burnaby-7297-Kingsway.aspx>
- Burnaby - Metrotown <https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres/Mainland-Southwest/Burnaby-4211-Kingsway.aspx>
- BC Construction Association-Integrating Newcomers (BCCA-IN) [https://bccassn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/#:~:text=The%20BCCA%20%E2%80%93%20Integrating%20Newcomers%20\(BCCA,in%20Canada%20%E2%80%93%20before%20moving%20here.](https://bccassn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/#:~:text=The%20BCCA%20%E2%80%93%20Integrating%20Newcomers%20(BCCA,in%20Canada%20%E2%80%93%20before%20moving%20here.)
- Career Paths for Immigrants (Construction & Engineering) <https://issbc.org/service-types/career-paths-for-skilled-immigrants>
- WorkBC Apprentice Services Centre <https://workbcapprenticeservices.ca/>

Burnaby has numerous employment programs and services for immigrants and refugees. A complete listing of currently available and free programs and services can be found on this site's Immigrant Programs and Services (<https://newtobc.ca/settlement-information-for-newcomers/immigrant-and-refugee-programs-and-services/>). Select Burnaby under communities, and Employment under categories, and browse through the various programs to find one that meets your needs.

