



NOVA SCOTIA

Construction Looking Forward 2009-2017 Key Highlights

Construction activity will help Nova Scotia weather the recession, adding 1,400 new jobs in 2009 and 2010. Ongoing resource-related projects and government infrastructure activity are currently providing momentum in the non-residential sector. This work helps to offset the loss of jobs in residential building as housing starts decline. On balance, 2,400 non-residential jobs more than compensate for 1,000 lost jobs in residential.

Not all trades and occupations share in the opportunities. This division of work opportunities favours a small group of skilled industrial and civil trades (e.g., boilermakers, millwrights, equipment operators, ironworkers, truck drivers) and leaves other trades (e.g., painters, drywall installers, floor covering installers) vulnerable to job losses in housing. Some trades will have the skills and experience to move across sectors in search of work.

Markets weaken and employment falls in 2011 and 2012 as fiscal stimulus ends and major projects are completed. Later in the forecast period, moderate growth resumes and construction markets regain lost ground with total employment in 2017 close to current levels.

Overall, the current tight labour markets for selected industrial and civil trades will weaken in 2011. Otherwise, markets in the province are generally balanced over the forecast period. Nova Scotia avoids the volatility that will dominate construction in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Challenges for construction recruiters and industry stakeholders will be focused on the risk of losing skilled workers to jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador in the short term and to New Brunswick in the longer term. Towards the end of the forecast period, risks shift to replacing retiring workers. Even moderate annual employment growth of between 2% and 3% later in the scenario will require competitive efforts. Nova Scotia's total workforce will be flat or declining at that time and the industry must attract new recruits from a shrinking pool of youth. All trades and occupations face this challenge, with housing-related skills and experience needed to fill the larger share of new jobs, and key occupations with older age profiles filling in for retirements.

At a minimum, Nova Scotia will need 5,900 workers to replace retiring workers. Other than increased employment in 2009 and 2010 associated with the infrastructure stimulus, total employment remains relatively unchanged throughout the forecast period with net new employment up 600 workers by 2017 compared to 2008.

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

Industry and government must sustain the traditional support systems for construction across the scenario. This support is essential to meet the challenges of mobilizing for major projects, increasing mobility, replacing skilled workers as they retire and improving skills.

MARKET RANKINGS FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boilermakers	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
Bricklayers	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Carpenters	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Construction managers	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics (except textile)	4	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Crane operators	3	4	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	4
Electricians (including industrial and power system)	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	4	4
Insulators	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators and fitters	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
Painters and decorators	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
Plumbers	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential home builders and renovators	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Roofers and shinglers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Sheet metal workers	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Trades helpers and labourers	2	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	4
Truck drivers	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
Welders and related machine operators	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	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 Atlantic Canada*, 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

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