

SASKATCHEWAN

Construction Looking Forward 2008-2016 Key Highlights

A major challenge for Saskatchewan's construction industry over the next few years will be to meet the growing demand for new workers driven by a surge in industrial and engineering construction activity.

- Saskatchewan is competing with other provinces to find construction workers in many trades and occupations.
- Excess supply rates for construction trades dropped to record low levels in 2007 and remain extremely tight in 2008 and 2009.
- Construction employment grows steadily to a peak in 2010.
- Starting in 2011, the downturn in the construction cycle elevates the excess supply rates to levels that are still relatively low by historical standards.
- Replacement due to the retirement of older workers will be a challenge for some trades in the second half of the forecast period.

Work on a long list of major non-residential projects has begun or is planned for the next few years. Between 2008 and 2010, construction employment will increase by more than 14%, or 3,800 new workers. This is in addition to a similar increase in employment estimated for 2007 alone. This surge in construction employment growth will push excess supply rates to record low levels.

Recruiting difficulties and concerns about skills shortages will be more severe for the following trades:

- Boilermakers
- Construction managers and supervisors
- Crane operators
- Heavy equipment operators
- Heavy-duty equipment mechanics
- Ironworkers
- Welders

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, as shown in the ranking table (over). Former residents of the province are coming back, new immigrants are coming in and the number of apprenticeship programs and other training initiatives are on the rise.

Industrial and engineering construction activity is expected to peak in 2010 and then begin a gradual decline with the completion of known major projects. The forecast calls for employment to decline at a modest pace from 2011 to 2016 in line with other economic conditions and the end of major construction projects. Project plans, however, may well change in the second half of the forecast period and labour market conditions may adjust in the face of events.

There is a risk that the decline in construction activity from record levels might be interpreted as a signal for reducing initiatives to build and sustain a strong workforce. It is important, however, that investment in training, industry promotion and recruiting by the industry and government continues to ensure high productivity and quality on construction sites. This is especially true given the demand to replace more than 4,000 retiring workers over the next nine years.

MARKET RANKINGS FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN

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

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 2008 to 2016 for Saskatchewan*, is part of the Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information Program, and is available electronically at www.csc-ca.org.

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