



Occupational Outlook

Nova Scotia

2020-2021



About this Report:

Each year, ESDC/Service Canada undertakes analysis on occupational job prospects and wages across all regions of Canada. The results, published to www.jobbank.gc.ca, serve to support Canadians in making informed decisions on education, training and employment opportunities.

This report examines occupational employment trends in Nova Scotia arising from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on occupations that have been most impacted across various segments of the economy, as well as those in-demand by employers. Drawing on insights from various sources, the analysis offers considerations as to how job prospects will unfold in the year ahead.

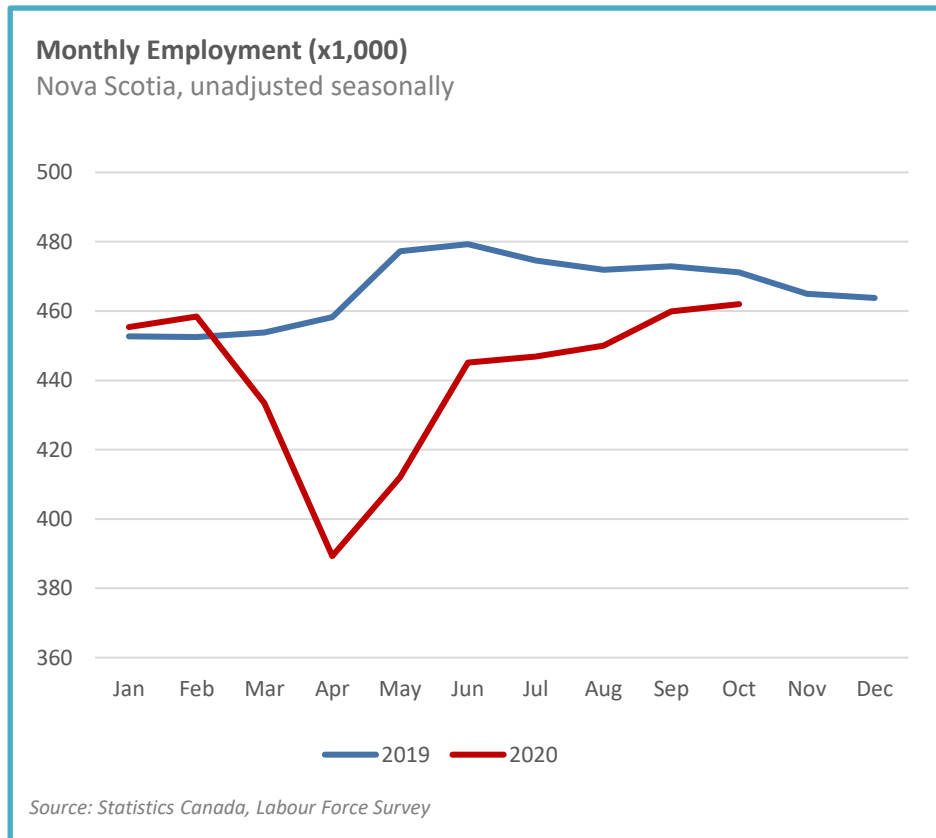
HOW COVID-19 IS AFFECTING THE LABOUR MARKET

The effects of COVID-19 on the labour market in Nova Scotia have been comparable to much of the rest of the country. During the spring, businesses in several industries were forced to suspend normal operations under a provincial Health Protection Act Order. Others opted to close as consumers avoided nonessential outings. This triggered a swift employment decline through March and April as 75,400 workers were laid off. Since then, the labour market has experienced an incomplete recovery: from April to October, employment went up by 62,900, equivalent to about 83% of the jobs shed in the spring. Total employment in October was 2.7% below the most recent pre-pandemic level measured in February.

Individual industries have experienced very different impacts from COVID-19. Retail trade, accommodation and food services, and information, culture and recreation were hardest hit by travel and physical-distancing restrictions. Layoffs have continued to occur following the “reopening” of the economy in June as businesses adjust to ongoing conditions. Building activity in the construction industry has been a bright spot, thanks to a surge of renovations, a tight housing market and several large highway, hospital, and school projects. Employment in this sector has not fully recovered yet, however. Many office-based occupations also fared well as employees were able to work from home.

Multiple variables will affect the pace of recovery. Vaccines are expected to become widely available in 2021, though precise timeframes are not yet known. Presently, some economic forecasts anticipate that the recession

in Nova Scotia will be less severe than in other provinces due in part to the low number of cases. However, a second wave of COVID-19 could prompt new restriction, such as those imposed on Halifax-area restaurants in late November. Furthermore, the full effect of travel restrictions—which have been instrumental in avoiding a second outbreak—is not yet known. For businesses that rely on tourism, the ability to remain solvent will be determined by the state of travel restrictions in 2021 and financial supports provided in the interim.



OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS

The occupational analysis is organized by broad occupation category, as listed below. Each section begins with some general analysis on the factors affecting employment in this group, followed by detailed discussion on a handful of specific occupations.

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0 – MANAGEMENT OCCUPATIONS

Management occupations accounted for approximately 33,000, or 7.3%, of Nova Scotia's total employment in 2019. Workers in this occupational category are employed in all sectors of the economy, so the extent to which they have been affected by COVID-19 depends mainly on the industry they work in. For example, managers in retail, food service, and accommodations—sectors that have been hit hard by closures and physical distancing requirements—are more likely to have been laid off at some point in 2020 than managers in health care and public administration. Looking forward, the same relationship applies: the number of managers in growing sectors such as information technology is expected to increase, while in industries that are struggling to adapt to the pandemic, further layoffs at the management level are possible. Further, this occupational category has the highest rate of retirements, which will continue to be a source of opportunities.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 0213: Computer and information systems managers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include computer systems design services (33%), wholesale trade (9%), and information and cultural industries (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 As with other positions related to computer and information systems, this occupation has not experienced wide-ranging layoffs as a result of COVID-19.
- 🍁 The office-based nature of this occupation has allowed workers to comply with physical distancing requirements by working from home or in an adapted office configuration.
- 🍁 Some workers in this occupation may be engaged in tasks or projects related to the increased popularity of virtual platforms for commerce and administration during COVID-19.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 In recent years, there has been strong employment growth in most occupations related to computer and information systems, reflecting the growing presence of the industry in the province's capital, Halifax.
- 🍁 Prospects in this occupation are favourable. Job applicants with more experience are preferred by employers, particularly at the management level.
- 🍁 Some employers have reported difficulty finding suitable candidates within their geographic area and have expanded their search to include remote workers in other provinces. This trend may allow N.S. jobseekers to work remotely for an out-of-province company.

NOC 0621: Retail and wholesale trade managers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 7,250 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other retail stores (66%), food and beverage stores (19%), and wholesale trade (12%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 During the spring, many nonessential retail stores closed as consumers were urged to avoid nonessential outings. Thousands of retail and wholesale trade managers were laid off.
- 🍁 While most nonessential retail establishments have since reopened, they must adhere to regulations concerning physical distancing, occupancy levels, and sanitization requirements. Some have also kept reduced business hours, lessening the number of staff needed.
- 🍁 With the exception of clothing and gasoline, sales values in most types of retail in Nova Scotia recovered by August. Employment has been slower to rebound, though by necessity, managers are among the first staff called back to work.
- 🍁 The effect of COVID-19 has varied by type of retail. Many grocery stores increased staffing in the spring as consumers stopped dining at restaurants and stockpiled supplies for a potential lockdown.
- 🍁 In response to a decrease in foot traffic and fewer tourists, some retail businesses have added or improved their online purchase and delivery options. This may have caused a change in the tasks and responsibilities of retail managers.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 In general, the number of retail establishments and employees has increased over time with population and income growth. At the same time, the growing popularity of online shopping—which has been accelerated by the pandemic—may erode demand and opportunities for managers in certain types of retail.
- 🍁 In recent years, retirements have been a major driver of job openings.

NOC 0631: Restaurant and food service managers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 3,550 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food services and drinking places (93%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Many restaurant managers were laid off from March until June, when dining rooms were ordered to close under the Health Protection Act Order. Some remained employed throughout this period if their restaurant continued to sell takeout or delivery.
- 🍁 Looking forward through the recovery period, the outlook for restaurant managers is uncertain. Many establishments have stated an inability to recover from lost revenue in the spring, and those reliant on seasonal summer revenue were further impacted by the decline in tourists this year. Some seasonal restaurants opted to close early, causing layoffs to occur sooner than usual.
- 🍁 In many eating establishments, managers have had to increase their own work hours to cover the tasks of other staff who have been laid-off. In some communities, the knowledge of longer hours and potential burnout has discouraged potential candidates from applying.
- 🍁 In the months following restaurants reopening, a number of permanent closures were announced. These may result in reduced demand for restaurant managers, persisting after the pandemic is over.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to COVID-19, the number of workers in food services rose during the previous several years. Demand has increased with population and income growth, as well as the emergence of food delivery services.

- 🍁 The potential for travel restrictions to extend into the 2021 tourism season presents a major risk and source of uncertainty for the food service industry. For many establishments, this scenario would greatly increase the likelihood of permanent closure and resulting layoffs.
- 🍁 High turnover is a contributor to vacancies in this occupation.

