

# British Columbia Outlook Report

This report highlights some occupational outlooks that have either improved or been adversely affected in 2020.

While the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were the primary factor contributing to the appearance of occupations on this list, other dynamics may have been involved in some cases.

Occupations were included in this report based upon a analysis of Labour Force Survey and administrative data (employment insurance claims and job postings), as well as qualitative analysis of labour market events and occupational research.

Each occupational narrative includes the following:

- Job Description,
- COVID-19 observation (as applicable),
- Employment change statement,
- Listing of primary industries, and
- Qualitative remark(s).

Given the changing nature of the economy and labour market, these outlooks/trends are not long-term.

## Impacted Occupations

### 1411 General office support workers

- General office support workers prepare correspondence, reports, statements and other material, operate office equipment, answer telephones, verify, record and process forms and documents such as contracts and requisitions and perform general clerical duties according to established procedures. They are employed in offices throughout the public and private sectors.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for general office support workers to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 6% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- General office support workers work in the following industries:
  - health care and social assistance
  - public administration
  - retail trade
- The demand for general office support workers has declined due to the large numbers of office workers teleworking.
- It is anticipated that the trend to teleworking, and other flexible work options, will continue for the foreseeable future.

### 1414 Receptionists

- Receptionists greet people arriving at offices, hospitals and other establishments, direct visitors to an appropriate person or service, answer and forward telephone calls, take messages, schedule appointments and perform other clerical duties. They are employed by hospitals, medical and dental offices and other offices throughout the public and private sectors. Telephone operators are included in this group.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for receptionists to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 40% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Receptionists work in the following industries:
  - health care and social assistance
  - other services (except public administration)
  - retail trade.
- The customer-facing nature of reception work means that workers in this occupation are at higher risk of COVID-19 exposure. In order to mitigate this risk workplaces are limiting unnecessary person-to-person contact through reduced hours for visitors, and in some cases, diverting visitors to contactless options.
- Consequently, employment opportunities for receptionists has declined and demand is expected to remain weak for much of 2021.

#### **4214 Early childhood educators and assistants**

- Early childhood educators plan, organize and implement programs for children between the ages of infancy and 12 years. Early childhood educator assistants provide care for infants and preschool- to school-age children under the guidance of early childhood educators. Early childhood educators and assistants lead children in activities to stimulate and develop their intellectual, physical and emotional growth and ensure their security and well-being. They are employed in child-care centres, daycare centres, kindergartens, agencies for exceptional children and other settings where early childhood education services are provided. Supervisors of early childhood educators and assistants are included in this unit group.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for early childhood educators and assistants to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 44% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Early childhood educators and assistants to work in the following industries:
  - health care and social assistance
  - educational services
  - arts, entertainment and recreation.
- Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) were negatively impacted by closures and capacity restrictions on daycares during the pandemic's first wave in early spring 2020. Under BC's Restart Plan, which began in May 2020, daycares were again allowed to operate at full capacity.
- Despite this, employment opportunities for daycare workers remain bleak, as many parents, particularly women, who worked in close contact service jobs, were laid off during the pandemic. As a result, parents are caring for their young children at home.
- In addition, concern for possible viral transmission has kept some preschoolers at home with their work-from-home parents. Recovery will largely depend on two factors - when service sector workers are able to find work again, and thus need daycares, and when fears of viral transmission among preschoolers are reduced.

### **6232 Real estate agents and salespersons**

- Real estate agents and salespersons act as agents for the sale or purchase of houses, apartments, commercial buildings, land and other real estate. They are employed in the real estate industry.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for real estate agents and salespersons to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 28% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Real estate agents and salespersons work in the following industry:
  - real estate and rental and leasing.
- In B.C.'s metropolitan areas, real estate agents are adjusting to shifts in buyer preference for rural and suburban house markets, and away from the previously hot downtown condominium markets.

### **6421 Retail salespersons**

- Retail salespersons sell, rent or lease a range of technical and non-technical goods and services directly to consumers. They are employed by stores and other retail businesses, as well as wholesale businesses that sell on a retail basis to the public.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for retail salespersons to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 38% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Retail salespersons work in the following industry:
  - retail trade.
- In April 2020, salespersons in B.C. were laid off or faced reduced work hours as many retailers chose to either temporarily close or reduce operating hours in response to pandemic safety concerns. Although B.C.'s public health measures did not mandate closures, stores were required to limit customer capacity, maintain physical distancing, enhance worker safety and significantly increase cleaning protocols.
- In November 2020, B.C. issued an order requiring masks be worn in all indoor retail spaces. Although retail sales rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in September 2020, employment has been slower to recover as some bricks and mortar stores closed permanently due to financial pressures and the significant increase in online shopping.

