



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Construction Looking Forward 2009-2017 Key Highlights

Construction labour markets in British Columbia are reaching a peak after a decade or more of strong growth. Thanks to governments' fiscal stimulus, the current economic downturn will be a soft landing for construction in contrast to the declining activity in other industries. While the downturn has taken its toll on residential and commercial construction markets, proposed major projects continue in the mining, manufacturing and utility industries.

Residential building peaked in 2007 and activity has been declining with associated weakness for trades and occupations working there. On a more positive note, the new federal government's home renovation tax credit will boost residential renovation activity this year.

Remaining momentum for industrial projects combines with the government's higher infrastructure and institutional construction projects to sustain employment growth in non-residential construction until 2010. The following trades and occupations will benefit the most:

- boilermakers
- construction estimators
- millwrights
- crane operators
- heavy equipment operators
- ironworkers
- truck drivers
- welders

As the stimulus from the Olympics and government programs ends in 2011, employment in all trades and occupations declines. Growth returns in 2013 as general economic activity improves, and exports and investment rise.

Recruiting conditions for most construction jobs will ease in 2009 and remain close to normal until the recovery in 2014 encounters the loss of baby boomers retiring later in the scenario. A select group of workers, including equipment operators and mechanics, truck drivers and ironworkers, are needed for the civil engineering projects that are often the focus of government stimulus in 2009-2010. Tighter markets will be an issue for this group.

The outlook for residential and non-residential construction investment in British Columbia, as well as the need to replace older workers who will be retiring, are the key drivers for construction trades demand. Construction employment is set to rise by about 6,400 jobs to meet the requirements attributable to the expected rise in construction activity. Over the near term, employment growth is driven by proposed increased infrastructure spending. Later in the forecast period, several major investment projects will contribute to growth, including numerous mining projects, a major industrial aluminum smelter expansion and continued investment in the utilities industry. By 2013, residential investment begins its recovery as the overall economy improves. The outlook also calls for the replacement of nearly 26,000 construction workers who are expected to retire over the forecast period.

The table (over) shows the labour market rankings for trades and occupations in British Columbia.

While much has changed in markets in the past year, the challenge of replacing the retiring boomers will remain, especially at the end of the scenario. Industry and government must sustain the traditional support systems for construction over the years to come. This support is essential to meet the challenges of volatile markets, increasing mobility, replacing skilled workers as they retire and improving skills.

MARKET RANKINGS FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boilermakers	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Bricklayers	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	4	3
Carpenters	4	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	3	4
Concrete finishers	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
Construction managers	3	3	4	2	2	3	4	5	4	4
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Contractors and supervisors	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Crane operators	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	4	3	4
Drillers and blasters – construction	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	4	3	4
Electricians (including industrial and power system)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Gasfitters	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Glaziers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Insulators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators and fitters	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	3
Plumbers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential home builders and renovators	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	4	4	4
Roofers and shinglers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tiles setters	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Truck drivers	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	4
Welders and related machine operators	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	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. 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 2009 to 2017 for British Columbia*, is part of the Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information Program, and will be available electronically at www.csc-ca.org later this summer.

For more information or copies contact

The Construction Sector Council
 220 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 1150
 Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5Z9
 Phone: 613-569-5552
 Fax: 613-569-1220
info@csc-ca.org

April 2009