NOC 0632: Accommodation service managers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,700 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include accommodation services (67%), nursing and residential care facilities (11%), and arts, entertainment and recreation (8%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The number of tourists in Nova Scotia was much lower than usual in 2020 as a result of international and interprovincial travel restrictions. Many accommodations reported exceptionally low occupancy rates throughout the year, and several hotels in the Halifax area closed temporarily.
- 🍁 Some hotels and resorts were able to make up for the decline in revenue and layoffs by catering to tourists originating within the Atlantic Bubble.
- 🍁 Because of the temporary closures, some accommodation service managers were laid off, many of whom have since been rehired. Managers were less affected by staffing changes than those in front-end positions in the accommodations industry. However, some managers have experienced burnout from covering the duties of laid-off staff.
- 🍁 Accommodation service managers have experienced a change in tasks and priorities as hotels have complied with new sanitization, occupancy and physical-distancing requirements. Hotels have also been used by those entering the province from outside the Atlantic Region to complete their mandatory two-week isolation period.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Several new hotels have opened in recent years, particularly in the Halifax area, contributing to job opportunities for hotel managers.
- 🍁 The potential for travel restrictions to extend into the 2021 tourism season presents a major risk and source of uncertainty for the accommodations industry. For some establishments, this scenario would greatly increase the likelihood of permanent closure and resulting layoffs.
- 🍁 Competition for room nights from sharing economy services such as Airbnb may be reducing the demand for conventional accommodations.

1 – BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS

Business, finance and administration occupations was the second-largest occupational category in Nova Scotia in 2019, with 67,500 workers. Many jobs in this category can be conducted remotely, which has allowed workers to continue in their roles while complying with public health directions. However, this occupational category has not been entirely unaffected by the pandemic. Some office workers in administrative and support type roles are employed by businesses that were forced to close temporarily, such as retail stores, dental offices, and spas. Furthermore, some professional services establishments like accounting firms anticipated a loss of revenue and engaged in cost-cutting measures, which in some cases resulted in layoffs and lower earnings. In the longer run, technological developments may reduce the need for lower skill-level occupations, or increase the skill-level required for such occupations.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 1111: Financial auditors and accountants

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 5,300 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services (25%), nursing and residential care facilities (22%), and ambulatory health care services (7%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Overall, this occupation did not experience a large employment decline as a result of COVID-19. Many workers in this occupation were able to transition to working from home, permitting them to continue working while complying with physical distancing requirements.
- 🍁 In anticipation of declining revenue during the pandemic, some major employers of this occupation sought ways to reduce costs. In some cases, these measures included laying off a small percentage of staff.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment for this occupation has been fairly stable in recent years, and opportunities occur regularly given the large employer base.
- 🍁 Those with a CPA designation may secure employment more easily than those without, and are more likely to advance their career into management roles.
- 🍁 Upheaval among clients of financial services firms due to the pandemic may result in a greater demand for the services of this occupation and increase the number of opportunities.
- 🍁 Though most employment in this occupation is in Halifax, jobseekers may benefit from being willing to move to other areas of the province should an opportunity open up in a rural area.

NOC 1221: Administrative officers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 5,300 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include ambulatory health care services (11%), construction (9%), and other retail stores (7%).

- 🍁 Administrative officers often have managerial and oversight duties, including the planning, coordination, and analysis of projects and services. This occupation includes university admissions officers.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 A limited number of administrative officers were laid off in March and April due the closure of specific businesses and industries, the majority of whom have since been rehired. Because of its critical role in many businesses, this position is somewhat less vulnerable to reductions in staffing levels than front-line workers.
- 🍁 Employees in this occupation are spread across several different industries, some of which may have been affected more than others by COVID-19. For example, those in healthcare were less likely to have been laid off than those in retail or food services, but may have experienced a change in duties as the healthcare system prepared to receive COVID-19 patients.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Total employment in this occupation has been relatively stable in recent years. Looking forward, neither a large increase nor decrease is expected.
- 🍁 Vacancies created by retirements are a main source of opportunities. Presently, there is a large number of qualified jobseekers for vacancies in this occupation. Successful job applicants are likely to be distinguished by they amount of experience or industry-specific skills that they possess.

NOC 1241: Administrative assistants**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 3,450 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include elementary and secondary schools (11%), provincial and territorial public administration (8%), and universities (7%).
- 🍁 Administrative assistants perform a variety of administrative duties in support of managerial and professional employers. Secretary is a common job title in this occupational group.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 A moderate number of administrative assistants were laid off in March and April due the temporary closures of certain types of business. Many have since been rehired.
- 🍁 Workers in this occupation are spread across several different industries, some of which may have been affected more than others by COVID-19. Those in educational services and retail trade were more likely to experience layoffs than those in industries that continued to operate throughout the first wave of cases.
- 🍁 With the increase of virtual communication, sanitization, and occupancy restrictions due the pandemic, many administrative assistants have experienced a change in work tasks.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Total employment in this occupation has been relatively stable in recent years. Looking forward, neither a large increase nor decrease is expected.
- 🍁 Improvements in administrative software and other technological advancements have reduced the need for administrative assistants in some settings.
- 🍁 Vacancies created by retirements are a main source of opportunities. Presently, there is a large number of qualified jobseekers for vacancies in this occupation. Successful job applicants are likely to be distinguished by amount of experience or industry-specific skills.

NOC 1411: General office support workers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 5,350 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include hospitals (21%), federal government public administration (10%), and other retail stores (8%).
- 🍁 General office support workers perform a variety of administrative tasks such as preparing and filing documents, preparing invoices, processing mail, and communicating with clients. A common job title in this occupation is clerk.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 A moderate number of general office support workers were laid off in March and April due the temporary closure of certain types of business. Many have since been rehired.
- 🍁 Workers in this occupation are spread across several different industries, some of which may have been affected more than others by COVID-19. Those in hospitals and government organizations are far less likely to have been laid off than those in harder hit industries, such as retail.
- 🍁 With the increase of virtual communication, sanitization, and occupancy restrictions due the pandemic, many office support workers have experienced a change in work tasks.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Total employment in this occupation is expected to decline. Improvements in administrative software and other technological advancements have automated some of the simpler tasks performed by office support workers. As a result, the remaining positions have become more skilled.
- 🍁 Vacancies created by retirements are a main source of opportunities. Presently, there is a large number of qualified jobseekers for vacancies in this occupation. Successful job applicants are likely to be distinguished by amount of experience or industry-specific skills.

2 – NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Natural and applied sciences and related occupations, which employed 29,650 workers in 2019, have fared relatively well throughout the pandemic. Most employees in this category were able to continue working while complying with the Health Protection Act Order, and very few were affected by the targeted closures of certain types of business between March and June. Employment prospects have generally been good for professionals in various fields of engineering, and the number of workers in computer and information systems occupations has been steadily growing in Nova Scotia in recent years. With a few exceptions, broadly favourable conditions are expected to continue in this occupational category. The increase in remote work may provide jobseekers in Nova Scotia with a greater range of opportunities and, in some fields, exert upward pressure on local wages. Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 2171: Information systems analysts and consultants

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 4,050 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include computer systems design services (44%), wholesale trade (8%), and federal government public administration (7%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Relatively few workers in this occupation were laid off because of COVID-19. Many employees were able to transition to working from home or in office spaces adapted to meet physical-distancing requirements.
- 🍁 The widespread adoption of remote work has increased the number of opportunities for jobseekers in Nova Scotia to apply for jobs with employers in other provinces (and vice versa). This trend may exert upward pressure on wages in areas of the province where local businesses are now competing with employers in other cities for talent.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment in the information technology field has increased substantially in Nova Scotia in recent years. As such, many vacancies in this occupation result from employment growth. The majority of positions are in the Halifax region.
- 🍁 Prospects in this occupation are typically favourable. Industry growth has tended to absorb the supply of qualified university graduates, keeping the number of jobseekers per vacancy reasonably low.
- 🍁 While employers prefer workers with more experience and leading-edge skills, recent graduates should be able to find work with relative ease, particularly those coming out of co-op programs.

NOC 2173: Software engineers and designers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,850 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include computer systems design services (64%), information and cultural industries (6%), and computer and electrical manufacturing (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- ✿ Relatively few workers in this occupation were laid off because of COVID-19. Many employees were able to transition to working from home or in office spaces adapted to meet physical-distancing requirements.
- ✿ The widespread adoption of remote work has increased the number of opportunities for jobseekers in Nova Scotia to apply for jobs with employers in other provinces (and vice versa). This trend may exert upward pressure on wages in areas of the province where local businesses are now competing with employers in other cities for talent.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✿ Employment in the information technology field has increased substantially in Nova Scotia in recent years. As such, many vacancies in this occupation result from employment growth. The majority of positions are in the Halifax region.
- ✿ Prospects for employment in this occupation should continue to be favourable. In some areas of Nova Scotia where the supply of qualified applicants is insufficient, employers are recruiting from other provinces.
- ✿ Recent graduates of computer science programs should be able to find work fairly easily, even without much experience. Possessing a master's degree is an attribute.

NOC 2174: Computer programmers and interactive media developers**General information about this occupation:**

- ✿ In Nova Scotia, there were 3,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include computer systems design services (58%), information and cultural industries (12%), and wholesale trade (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- ✿ Relatively few workers in this occupation were laid off because of COVID-19. Many employees were able to transition to working from home or in office spaces adapted to meet social distancing requirements.
- ✿ The widespread adoption of remote work has increased the number of opportunities for jobseekers in Nova Scotia to apply for jobs with employers in other provinces (and vice versa). This trend may exert upward pressure on wages in areas of the province where local businesses are now competing with employers in other cities for talent.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✿ Employment in the information technology field has increased substantially in Nova Scotia in recent years. As such, many vacancies in this occupation result from employment growth, and there are regular reports of hiring difficulties from employers. The majority of positions are in the Halifax region.
- ✿ Employment prospects have been favourable in recent years and there is good indication this trend will continue.
- ✿ Jobseekers with more experience and a high level of specific or leading-edge skills will have a better chance of finding work. Among recent graduates, having completed a co-op program is also an asset.