### **6513 Food and beverage servers**

- Food and beverage servers take patrons' food and beverage orders and serve orders to patrons. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, bars, taverns, private clubs, banquet halls and similar establishments.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for food and beverage servers to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 75% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Food and beverage servers work in the following industries:
  - accommodation and food services
  - health care and social assistance
  - arts, entertainment and recreation.

- Servers benefited from the temporary patio expansions that allowed restaurants and pubs to expand capacity amid pandemic regulations for physical distancing between patrons.
- As the weather gets colder, businesses are installing outdoor shelters and heaters to extend the usual patio season. To help support businesses, Vancouver's patio program was extended to October 2021.
- However, with so many people working from home and spending more time in their own communities during the pandemic, downtown eateries have seen a loss of business in their regular lunch crowd.
- Bars in downtown areas, which rely on late-night customers, have also been seen a loss of business as a result of pandemic curfews. On the other hand, restaurants and pubs in suburbs have seen an uptick in business.

### **6611 Cashiers**

- Cashiers operate cash registers, optical price scanners, computers or other equipment to record and accept payment for the purchase of goods, services and admissions. They are employed in stores, restaurants, theatres, recreational and sports establishments, currency exchange booths, government offices, business offices and other service, retail and wholesale establishments.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for cashiers to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 40% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Cashiers work in the following industries:
  - retail trade
  - accommodation and food services
  - arts, entertainment and recreation.
- Many cashiers working in non-essential services lost their jobs early in the pandemic. However, as B.C. began a cautious re-opening in mid-May 2020, businesses put in place safety measures, such as plexiglass shields to protect cashiers from direct customer exposure. As a result of these safety measures cashier jobs have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Although some larger retailers and grocers have begun introducing self-checkouts, employment for cashiers has remained relatively steady over the last five years.

### **6731 Light duty cleaners**

- Light duty cleaners clean lobbies, hallways, offices and rooms of hotels, motels, resorts, hospitals, schools, office buildings and private residences. They are employed by hotels, motels, resorts, recreational facilities, hospitals and other institutions, building management companies, cleaning service companies and private individuals.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for light duty cleaners to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 40% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Light duty cleaners work in the following industries:
  - administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
  - accommodation and food services
  - health care and social assistance.
- Light duty office cleaners have been negatively impacted by office closures as people move to work-from-home arrangements.

- In addition, demand for light duty hotel cleaning has declined with fewer people travelling during the pandemic, in line with the province's recommendations. Furthermore, demand for in-home cleaning has also likely declined with people working from home.
- While the overall Cleaners occupation (673) is fairly evenly split between men and women, light duty cleaners are predominately women.

### **7241 Electricians (except industrial and power system)**

- Electricians (except industrial and power system) lay out, assemble, install, test, troubleshoot and repair electrical wiring, fixtures, control devices and related equipment in buildings and other structures. They are employed by electrical contractors and maintenance departments of buildings and other establishments, or they may be self-employed.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for electricians to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 12% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Electricians work in the following industry:
  - construction.
- Electricians in B.C. work primarily in residential construction, which was already in decline pre-pandemic from its peak in 2018.
- In spite of more stringent health and safety measures at work sites, employment opportunities for electricians are limited.
- In addition to fewer housing starts, renovation work in B.C. declined in 2020. However, as housing stock in B.C. ages, particularly in the Lower Mainland, demand for housing and renovation, key drivers for electrical work, is anticipated to pick up post-2021.

### **7321 Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers**

- Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers inspect, diagnose, repair and service mechanical, electrical and electronic systems and components of cars, buses, and light and commercial transport trucks. They are employed by motor vehicle dealers, garages, truck and trailer dealerships, fleet maintenance companies, and service stations, automotive specialty shops, transportation companies and retail establishments which have automotive service shops. This unit group also includes mechanical repairers who perform major repairs and replacement of mechanical units on newly assembled motor vehicles. They are employed by motor vehicle manufacturing companies.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 45% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended lower year-over-year.
- Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers work in the following industries:
  - other services (except public administration)
  - retail trade
  - transportation and warehousing.
- Demand for automotive services remains poor. As fewer people are commuting to work the need for vehicle maintenance services has fallen.

