

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Construction Looking Forward 2008-2016 Key Highlights

Since the start of the millennium, British Columbia has led the country in construction employment growth.

- From 2001 to 2007, construction employment rose more than 50%, exceeding all other provinces. This resulted in large numbers of workers drawn into the British Columbia construction industry.
- The building boom was spread across all sectors, but new industrial and engineering construction activity accelerated in 2005.
- Construction employment growth exceeded labour force growth, reducing unemployment to the lowest levels recorded since the late 1980s, and likely the lowest ever. Measured at the summer peak, this suggests that needed workers were not available.
- The continuous surge in employment in the engineering and industrial trades will drive excess supply rates for construction trades even lower this year and next.

Recruiting difficulties and concerns about skills shortages will continue to be more severe in the trades focused on industrial and engineering projects. There are not enough workers in these trades to meet the building requirements over the next two years and as a result, the forecast calls for intense competition for these tradespeople.

These trades include the following:

- Managers and supervisors
- Boilermakers
- Construction millwrights
- Crane operators
- Heavy equipment operators and mechanics
- Insulators
- Ironworkers
- Steam, pipe and gasfitters
- Truck drivers
- Welders

As shown in the ranking table (over), several major projects end and labour market conditions will ease in British Columbia by 2010 and 2011. More normal recruiting will be possible in the second half of the forecast period.

These cyclical shifts will sustain the need for British Columbia industry and government investment in promotion, recruiting and training programs. Even as construction activity flattens out later in the cycle, increased retirement demand will call for large numbers of new workers into construction. From 2007 to 2016, retirement demand is estimated to require at least 26,500 new entrants, while new building will require an additional 21,000 workers for construction trades and occupations to reach the employment peak in 2009.

## MARKET RANKINGS FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boilermakers	4	3	5	3	3	4	3	3	4	4
Bricklayers	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Carpenters	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Concrete Finishers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction Managers	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Construction Millwrights and Industrial Mechanics (except textile)	4	4	5	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
Contractors and Supervisors	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	4
Crane Operators	4	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Drillers and Blasters – Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction	4	4	5	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Electricians (including industrial and power system)	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3
Elevator Constructors and Mechanics	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Floor Covering Installers	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Gasfitters	4	4	5	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Heavy Equipment Operators (except crane)	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy-Duty Equipment Mechanics	4	5	5	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Insulators	5	4	5	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
Ironworkers and Structural Metal Fitters	4	4	5	3	3	4	3	3	4	4
Painters and Decorators	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, Drywall Installers and Finishers, and Lathers	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanics	4	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and Commercial Installers and Servicers	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Roofers and Shinglers	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet Metal Workers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Steamfitters, Pipefitters and Sprinkler System Installers	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4
Tilesetters	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Trades Helpers and Labourers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck Drivers	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and Related Machine Operators	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	4	4	4

Source: Construction Sector Council.

### MARKET RANKINGS

- 1 Workers are available, excess supply is apparent and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets.
- 2 Workers are available to meet an increase in demand.
- 3 The availability of workers may be limited by large projects, industrial maintenance or other short-term increases in demand.
- 4 Workers are generally not available. Employers will need to compete to attract additional workers.
- 5 Workers are not available to meet demand. Competition for workers is intense and projects or production may be delayed or deferred.

Timely construction forecast data is available online at [www.constructionforecasts.ca](http://www.constructionforecasts.ca). Create customized reports on a broad range of selected categories within sector, trade or province covering up to 10 years.

The full report, *Construction Looking Forward, An Assessment of Construction Labour Markets from 2008 to 2016 for British Columbia*, is part of the Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information Program, and is available electronically at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).

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