NOC 2273: Deck officers, water transport**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 450 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include federal government public administration (43%), other transportation (36%), and support activities for transportation (7%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation did not experience widespread layoffs as a result of the pandemic. Most deck officers are employed on cargo ships, interprovincial ferries, or by federal government organizations such as the Coast Guard, which continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Some cargo shippers may have had a reduced need for deck officers throughout 2020 as the number of containers passing through the Port of Halifax declined somewhat.
- 🍁 Deck officers working for businesses which provide services to the Atlantic offshore oil industry may have been laid off as low oil prices prompted the cancellation or deferral of some planned projects.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation is relatively small, with no major increase or decrease in total employment expected.
- 🍁 Many workers in this occupation are approaching retirement age. Attrition will be the main source of vacancies.
- 🍁 Employers sometimes experience difficulty finding local jobseekers to fill positions and hire workers from outside Nova Scotia.

NOC 2282: User support technicians**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,250 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include computer systems design services (23%), business services (21%), and other retail stores (8%).
- 🍁 Many employers based within Nova Scotia specialize in client support related to the province's growing information technology industry.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Relatively few user support technicians were laid off because of COVID-19. Many employees were able to transition to working from home or in office spaces adapted to meet social distancing requirements. Some employees in this occupation were already permitted to work remotely prior to the pandemic.
- 🍁 There has been an increase in remote hiring in Nova Scotia by major e-commerce and online contact centre companies that are headquartered in other provinces or countries. Laid-off retail and food services workers may be suitable for these positions as they have customer service experience.
- 🍁 Some remote employers hiring in the province pay substantially more than the prevailing wage in this region. This trend may exert upward pressure on wages among local employers who are now in competition with companies based in regions with higher wages.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

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- 🍁 Employment in this occupation has been relatively stable in recent years, with most opportunities occurring because of turnover. However, the growth in remote hiring may result in a notable increase in the number of user support technicians.
 - 🍁 Jobseekers are encouraged to verify the reputability of remote employers before accepting a position.
 - 🍁 Being bilingual may improve prospects for jobseekers, particularly with government positions.

3 – HEALTH OCCUPATIONS

There were 45,850 workers in health occupations in Nova Scotia in 2019, representing nearly one-tenth of the provincial workforce. Strong demand for many of the occupations in this category existed prior to COVID-19, and the pandemic has only reinforced this trend. Employment in certain occupations increased this year as the provincial government set up networks for testing and tracing the virus. Some private long-term care facilities also hired additional staff to cover the increased number of absences expected when workers with symptoms self-isolate. Employment in this occupational category has an inherently higher personal health risk; during the first wave, several dozen workers contracted the virus after being exposed at work. Others experienced burnout from covering absent coworkers as well as the extra workload associated with enhanced sanitization requirements. Beyond the pandemic, major trends shaping this occupational category are the needs of the aging population, the transition to collaborative primary care, and the increasing popularity of homecare.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 3012: Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 11,100 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include hospitals (75%), nursing and residential care facilities (11%), and ambulatory health care services (9%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The demand for nurses has increased as a result of the pandemic. Many of the additional positions are the result of COVID-19 testing and tracing.
- 🍁 In March, dozens of nurses were hired to staff the 811 health information phone line, some of whom came out of retirement. In September, the provincial health authority created 100 more positions to support contact tracing.
- 🍁 Many nurses' tasks have changed because of the pandemic. Those employed in hospitals experienced varying workloads as non-urgent procedures were cancelled in the spring to prepare for an influx of COVID-19 patients. Though there were several hospitalized individuals during the first wave of cases, the number of COVID-19 patients did not strain nursing staff and resources in hospitals as expected.
- 🍁 Some nurses contracted COVID-19 due to workplace exposure, particularly in long-term care settings. Others voluntarily self-isolated from family members to reduce the risk of accidentally passing on the virus.
- 🍁 Some private online contact centres (unrelated to the provincial public health system) have been hiring nurses remotely to staff telehealth services.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 In general, demand for registered nurses in Nova Scotia is strong, due in part to the needs of an aging population. At the same time, the growth of total employment in hospitals and long-term care homes is sometimes limited by budget constraints.
- 🍁 Many unemployed nurses find employment easily, including recent graduates. However, those with less experience may fill casual positions at first, and may not immediately find an opportunity to work in their preferred branch of medicine.

- 🍁 In recent years, some rural areas have experienced a shortage of nurses severe enough to impact service provision and prompt recruitment outside of the province. A willingness to relocate may improve a jobseeker's prospects.
- 🍁 Collaborative care clinics employ an increasing number of registered nurses. In these clinics, nurses work alongside different health professionals and practitioners to provide primary care.

NOC 3233: Licensed practical nurses**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,750 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include hospitals (56%), nursing and residential care facilities (31%), and ambulatory health care services (10%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The demand for licenced practical nurses (LPNs), which was already strong, has increased as a result of the pandemic.
- 🍁 Amid outbreaks in long-term care homes, shortage conditions emerged as some LPNs were compelled to self-isolate. There have been reports of burnout as remaining staff were required to cover absent coworkers' shifts and manage additional tasks and stress associated with treating COVID-19 patients.
- 🍁 Some LPNs are employed at multiple long-term care facilities and hospitals. During outbreaks, the intention is to limit this practice as much as possible to avoid spreading COVID-19 between facilities. Having LPNs employed exclusively at one facility increases the number of workers needed, worsening the existing shortage.
- 🍁 In addition to an increased workload and change in tasks, some LPNs experienced impacts on their personal life because of the pandemic. Many chose to isolate from their household to avoid passing the virus from their workplace to family members. Some LPNs contracted COVID-19 as a result of workplace exposure.
- 🍁 Some private online contact centres (unrelated to the provincial public health system) have been hiring LPNs remotely to staff telehealth services.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to the pandemic, demand for LPNs was already strong. Jobseekers in this occupation should have little difficulty finding employment.
- 🍁 The range of duties of LPNs has expanded amid constraints on healthcare and long-term care budgets as well as shortages of other types of health practitioners. Many unionized LPNs were awarded a 12% retroactive wage increase as a result of having performed tasks above their pay grade for several years.
- 🍁 While the majority of LPNs are employed in hospitals, collaborative care clinics and long-term care tend to account for a large portion of job opportunities.

NOC 3236: Massage therapists**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,350 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include ambulatory health care services (90%), personal and laundry services (6%), and arts, entertainment and recreation (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 From March until June, many massage therapists were obligated to stop practicing under the Health Protection Act Order. Since reopening, massage therapists must comply with enhanced sanitization practices and other protocols to reduce the likelihood of spreading of COVID-19.
- 🍁 Massage therapists are reporting increased demand for services during the pandemic. This may be due in part to the ergonomic challenges encountered by those who have begun working from home. Increased demand and growing wait times may result in massage therapists working additional hours, potentially leading to burnout.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prospects in this occupation are favourable. The aging population and expanding private medical coverage may contribute to the growth in demand for massage services.
- 🍁 The shortage of massage therapists noted in rural areas indicates that jobseekers can improve their prospects by being willing to relocate for a position.
- 🍁 Turnover accounts for a large number of vacancies. Many massage therapists experience ergonomic problems caused by the physically demanding nature of the job within the first 10 years of practice and change careers.
- 🍁 Massage therapists benefit from acquiring new knowledge and complementary techniques to broaden their scope of services.

NOC 3413: Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 10,800 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include nursing and residential care facilities (58%), hospitals (15%), and ambulatory health care services (11%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The demand for this occupation has increased as a result of the pandemic.
- 🍁 Amid outbreaks in long-term care homes, shortage conditions emerged as some continuing care assistants (CCAs) were compelled to self-isolate. Burnout increased, as remaining staff were required to cover coworkers' shifts as well as manage the additional tasks and stress associated with treating COVID-19 patients.
- 🍁 Some CCAs are employed at multiple long-term care facilities and hospitals. During outbreaks, the intention is to limit this practice as much as possible to avoid spreading COVID-19 between facilities. Having CCAs employed exclusively at one facility increases the number of workers needed, worsening the existing shortage.
- 🍁 In addition to an increased workload and change in tasks, some CCAs experienced impacts on their personal life because of the pandemic. Many chose to isolate from their household to avoid passing the virus from their workplace to family members. It has been reported that some CCAs contracted COVID-19 as a result of workplace exposure.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to the pandemic, demand for CCAs was already strong. Jobseekers in this occupation should have little difficulty finding employment, as there is usually a large number of vacancies.
 - 🍁 Some vacancies arise due to turnover due to the physically challenging nature of this occupation combined with relatively low wage rates.
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- 🍁 The majority of CCAs work in long-term care facilities. The growing popularity of homecare has also increased the demand for this occupation substantially.

4 – OCCUPATIONS IN EDUCATION, LAW, AND SOCIAL COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Occupations in education, law, and social community and government services employed 53,800 workers in Nova Scotia in 2019, comprising 11.5% of the workforce. Though layoffs were less widespread in this occupational category than in some others, many workers have experienced major disruptions in their roles and responsibilities due to the pandemic. Daycares were temporarily closed during the first wave of cases, and had fewer attendees return after reopening. Elementary and secondary school teachers transitioned to a limited online teaching format when public schools closed in the spring, leaving many classroom support staff unable to perform their regular duties. Universities laid off part-time teaching staff and research assistants in anticipation of a decrease in tuition revenue. The justice system was ill prepared to transition to virtual proceedings, leading to a backlog of court cases and changes to long-established processes in order to comply with physical distancing requirements. Job availability in many occupations in this group is subject to government spending – likely to see some restraint in coming years as governments aim to balance budgets following the pandemic.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 4012: Post-secondary teaching and research assistants

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,500 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include universities (93%), community colleges (3%), and other schools and instruction (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Post-secondary institutions laid off some teaching and research assistants as the number of students and activities on physical campuses were reduced in March.
- 🍁 Universities anticipated a reduction in enrolment, leading to budgetary challenges. This prompted some institutions to lay off part-time and casual teaching staff, consolidating the reduced number of class offerings among full-time professors.
- 🍁 Looking forward, a rebound in the number of teaching assistants will be strongly influenced by enrolment figures and the resumption of on-campus teaching.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment in this occupation has been relatively stable prior to the pandemic, generally following the enrolment and course offerings of a university. The availability of research funding is also a determinant of the demand for this occupation.
- 🍁 This position is typically held by graduate students, with a large percentage working part-time and/or part of the year.

NOC 4152: Social workers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,750 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include social assistance (29%), provincial and territorial public administration (26%), and hospitals (20%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Few social workers were laid off because of COVID-19. Demand for many of the services provided by this occupational group have remained stable or increased as a result of the pandemic.
- 🍁 Social workers serving clients in an office setting or visiting homes have been encouraged to transition to virtual or telephone-based meetings whenever possible.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Demand for social workers is strong in general. The number of roles for this occupational group has been increasing due to factors such as: enhanced services for veterans; the growing needs of an aging population; and an increased emphasis on mental health and the psychological needs of youth.
- 🍁 A large number of vacancies arise from turnover, due to high caseloads, a stressful work environment, and staff burnout. Many new entrants to this occupation work in child welfare type roles before transitioning to other fields.

NOC 4214: Early childhood educators and assistants**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 4,600 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include social assistance (88%), elementary and secondary schools (7%), and religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations (1%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 In March, daycares were closed by the provincial government to limit the spread of COVID-19. Many early childhood educators (ECEs) were laid off and training programs were suspended to avoid adding unnecessarily to the number of unemployed jobseekers.
- 🍁 Daycares were later permitted to reopen, but enrolment was slow to rebound for a variety of reasons, creating revenue challenges for some operators. Some have chosen to shut down altogether, laying off staff permanently.
- 🍁 In some areas of the province, daycares that have remained in operation have encountered a shortage of certified ECEs to fill job vacancies. There is a larger than usual need for substitutes, as regular staff must stay home if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. In some cases, this shortage is alleviated by hiring.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 The multi-year rollout of the provincial government's pre-primary program wrapped up in the fall of 2020. The program employs 850 ECEs, increasing overall demand. The program's creation resulted in openings in the private sector as well, as some daycare employees moved to the public pre-primary program.
- 🍁 There is typically a large number of job vacancies in this occupation, with openings occurring all over the province. This is due in part to a high rate of turnover among ECEs.

NOC 4412: Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,300 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include social assistance (40%), ambulatory health care services (21%), and private households (18%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Many home support workers were laid off or unemployed during the first wave of COVID-19 cases. Some of those providing nonessential services to clients opted to reduce or suspend visits to limit the spread of the virus to vulnerable individuals.
- 🍁 Some home support workers contracted COVID-19 in the performance of their duties, leading to a shortage of workers to serve the needs of clientele.
- 🍁 The requirements of heightened sanitization and physical distancing have altered the tasks performed by home support workers somewhat.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prospects for home support workers are favourable. There is generally a large number of job openings relative to the number employed in this occupation.
- 🍁 The aging population and the growing preference for home delivery of health services has increased demand for home support workers overall.

NOC 4413: Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 4,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industry of employment is elementary and secondary schools (99%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 A large number of teacher assistants were laid off when schools closed in March. When teaching resumed in a limited online format later in the spring, teacher assistants did not resume their usual duties. However, when schools physically reopened in September, workers in this occupation were back on the job.
- 🍁 The provincial government typically hires teacher assistants before the beginning of the school year. However, a second round of hiring took place later in the fall of 2020 to address unique needs created by the closure of schools during the spring.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 In recent years, employment prospects for this occupation have been fair. Employment growth is determined largely by the priorities and resource allocation of the provincial public school system.
- 🍁 Since 2018, the number of workers in this occupation has increased somewhat as the result of additional funding for classroom supports. During the first of two hiring rounds in 2020, 85 support staff were added to primary and secondary schools. The provincial Department of Education has indicated that the present staffing levels are sufficient for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year, so additional hiring is not likely until at least September 2021.

5 – OCCUPATIONS IN ART, CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORT

Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport was the smallest occupational category in 2019, with 10,900 workers. Many occupations in this group have been severely affected by COVID-19. For creative and performing artists, physical distancing requirements and limits on gathering sizes prohibit audience sizes large enough to generate adequate revenue. These rules have also created challenges for some occupations related to athletic programs and events. For many workers in this category, tourists—and the province’s many summer festivals that cater to them—are a key source of income. The major decline in the number of visitors from outside the province this year prompted the cancellation of many big events. Travel restrictions also caused a slowdown in the film and television sector, as many workers come from out of province; however, this trend was reversed later in the summer. The recovery of this occupational category will depend largely on the removal of gathering size limits and the state of the tourism season in 2021.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 5131: Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 650 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include information and cultural industries (65%), arts, entertainment and recreation (18%), and provincial and territorial public administration (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Activity in the theatre and film industries was severely restricted at the beginning of the pandemic.
- 🍁 To comply with physical distancing rules, theatres had to greatly reduce the size of their audience, limiting the ability to generate revenue. Many theatres have opted to remain closed while these regulations are in place. Crewmembers who would ordinarily be employed have not been able to generate income as a result.
- 🍁 The introduction of travel restrictions caused a lull in the film and TV industry. By late summer, however, several projects were underway with workers from out-of-province self-isolating prior to beginning production. There is speculation in the industry that the relative safety of low case counts in this province have been a draw for some crews.
- 🍁 Certain types of worker in this occupational group, such as those involved in radio or video game production, were less impacted by the Health Protection Act Order.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 This is a relatively small occupation which is strongly affected by changes in industry conditions, such as arts funding or the number of active TV and film productions in the province. In the film industry, a large influx of projects has the potential to absorb the limited supply of production specialists.
- 🍁 Prospects have been generally poor in recent years, though there are exceptions. Prior to the pandemic, higher interest in theatre productions in some communities enabled more consistent employment opportunities than usual.

NOC 5133: Musicians and singers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 650 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include arts, entertainment and recreation (47%), other schools and instruction (36%), and federal government public administration (4%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation is comprised of a mixture of musicians, singers, and music teachers. Most venues are unable to operate normally while complying with physical distancing requirements, limiting opportunities for performers to generate income through live performances. Some musicians have been able to perform at smaller venues and through live streaming, however.
- 🍁 Music teachers have fared somewhat better, with private and small group lessons being feasible under current restrictions. Some instructors also offer virtual lessons, which has broadened the accessibility of music lessons at a time when more people are pursuing music as a hobby.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prospects in this occupational group have been poor in recent years. Most workers are self-employed and do not work full-time or full-year.
- 🍁 Musicians may improve their prospects by being willing to travel throughout the province to pursue opportunities.
- 🍁 Despite normally poor prospects, certain positions can occasionally be difficult to fill, due to the small size of the occupational group and the specialization of workers in a certain instrument or genre of music.

NOC 5241: Graphic designers and illustrators**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 950 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include architectural, engineering and design services (36%), information and cultural industries (15%), and computer systems design services (8%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Some graphic designers were laid off because of the pandemic. Demand for certain services provided by this occupation—such as advertising—was adversely affected by closures and revenue challenges in some industries.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prospects for graphic designers and illustrators are highly dependent on their industry or field of expertise. For example, there has been a large decline in print advertising during the pandemic, reducing the need for graphic designers in that field.
- 🍁 The overall outlook has been considered to be limited in recent years, in part because of increased competition from remote workers. Many graphic designers are self-employed and do contract work. There may be several jobseekers vying for a single full-time graphic design opening which may be less precarious than freelancing.
- 🍁 Those seeking employment in the video game and animation sector have better prospects. Some employers in these industries have indicated that favourable conditions have resulted in a shortage of illustrators and animators.

NOC 5254: Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,500 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include arts, entertainment and recreation (58%), other schools and instruction (12%), and universities (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 A large percentage of this occupation was temporarily laid off in as a result of COVID-19. Many workers returned to work following the relaxation of restrictions in June, but employment has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- 🍁 In March, gyms and fitness studios were ordered to close under the Health Protection Act Order, resulting in widespread layoffs. Upon reopening, these facilities have had to comply with physical distancing requirements, which can reduce overall facility occupancy as well as class sizes for group activities. As a result, not all workers in this occupation have been rehired.
- 🍁 Other foregone employment in this occupation includes seasonal program leaders. For instance, the municipal government of Halifax laid off or declined to hire several hundred recreational workers during the summer of 2020.
- 🍁 Most workers in this occupation will have experienced a change in tasks and responsibilities as a result in COVID-19, relating mostly to heightened sanitization requirements.
- 🍁 As of November 2020, gyms and fitness studios in the Halifax area were forced to close for a second time due to local community spread of the virus.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to the pandemic, prospects for this occupational group were considered to be fair. Total employment demand was supported by public interest in fitness and health, particularly in Halifax. The availability of public funds for programming can also be a determinant of employment levels.
- 🍁 Turnover is the main source of job vacancies in this occupation. Positions are often part-time, seasonal, and staffed by students.
- 🍁 Depending on the sport or activity associated with a vacancy, certain credentials or experience may be an asset or requirement.

6 – SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS

Sales and service occupations is the largest occupational category in Nova Scotia by a wide margin. There were more than 130,250 workers in this category in 2019, accounting for more than one-quarter of provincial employment. During the first wave of the pandemic, tens of thousands of employees in this group were laid off as restaurant dining rooms and most nonessential retail stores closed. The rebound in employment after reopening has been slow. Many restaurants that are dependent on seasonal tourism revenue struggled to recover financially from the two-and-a-half month closure in the spring. Amid uncertainty about business conditions in the months to come, some employers have declined to rehire all of their pre-pandemic staff. Others have indicated that lower staffing levels are beyond their control, as COVID-19 appears to have reduced the supply of workers in certain occupations. For many employees in this category, conditions still are not back to normal; weeks and months after reopening, a number of retail stores and restaurants announced that they are closing permanently. Furthermore, as of late November, dining rooms in the greater Halifax area were once again forced to close temporarily due to viral community spread.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 6322: Cooks

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 6,900 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food services and drinking places (74%), nursing and residential care facilities (6%), and hospitals (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Thousands of cooks were laid off from March until June when dining rooms were ordered to close. Some remained employed as restaurants were permitted to sell meals as delivery or takeout. Many cooks were rehired when dining rooms were able to open again, though some remained unemployed as of late summer.
- 🍁 As of November 2020, dining rooms in the Halifax region were forced to close for a second time due to community spread of the virus. This is expected to result in a temporary increase in the number of unemployed cooks.
- 🍁 Despite the higher-than-usual number of unemployed cooks, employers in some areas of the province have indicated that finding qualified cooks has been a challenge. High turnover in this occupation can also be problematic from a service delivery standpoint, given the length of time dedicated to on-the-job training for new employees.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to COVID-19, the number of workers in food services rose during the previous several years. Demand has increased with population and income growth, as well as the rising popularity of food delivery services.
- 🍁 Some restaurants reported a shortage of cooks prior to the pandemic. There are typically a large number of vacancies due to high turnover. The permanent closure of some restaurants may result in reduced demand for cooks persisting after the pandemic.
- 🍁 Going forward, employment in this occupation will be linked to the health of the food services industry overall. Many restaurants have indicated an inability to recover financially from the closure in the

spring. Those normally reliant on seasonal summer revenue were particularly hard-hit by the decline in tourism.

NOC 6421: Retail salespersons**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 16,500 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other retail stores (72%), food and beverage stores (14%), and wholesale trade (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 During the spring, many nonessential retail stores closed as consumers were urged to avoid nonessential outings. Thousands of retail salespersons were laid off or had their hours reduced to zero.
- 🍁 While most nonessential retail establishments have reopened, they must adhere to regulations concerning physical distancing, occupancy levels, and enhanced sanitization. Some have also chosen to keep reduced business hours, reducing the total number of salespersons needed.
- 🍁 The effect of COVID-19 has varied by type of retail. For example, many grocery stores increased shifts or hired additional staff in the spring as consumers stockpiled groceries in preparation for a potential lockdown. Some essential retail salespersons received a temporary wage increase during this period.
- 🍁 With the exception of clothing and gasoline, sales in most types of retail in Nova Scotia recovered by August. In comparison, the rebound of employment has been slower and remains well below pre-pandemic levels. Some employers have also reported that a shortage of salespersons developed or worsened during the pandemic.
- 🍁 In response to a decrease in foot traffic and fewer tourists, some businesses have added or improved their online purchase and delivery options.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 In general, the number of retail establishments and employees has increased over time with population and income growth. However, recent changes such as the increased popularity of online shopping and self-serve checkouts may erode demand for this position.
- 🍁 A high rate of employee turnover is a major driver of job vacancies in this occupation. In some communities and under certain economic conditions, the pool of candidates applying for vacancies can be large as education and skill requirements are fairly low.

NOC 6512: Bartenders**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 850 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food services and drinking places (69%), arts, entertainment and recreation (11%), and religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations (7%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 From March until June, dining rooms, bars, and other drinking establishments were ordered to close. Though restaurants could continue to sell delivery or takeout meals, most bartenders were laid off under during this period.

- 🍁 As of November 2020, dining rooms in the Halifax region were forced to close for a second time due to community spread of the virus. This is expected to result in a temporary increase in the number of unemployed bartenders.
- 🍁 Many bartenders were rehired when bars and dining rooms were permitted to reopen in early June. However, occupancy and physical distancing restrictions often reduce the amount of revenue an establishment can generate, which may negatively affect staffing levels going forward.
- 🍁 Employers in some communities have encountered a shortage of bartenders and other restaurant staff, in some cases forcing them to reduce operating hours.
- 🍁 In response to COVID-19, the provincial government has liberalized liquor regulations such that alcoholic beverages can be ordered with takeout. Some establishments have begun to sell prepared cocktails in response, which may represent an opportunity for bartenders even under a takeout model.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to COVID-19, the number of workers in food services rose during the previous several years. Demand has increased with population and income growth, as well as the rising popularity of food delivery services.
- 🍁 There are typically some vacancies due to high turnover in this occupation.
- 🍁 Going forward, employment in this occupation will be linked to the health of the food services industry overall. Many restaurants have indicated an inability to recover financially from the closure in the spring. Those normally reliant on seasonal summer revenue were particularly hard-hit by the decline in tourism.
- 🍁 Opportunities also arise due to the turnover of establishments. While the challenges of the pandemic have caused a number of bars and restaurants to close permanently, there have been many announcements of new ones opening.

NOC 6513: Food and beverage servers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 5,100 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food services and drinking places (89%), arts, entertainment and recreation (5%), and accommodation services (5%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 From March until June, dining rooms, bars, and other drinking establishments were ordered to close. Restaurants could continue to sell delivery or takeout meals. Under this model, the majority of servers were laid off, with a reduced staff remaining to complete takeout transactions.
- 🍁 Many servers were rehired when bars and dining rooms were permitted to reopen in early June. However, occupancy and physical distancing restrictions often reduce the amount of revenue an establishment can generate, which may negatively affect staffing levels.
- 🍁 As of November 2020, dining rooms in the Halifax region were forced to close for a second time due to community spread of the virus. This is expected to result in a temporary increase in the number of unemployed food and beverage servers.
- 🍁 Employers in some communities have encountered a shortage of servers and other restaurant staff, in some cases forcing them to reduce operating hours.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

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- 🍁 Prior to COVID-19, the number of workers in food services rose during the previous several years. Demand has increased with population and income growth, as well as the rising popularity of food delivery services.
 - 🍁 There are typically a large number of vacancies due to high turnover in this occupation. Some employers have reported occasional difficulty in filling vacancies.
 - 🍁 Going forward, employment in this occupation will be linked to the health of the food services industry overall. Many restaurants have indicated an inability to recover financially from the closure in the spring. Those normally reliant on seasonal summer revenue were particularly hard-hit by the decline in tourism.
 - 🍁 Opportunities also arise due to the turnover of establishments. While the challenges of the pandemic have caused a number of bars and restaurants to permanently close, there have been many announcements of new ones opening.
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NOC 6541: Security guards and related security service occupations

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,950 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other management and administrative services (61%), local, municipal, regional, aboriginal and other public administration (5%), and federal government public administration (4%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The effect of COVID-19 on this occupation has been mixed. The transition of many workers from office spaces to remote work, as well as reduced foot traffic in commercial and public buildings, has diminished the need for security guards in some settings.
- 🍁 Conversely, some retail establishments have hired additional security guards to enforce occupancy and physical distancing rules. The relative stress and difficulty associated with these tasks, as well as the immediate need to fill this type of position, has prompted employers to offer wages well above the normal rate for this occupation.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 There does not appear to have been a clear increase or decrease in employment in this occupation in recent years, though technological developments may reduce the need for security guards in certain settings.
 - 🍁 High turnover is a major contributor to vacancies in this occupation.
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NOC 6552: Other customer and information services representatives

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 6,250 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include business services (37%), other retail stores (19%), and wholesale trade (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation is spread across a variety of industries, which have each been uniquely affected by the pandemic. Therefore, the effect of COVID-19 is highly dependent on the industry and employer. While layoffs were widespread during the spring of 2020, the drop in employment was less severe than in many other service and sales occupations.
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- Some workers in this occupation in public-facing retail positions (e.g. courtesy desk clerks) were laid off when stores closed temporarily in the spring. Others may be impacted on an ongoing basis by occasional permanent store closures that have been announced throughout the summer and fall.
- Call centres, many of which were able to remain operational throughout the pandemic, employ a large proportion of this occupation. These workers are less likely to have been laid off or otherwise impacted. There have been exceptions, however, for call centres serving harder hit industries such as the airlines.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- Employee turnover is generally a large source of opportunities for customer service representatives. There is a moderate to large number of vacancies at most times.
- Total employment for this occupation in business services in Nova Scotia tends to fluctuate with openings, expansions, or closures of call centres. Such events typically affect hundreds of workers.
- Even prior to the pandemic, there has been a shift among some employers from office-based to remote employment. Remote positions may also be available with employers that do not have a physical office established in Nova Scotia.
- Retail-based workers in this occupation may be subject to broader trends in that industry. While the number of retail businesses tends to increase with population and income growth, demand for some customer service roles is slowly being eroded by automation and outsourcing.

NOC 6611: Cashiers

General information about this occupation:

- In Nova Scotia, there were 14,350 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other retail stores (48%), food and beverage stores (33%), and food services and drinking places (14%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- During the spring, many nonessential retail stores closed as consumers were urged to avoid nonessential outings. Thousands of cashiers were laid off or had their hours reduced to zero.
- While most nonessential retail establishments have reopened, they must adhere to regulations concerning physical distancing, occupancy levels, and enhanced sanitization. Some have also chosen to keep reduced business hours, reducing the total number of cashiers needed.
- The effect of COVID-19 has varied by type of retail. For example, many grocery stores increased shifts or hired additional staff in the spring as consumers stockpiled groceries in preparation for a potential lockdown. Some essential retail cashiers received a temporary wage increase during this period.
- With the exception of clothing and gasoline, sales in most types of retail in Nova Scotia recovered by August. In comparison, the rebound of employment has been slower and remains well below pre-pandemic levels. Some employers have also reported that a shortage of cashiers developed or worsened during the pandemic.
- In response to a decrease in foot traffic and fewer tourists, some businesses have added or improved their online purchase and delivery options.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- In general, the number of retail establishments and employees has increased over time with population and income growth. However, recent changes such as the increased popularity of online shopping and self-serve checkouts may reduce the need for this position.

- 🍁 A high rate of employee turnover is a major driver of job vacancies in this occupation. The present shortage conditions notwithstanding, the pool of candidates applying for vacancies can be large at times as education and skill requirements are fairly low.

NOC 6711: Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 11,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food services and drinking places (74%), nursing and residential care facilities (7%), and hospitals (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 From March until June, dining rooms, bars, and other drinking establishments were ordered to close. Restaurants could continue to sell delivery or take-out meals. Many food counter attendants were laid off as a result.
- 🍁 As of November 2020, dining rooms in the Halifax region were forced to close for a second time due to community spread of the virus. This is expected to result in a temporary increase in the number of unemployed food counter attendants.
- 🍁 Food counter attendants are prevalent in take-out and drive-thru type establishments, which were better suited to adapt to the closure of dining rooms than table service restaurants. As a result, the percentage of workers laid off in this occupation was somewhat lower than other food service occupations (such as servers), with several thousand remaining employed throughout the pandemic.
- 🍁 Many food counter attendants who had been laid off were rehired when bars and dining rooms were permitted to reopen in early June. However, occupancy and physical distancing restrictions often reduce the amount of revenue an establishment can generate, which may negatively affect staffing levels.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Prior to COVID-19, this occupation was characterized by a large number of vacancies, strong employment growth, and occasional difficulty in filling positions.
- 🍁 High turnover is a major contributor of job opportunities in this occupation.
- 🍁 This occupation is also common in long-term care facilities, schools, and universities which provides a degree of employment stability relative to occupations exclusive to table service restaurants.
- 🍁 Going forward, employment in this occupation will be linked to the health of the food services industry overall. Many restaurants have indicated an inability to recover financially from the closure in the spring. Those normally reliant on seasonal summer revenue were particularly hard-hit by the decline in tourism, and the risk remains high that travel restrictions persisting into 2021 will slow or prevent a full recovery.

NOC 6731: Light duty cleaners

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 6,400 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include building services (41%), hospitals (14%), and nursing and residential care facilities (12%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- ✳ Despite reduced foot traffic or even outright closures of some public buildings and workspaces, the heightened need for sanitization during the pandemic appears to have resulted in a net increase in demand for cleaners throughout the province. A shortage of cleaners has emerged as a surge of hiring used up the available labour supply.
- ✳ Demand for this occupation in hotels and offices has gone down due to reduced tourist occupancy and the increased number of people working from home, respectively. However, employment has been stable for those working in hospitals and other public buildings with a continued (or even increased) need for sanitization.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✳ There are usually several vacancies for this occupation in Nova Scotia due to a high rate of turnover.
- ✳ Employers have occasionally noted difficulty in filling positions.
- ✳ The increasing popularity of sharing economy services such as Airbnb may represent an emerging opportunity for self-employed light duty cleaners.
- ✳ The eventual end of the pandemic will likely reduce the need for such frequent and widespread sanitization in public spaces. This may result in layoffs for light duty cleaners. However, hiring may take place as other public spaces reopen and accommodations become busier.

NOC 6741: Dry cleaning, laundry and related occupations**General information about this occupation:**

- ✳ In Nova Scotia, there were 1,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include nursing and residential care facilities (35%), personal and laundry services (24%), and hospitals (18%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- ✳ The industry in which a worker in this occupation is employed is a major determinant of whether or not they have been affected by the pandemic.
- ✳ For those employed in hospitals and nursing facilities, working conditions have remained fairly stable.
- ✳ Those employed in the accommodations industry and by commercial dry-cleaners are more likely to have experienced layoffs or reduced work as a result of the decline in hotel occupancy. A rebound in this occupation is not expected until travel restrictions are eased.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✳ Overall, the number of laundry establishments has been declining over time.
- ✳ There are relatively few job openings in this occupation due to its small size.
- ✳ Retirements will be a main contributor to the opportunities that do arise.

7 – TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations employed 64,000 in 2019, which is just under 14% of the workforce. For many construction occupations in this category, the pandemic has not been the deciding factor of labour market outcomes this year. Some effects of the Health Protection Act Order were felt in the spring, when physical distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE) were introduced on private construction sites. However, a surge of construction activity in both the residential and non-residential sectors quickly cancelled out the pandemic's impact on demand. For less specialized construction occupations, such as carpenters, labourers, and helpers, conditions are strong throughout the province and are expected to improve even further in 2021. Prospects for specialized tradespersons and heavy equipment operators are more dependent on where they live and what projects are underway in their area, though a higher-than-usual number of healthcare, highway, and private sector projects will put them in high demand too. For transportation workers, the pandemic has had a somewhat larger effect: a pre-existing shortage of long haul truck drivers has become more severe due to the greater risk of being exposed to the virus in another province or in the U.S.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 7271: Carpenters

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 3,350 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include construction (85%), ship and boat building (2%), and other retail stores (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 At the outset of the pandemic in March, carpenters were moderately impacted. Private worksites were subject to physical distancing requirements, leading to the suspension of work on some projects and general uncertainty about the state of the construction industry going into the busy season.
- 🍁 Disrupted supply chains caused a large increase in material prices, rendering some planned projects uneconomical.
- 🍁 These events resulted in temporary layoffs, which affected a large percentage of this occupational group.
- 🍁 An influx of people moving to the province, a surge of interest in home renovations, and an exceptionally tight housing market provided a major boost to residential construction activity. This trend appears to have overwhelmed the negative effects experienced earlier in the pandemic. In some areas of the province, COVID-19 has made a pre-existing shortage of carpenters worse, as some decided to stop working or retire early to avoid exposure.
- 🍁 As the Health Protection Act Order remains in effect, some carpenters are working with personal protective equipment (PPE).

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment prospects for carpenters are good, thanks to the current surge in demand. In addition to strong residential activity, a number of non-residential projects have absorbed nearly all of the available supply of carpenters in that sector. These favourable conditions are expected to persist for the next couple of years.
- 🍁 The limited supply of available carpenters may exert upward pressure on wages as contractors and employers compete for a dwindling supply of workers.

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- Some employers have relaxed requirements in response to the shortage. Jobseekers with less experience may benefit from this hiring environment.
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NOC 7321: Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers**General information about this occupation:**

- In Nova Scotia, there were 3,100 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include repair and maintenance (40%), other retail stores (34%), and wholesale trade (4%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- Many workers in this occupation were laid off during the first few months of the pandemic. More commuters began to work from home, and Nova Scotians were urged to stop nonessential driving and travelling. The large decrease in vehicle kilometres traveled resulted in fewer needed repairs and longer intervals between servicing.
- Some employers used the lull in business to train service technicians on new skills and technologies, including virtual communication with clients.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- Prospects in this occupation remain favourable for those with in-demand skills and certification. High turnover contributes to the number of vacancies at times.
 - In recent years, rapid advancements in electronics, safety features, and autonomous driving have resulted in a steeper learning curve and a greater need for technicians with specialized skills. As a result, red seal mechanics and those able to service recent technologies are in higher demand than those without.
 - Some larger dealerships have responded to the skills shortage by providing in-house training to new hires.
-

NOC 7452: Material handlers**General information about this occupation:**

- In Nova Scotia, there were 5,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other retail stores (24%), wholesale trade (18%), and truck transportation (10%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- A large number of material handlers were laid off because of the pandemic. Many work in retail and wholesale trade; the combination of nonessential store closures and supply chain disruptions reduced demand for this occupation.
- The rebound in employment for material handlers will be tied to the health of the retail industry and supply chains in general.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- Employment prospects are fair in this occupation. Total employment is expected to remain stable or decline slightly as mechanization reduces the need for some workers. However, a high rate of turnover will continue to provide regular vacancies.
 - There has been a high degree of competition among job applicants for certain vacancies in the Halifax area. This may reflect an elevated number of unemployed jobseekers remaining from the layoffs that occurred earlier in the year.
-

- 🍁 Prospects are somewhat better in some rural areas where there may be a shortage of labour willing to contend with the physically demanding nature of the position. Jobseekers may improve their prospects by having access to personal transportation and being willing to travel to employers in such areas.

NOC 7511: Transport truck drivers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 5,750 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include truck transportation (49%), construction (14%), and wholesale trade (8%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 At the beginning of the pandemic, some of truck drivers were laid off. However, many were rehired as the economy reopened.
- 🍁 Overall, COVID-19 has worsened a pre-existing shortage of truck drivers. Long haul routes have become less desirable as they require driving to other provinces or the U.S., where concerns of contracting the virus are greater. Long lineups at border checkpoints have also created logistics problems for some truck drivers. These factors prompted some drivers to try to switch to regional routes or change careers altogether.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Demand for truck drivers has been very strong in recent years. In addition to employment growth, a large number of workers in this occupation are reaching retirement age, causing a surge of vacancies to replace them. Many employers have reported difficulty in filling positions with qualified drivers.
- 🍁 Those with a class 1 license, the ability to travel to the U.S., and no barriers to obtaining insurance will have the best employment prospects.
- 🍁 Prior to concerns associated with the risk of contracting COVID-19, there was already an acute shortage of drivers in long haul trucking. The lifestyle associated with this sector has been a deterrent to jobseekers. Some advances in logistics have reduced the distance individual drivers must travel.
- 🍁 The shortage of truck drivers has prompted employers to recruit among underrepresented groups and outside of the province, raise wages, and offer incentives such as subsidized tuition.

NOC 7514: Delivery and courier service drivers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,300 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include other retail stores (30%), postal service, couriers and messengers (28%), and wholesale trade (11%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Some workers in this occupation were laid off because of the pandemic. Approximately 30% of delivery drivers are employed by retail stores, many of which closed during the months of March, April, and May, laying off employees.
- 🍁 Other jobs in this occupational group experienced growth as a result of COVID-19. Dining rooms and bars were forced to close under the Health Protection Act Order, causing the popularity of meal delivery to rise. Some businesses were established or expanded to fill this need, while some individuals sought part-time gig employment with organizations like Uber Eats.

- Similarly, the restriction on in-store shopping drove consumers to purchase goods from online retailers. Some shipping companies and couriers were temporarily overwhelmed by the surge in packages.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- The increasing popularity of online shopping and meal delivery was occurring prior to the pandemic, generating some new delivery positions.
- Prospects are good for jobseekers considering this occupation. Employers in some areas have reported difficulty in filling positions, a trend common with other lower wage, physically-demanding jobs.

NOC 7521: Heavy equipment operators (except crane)**General information about this occupation:**

- In Nova Scotia, there were 2,800 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include construction (67%), mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (6%), and local, municipal, regional, aboriginal and other public administration (3%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- Many heavy equipment operators were unemployed in April, indicating that widespread temporary layoffs occurred in the wake of the Health Protection Act Order. By June, however, many of these workers were back on the job.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- Several major construction projects have increased the demand for heavy equipment operators. These include four 100-series highway expansion projects (twinning and new construction) and the redevelopment of health-care facilities in Halifax and Cape Breton.
- Additionally, there are several smaller hospital and school construction projects underway throughout the province as well as multi-unit residential and non-residential private structures in Halifax.
- Employment prospects in this occupation—which are already favourable—are expected to improve even further as demand continues to increase in 2021. Jobseekers with less experience stand to benefit as employers may need to compete for labour amid shortage conditions.

NOC 7534: Air transport ramp attendants**General information about this occupation:**

- In Nova Scotia, there were 350 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include air transportation (73%), support activities for transportation (20%), and postal service, couriers and messengers (5%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- This small occupation has been severely impacted by the pandemic, with a large proportion of workers laid off. Unlike many other occupations, ramp attendants have not been rehired in large numbers since the reopening of the economy in June.
- In March, the federal government restricted international flights to four airports, which do not include Halifax. Furthermore, the continued requirement for travellers from outside the Atlantic Region to self-isolate upon arrival in Nova Scotia, as well as general advisories against nonessential travel, have caused an extreme decline in the number of passengers passing through the Halifax and Sydney airports.

- ✿ In response to the collapse of passenger counts and revenue, airlines have cancelled routes and laid off workers in the region.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✿ During the decade prior to the pandemic, the number of air travellers in Nova Scotia increased by an average of 2% per year, representing a positive trend for ramp attendants and other airline and airport staff. The introduction of international live seafood flights also created employment opportunities in the cargo sector.
- ✿ Despite the promising changes in airport activity, this occupation is relatively small. As such, vacancies do not arise frequently and opportunities for jobseekers are normally somewhat limited.
- ✿ The cancellation of regional flights may have a lasting impact on demand for ramp attendants. It is not known whether any will be reinstated, or how the air travel industry in general will recover after the pandemic.

NOC 7611: Construction trades helpers and labourers**General information about this occupation:**

- ✿ In Nova Scotia, there were 4,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include construction (81%), support activities for transportation (4%), and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- ✿ At the outset of the pandemic in March, a large portion of workers in this occupation was laid off. Private worksites were subject to physical distancing restrictions, leading to the suspension of work on some projects and general uncertainty about the state of the construction industry.
- ✿ Disrupted supply chains caused a large increase in material prices, rendering some planned projects uneconomical.
- ✿ An influx of people moving to the province, a surge of interest in home renovations, and an exceptionally tight housing market provided a major boost to residential construction activity. This trend appears to have overwhelmed the negative effects experienced earlier in the pandemic. In some areas of the province, COVID-19 has made a pre-existing shortage of construction trades helpers and labourers worse.
- ✿ As the Public Health Protection Act Order remains in effect, some labourers are working with personal protective equipment (PPE).

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- ✿ Like other construction occupations, there has been an increase in demand for helpers and labourers which is expected to rise even further in 2021. However, there is a relatively large supply of unemployed jobseekers in this occupation, creating the potential to meet this demand.
- ✿ Employers have indicated difficulty in attracting and retaining labourers. This occupation is physically demanding and often entails long hours, leading to high rates of turnover and absenteeism. An individual able to cope with these conditions and show up reliably should find employment with relative ease.

8 – NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE AND RELATED PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS

In 2019, there were 14,250 workers in natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations, making up 3.1% of the province's total workforce. Some occupations in this category were impacted by the pandemic through disruptions to market conditions. For those employed in the fishing industry, a severe decline in the demand and price of lobster represented an abrupt change from relatively lucrative seasons in recent years. While this wouldn't affect the number of license-holders on the water, some may hire fewer deckhands in anticipation of reduced income this year. Conditions for workers in agriculture were little changed due to COVID-19, though restrictions on international travellers resulted in temporary foreign workers arriving a bit later and in slightly fewer numbers than usual. A variety of occupations in the forestry industry experienced upheaval as a result of the closure of the Northern Pulp mill. There are shortage conditions in some occupations in this category unrelated to the pandemic, particularly in rural communities where the number of youth, who traditionally performed seasonal, physically-demanding work, has been in decline.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 8262: Fishermen/women

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 3,300 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include fishing, hunting and trapping (86%), food, beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (11%), and wholesale trade (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation was among the first to be affected by COVID-19, as flights carrying live lobster to China were suspended in the winter before cases of the virus appeared in the province. The loss of the Chinese market, followed by falling demand in other countries, resulted in a large decrease in the market price of lobsters.
- 🍁 The lobster fishing season was already underway in much of the province when prices plunged. The Northumberland Strait season, which begins in May, was delayed by two weeks. Fishermen/women experienced difficulty in selling their catch as processors struggled with poor market conditions.
- 🍁 Fishing vessels were exempted from restrictions on group sizes and physical distancing, limiting the effect of the pandemic on tasks and working conditions.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment prospects for fishermen/women are determined by a number of variables unrelated to market demand. This occupation typically refers to owner-operators of fishing boats; purchasing a vessel and other equipment is a significant barrier to entry. Additionally, the number of commercial fishing licenses by area and species is capped by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; acquiring licenses can also be a significant expense.
- 🍁 A main source of opportunities in this occupation will come from retirements. There are a large number of fishermen/women who are near or beyond retirement age. Many workers in this occupation are based in rural areas with declining populations and a limited number of individuals who could potentially purchase a retiree's equipment and license.

NOC 8431: General farm workers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,850 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include agriculture (84%), forestry and logging (3%), and arts, entertainment and recreation (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Overall, this occupation has not been severely impacted by the pandemic, where the food supply is considered an essential service.
- 🍁 Due to a chronic shortage of local workers in this occupation, many employers hire Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). At the outset of the pandemic, the closure of the Canadian border created uncertainty for employers, and resulted in some delays and complications in international hiring. TFWs were eventually permitted to enter the country, though some employers may have ended up with a smaller complement of staff than usual.
- 🍁 Living quarters provided to general farm workers are also subject to physical distancing and heightened sanitization requirements.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Many employers experience consistent difficulty in finding enough general farm workers to hire. Jobseekers interested in this occupation should be able to find employment with ease. Positions are predominantly found in the Annapolis Valley region.
- 🍁 The shortage of workers may become more acute in future years, as seniors currently comprise much of the local labour supply for some employers. As these workers retire, a larger share of employment will likely need to be sourced from the TFW program.
- 🍁 Physically-demanding conditions, fairly low wages and the seasonal nature of this occupation contribute to the lack of supply of labour.
- 🍁 Consolidation of farms and the mechanization of tasks over time can gradually reduce the demand for labourers. However, two major crops in the Annapolis Valley—apples and the rapidly expanding vineyard sector—remain labour intensive.

NOC 8441: Fishing vessel deckhands**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,150 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include fishing, hunting and trapping (99%), federal government public administration (1%), and agriculture (0%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation was among the first to be affected by COVID-19, as flights carrying live lobster to China were suspended in the winter before cases of the virus appeared in the province. The loss of the Chinese market, followed by falling demand in other countries, resulted in a large decrease in the market price of lobsters.
- 🍁 The lobster fishing season was already underway in much of the province when prices plunged. The Northumberland Strait season, which begins in May, was delayed by two weeks. There may have been fewer opportunities for deckhands—or earlier layoffs for those already employed—as fishermen/women contended with adverse market conditions and less revenue than normal.

- 🍁 Fishing vessels were exempted from restrictions on group sizes and physical distancing, limiting the effect of the pandemic on tasks and working conditions.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 The level of employment in this occupation is influenced by the number of fishing licenses for a specific area and species of seafood, which determines the number of employers. However, variables such as seafood prices or catch volumes may prompt fishermen/women to hire more or fewer deckhands in a given season.
- 🍁 A lot of hiring takes place through personal contacts and word-of-mouth; not very many public job postings are observed. There may be some competition for vacancies as wages are relatively high for the skill level.
- 🍁 A large share of opportunities in this occupation are expected to come from retirements. There are many deckhands who are near or beyond typical retirement age.

NOC 8611: Harvesting labourers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 150 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industry of employment is agriculture (100%).
- 🍁 The low employment figure for this occupation is due to workers being classified interchangeably with general farm workers.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 Overall, this occupation has not been severely impacted by the pandemic, where the food supply is considered an essential service.
- 🍁 Due to a chronic shortage of local workers in this occupation, many employers hire Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). At the outset of the pandemic, the closure of the Canadian border created uncertainty for employers, and resulted in some delays and complications in international hiring. TFWs were eventually permitted to enter the country, though some employers may have ended up with a smaller complement of staff than usual.
- 🍁 Living quarters provided to harvesting labourers are subject to physical distancing and heightened sanitization requirements.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Many employers experience consistent difficulty in finding enough harvesting labourers for peak season. Jobseekers interested in this occupation should be able to find employment with ease. Positions are predominantly found in the Annapolis Valley region.
- 🍁 The shortage of workers may become more acute in future years, as seniors currently comprise much of the local labour supply for some employers. As these workers retire, a larger share of employment will likely need to be sourced from the TFW program.
- 🍁 Physically demanding conditions, low wages and the seasonal nature of this occupation contribute to the lack of supply of labour.
- 🍁 Consolidation of farms and the mechanization of tasks over time can gradually reduce the demand for labourers. However, two major crops in the Annapolis Valley—apples and the rapidly expanding vineyard sector—remain labour intensive.

NOC 8612: Landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,950 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include building services (51%), arts, entertainment and recreation (21%), and construction (4%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The employment level of landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers was reduced somewhat by the pandemic. Some employers such as resorts, golf courses, and municipalities hired a smaller complement of seasonal staff as a cost-saving measure.
- 🍁 Tasks changed for some workers in this occupation as streamlined landscaping and grounds teams needed to prioritize essential maintenance over nonessential projects.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Employment in this occupation is expected to increase as urban areas continue to expand, particularly in the Halifax region.
- 🍁 Employers sometimes have difficulty filling positions and there is a high rate of turnover among workers. The seasonality and physically demanding nature of the job may be a deterrent to some jobseekers. However, if an individual is willing to cope with the working conditions, they should be able to find employment during the spring with relative ease.

9 – OCCUPATIONS IN MANUFACTURING AND UTILITIES

Occupations in this category, which employed 15,950 in 2019, span a variety of types of manufacturing. Overall, the manufacturing industry has not been heavily impacted by physical-distancing requirements, though some employers have had to contend with supply chain disruptions or temporarily send home a portion of their workforce. One of the province's major manufacturing subsets—fish and seafood processing—has faced weak demand for lobster products because of the pandemic, resulting in fewer shifts for employees at some plants. Some larger employers in rural or isolated communities have had increasing difficulty finding enough labourers, particularly when there is a seasonal component to production. One bright spot in this category is the opportunities created by the growing number of beverage producers in all parts of the province. Sawmills have experienced multiple changes in conditions over the past year. Many sawmills lost their main purchaser of wood chips when Northern Pulp closed, making production uneconomical for some. However, the large increase in lumber prices granted mills a reprieve and resulted in a 25% increase in the value of exported sawmill products.

Below is a select group of occupations that have either been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or are in high demand.

NOC 9423: Rubber processing machine operators and related workers

General information about this occupation:

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 2,000 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include plastics, rubber products and chemicals manufacturing (94%), other retail stores (2%), and wholesale trade (1%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 The majority of workers in this occupation in Nova Scotia are employed by one corporation. During the spring, a portion of the workforce at one of three tire production facilities was laid off. All employees were recalled by the end of the summer.
- 🍁 The demand for tires was adversely affected by a sharp decline in new car sales during the spring, the reduction of vehicle kilometers driven by those now working from home, and the loss of income among some households.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 The number of individuals employed in this occupation is affected primarily by production and staffing decisions made by Michelin, which in turn may be driven by market conditions for new passenger and heavy duty vehicles and aftermarket tires.
- 🍁 Aside from the occasional change in staffing levels, retirements are a main contributor of opportunities in this occupation. Favourable working conditions result in a relatively low rate of turnover. There may be some competition among jobseekers for vacancies as wages are relatively high for this skill level.

NOC 9463: Fish and seafood plant workers**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 1,150 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food, beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (90%), wholesale trade (6%), and air transportation (2%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 This occupation was impacted by a serious decline in the demand for lobster at the beginning of the pandemic. The reversal of these conditions will depend on how global demand for seafood recovers when the pandemic ends.
- 🍁 The effects that poor seafood market conditions have had on employment vary. Some employers have found that the pandemic has compounded a longstanding shortage of labour, while some regular seasonal fish and seafood plant workers have noted a reduction in their work hours.
- 🍁 Finding housing for workers near seafood processing facilities can be a challenge. This has been made worse by COVID-19, as some property owners may be uneasy about the possibility of a tenant being exposed to the virus.
- 🍁 Seafood processing facilities were exempted from group size restrictions in the Health Protection Act Order, reducing the effect on working conditions.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- 🍁 Jobseekers may improve their prospects by having personal transportation, as many seafood processors are in rural or isolated areas. The seasonal and physical aspects of this job may also act as a deterrent for potential applicants.
- 🍁 Labour supply for this occupation is scarce in many communities. This is expected to worsen as a large proportion of fish and seafood plant workers are close to the age of retirement. Given these conditions, those seeking work in this occupation should find employment with relative ease.

NOC 9617: Labourers in food, beverage and associated products processing**General information about this occupation:**

- 🍁 In Nova Scotia, there were 500 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food, beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (71%), wholesale trade (10%), and food and beverage stores (6%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- 🍁 There was an increase in unemployment in this occupation during the first wave of the pandemic, indicating that layoffs occurred among food processing labourers.
- 🍁 The closure of dining rooms in March and directions for individuals to stay home as much as possible resulted in a surge of liquor sales. Much of the additional sales volume was in beverages produced at craft distilleries and breweries within the province. However, these quantities were offset somewhat by the loss of sales through bars and dining rooms.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- There has been a large number of craft breweries, cideries, and distilleries that have opened in recent years, creating additional employment opportunities for this occupation. Alcohol sales among craft producers have taken market share from imported beverages. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
- Frozen food manufacturers also employ a large number of workers in this occupation. In some rural areas, the supply of labour is sometimes insufficient. As with other plant workers, there is concern that the scarcity of workers will worsen as large portions of the existing workforce reach retirement age.

NOC 9618: Labourers in fish and seafood processing**General information about this occupation:**

- In Nova Scotia, there were 900 employed in this occupation in 2019. The main industries of employment include food, beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (87%), wholesale trade (9%), and other management and administrative services (1%).

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this occupation?

- This occupation was impacted by a serious decline in the demand for lobster at the beginning of the pandemic. The reversal of these conditions will depend on how global demand for seafood recovers when the pandemic ends.
- The effects that poor seafood market conditions have had on employment vary. Some employers have found that the pandemic has compounded a longstanding shortage of labour, while some regular seasonal fish and seafood plant workers have noted a reduction in their work hours.
- Finding housing for workers near seafood processing facilities can be a challenge. This has been made worse by COVID-19, as some property owners may be uneasy about the possibility of a tenant being exposed to the virus.
- Seafood processing facilities were exempted from group size restrictions in the Health Protection Act Order, reducing the effect on working conditions.

What are the main trends affecting employment prospects in the occupation?

- Jobseekers may improve their prospects by having personal transportation, as many seafood processors are in rural or isolated areas. The seasonal and physical aspects of this job may also act as a deterrent for potential applicants.
- Labour supply for this occupation is scarce in many communities. This is expected to worsen as a large proportion of fish and seafood processing labourers are close to the age of retirement. Given these conditions, those seeking work in this occupation should find employment with relative ease.

Note: In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.

The occupational analysis presented within this report was finalized in **November 2020**.

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