- In addition, significantly reduced public transit use means that there are fewer buses on the roads and less demand for bus maintenance and repair services.

## Improved Occupations

### 1432 Payroll administrators

- Payroll administrators collect, verify and process payroll information, determine pay and benefit entitlements for employees, maintain accurate payroll records, and provide payroll information within a department, company or other establishment. They are employed by payroll administration companies and by establishments throughout the public and private sectors.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for payroll clerks to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 16% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. However, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Payroll administrators work in the following industry:
  - transportation and warehousing.
- Payroll administrators have been in high demand as many employers needed to offset unexpected revenue loss from the pandemic public health measures by reducing their employee costs.
- Payroll administrators were needed to implement such measures as employment terminations, temporary layoffs, and reduction of employee hours. Payroll administrators will likely remain in demand helping businesses manage a changing workforce.

### 2171 Information systems analysts and consultants

- Information systems analysts and consultants analyze and test systems requirements, develop and implement information systems development plans, policies and procedures, and provide advice on a wide range of information systems issues. They are employed in information technology consulting firms and in information technology units throughout the public and private sectors, or they may be self-employed.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for information systems analysts and consultants in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.
- Employment for this occupation was 32% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Information systems analysts and consultants work in the following industries:
  - professional, scientific and technical services
  - finance and insurance
  - information and cultural industries.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many more people working from home, most of whom require innovative technology and secure access to data.
- Consequently, employment opportunities for information systems analysts and consultants remain good. This trend is expected to continue post-pandemic.

### 2174 Computer programmers and interactive media developers

- Computer programmers write, modify, integrate and test computer code for software applications, data processing applications, operating systems-level software and communications software. Interactive media

developers write, modify, integrate and test computer code for Internet and mobile applications, computer-based training software, computer games, film, video and other interactive media. They are employed in computer software development firms, information technology consulting firms, and in information technology units throughout the private and public sectors.

- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for computer programmers and interactive media developers in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.
- Employment for this occupation was 15% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Computer programmers and interactive media developers work in the following industries:
  - professional, scientific and technical services
  - information and cultural industries
  - retail trade.
- Due to pandemic-related health concerns with office work, the demand for this occupation had risen sharply as employers have scrambled to provide innovative computer software for their work-from-home employees.

#### **4413 Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants**

- Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants support students, and assist teachers and counsellors with teaching and non-instructional tasks. They assist in areas of personal care, teaching and behaviour management under the supervision of teachers or other childcare professionals. They are employed in public and private elementary, secondary and special needs schools and treatment centres.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for elementary and secondary school teacher assistants in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.
- Employment for this occupation was 44% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants work in the following industry:
  - educational services.
- In the early months of the pandemic elementary and secondary schools in B.C. quickly pivoted to on-line learning. In September 2020, as in-class learning at schools returned, funding was increased to support new health and safety measures, protective equipment and new learning groups.
- The learning groups, made up of teachers, specialist support staff and education assistants (EAs), are intended to provide a consistent, controlled environment for students with more in-class learning time, increased peer interaction and support.
- Regardless of whether schools use remote learning, in-class or a hybrid structure, it is clear that teacher assistants will continue to play an important role in elementary and secondary schools.

#### **6221 Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade**

- Technical sales specialists in wholesale trade, sell a range of technical goods and services, such as scientific, agricultural and industrial products, electricity, telecommunications services and computer services, to governments and to commercial and industrial establishments in domestic and international localities. They are employed by establishments that produce or provide technical goods and services, such as pharmaceutical companies, industrial equipment manufacturing companies, grain elevators, computer services firms, engineering firms and hydroelectric companies, or they may be self-employed technical sales specialists/agents who contract their services to other companies. Technical sales specialists in wholesale trade who are supervisors are included in this unit group.

- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for technical sales specialists in wholesale trade to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 59% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. However, employment for technical sales specialists in British Columbia improved significantly beginning in May.
- Technical sales specialists in wholesale trade work in the following industries:
  - wholesale trade
  - professional, scientific and technical services
  - information and cultural industries.
- Technical sales specialists who work in wholesale trade were initially negatively impacted by the pandemic in April as the B.C. economy suddenly slowed.
- However, wholesale trade has since rebounded and the most recent sales data is pointing towards recovery. Employment opportunities should remain good going forward.

### **6322 Cooks**

- Cooks prepare and cook a wide variety of foods. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other health care institutions, central food commissaries, educational institutions and other establishments. Cooks are also employed aboard ships and at construction and logging campsites.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for cooks to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 43% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. However, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Cooks work in the following industries:
  - accommodation and food services
  - retail trade
  - health care and social assistance.
- Restaurants were closed to dine-in customers by B.C. public health order in March 2020 resulting in many cooks losing their jobs. By May, B.C. eateries had pivoted to online ordering, curbside pick-up and home delivery. British Columbians began ordering food online in droves, which increased the need for cooks.
- While the pandemic has devastated the food services industry with many bricks-and-mortar businesses unable to maintain their overhead without their steady stream of dine-in customers, it has also provided opportunities for creative cooks who were previously excluded from mainstream eateries.
- Innovators are hiring cooks to share spaces in rented commercial kitchens. These, so called “ghost kitchens”, which deliver food but are not attached to an eatery, advertise using online shops, virtual markets, and by leveraging social media and social media influencers.
- Employment opportunities for cooks have recovered from March and remain steady, particularly in metropolitan areas where well-heeled diners continue to seek diverse menus, even if they are not in traditional dine-in settings.

### **6733 Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents**

- Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents clean and maintain the interior and exterior of commercial, institutional and residential buildings and their surrounding grounds. Building superintendents employed in large establishments are responsible for the operation of the establishment and may also supervise other workers. They are employed by office and apartment building management companies, condominium corporations, educational institutions, health care facilities, recreational and shopping facilities, religious, industrial and other establishments.



- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for janitors, caretakers and building superintendents in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.

- Employment for this occupation was 17% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.

- Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents work in the following industry:

- administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- educational services
- real estate and rental and leasing.

- There has been an uptick in demand for services from these workers as they have to increase heavy duty cleaning and sanitization in order to protect the public from COVID-19.

- While the overall Cleaners occupation (673) is fairly evenly split between men and women, this specific occupation is predominately male.

### **7452 Material handlers**

- Material handlers handle, move, load and unload materials by hand or using a variety of material handling equipment. They are employed by transportation, storage and moving companies, and by a variety of manufacturing and processing companies and retail and wholesale warehouses.

- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for material handlers in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.

- Employment for this occupation was 91% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.

- Material handlers work in the following industries:

- transportation and warehousing
- wholesale trade
- retail trade.

- Material handlers, a key part of the supply chain for many industries, load and unload vital goods, like food, cleaning products, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), from trucks, railway cars, and warehouse docks.

- Consequently, employment prospects were good in early spring. For example, the Port of Vancouver was catching up on a cargo backlog as a result of the rail blockades and changes in international shipping schedules, even as B.C.'s pandemic health and safety measures were unfolding in March.

- With the exception of declines in July and August 2020, employment for material handlers in B.C. has remained steady and is expected to be good in 2021.

### **7511 Transport truck drivers**

- Transport truck drivers operate heavy trucks to transport goods and materials over urban, interurban, provincial and international routes. They are employed by transportation, manufacturing, distribution and moving companies, and trucking employment service agencies, or they may be self-employed. This unit group also includes drivers of special purpose trucks and shunters who move trailers to and from loading docks within trucking yards or lots.

- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions. Employment for transport truck drivers in British Columbia did not initially decline but has been affected overall.

- Employment for this occupation was 19% higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Similarly, average employment levels in 2020 trended higher year-over-year.
- Transport truck drivers work in the following industries:
  - transportation and warehousing
  - wholesale trade
  - manufacturing.
- Truck drivers are an essential part of the supply chain - delivering goods during the COVID-19 pandemic to a variety of industries.
- Though truck drivers are mostly isolated in their vehicles while on the road, they rely on health and safety protocols when they pick up, drop off and take rest breaks in unfamiliar environments. And while truckers transporting goods to and from the U.S. were exempt from the 14-day isolation rules, the Government of B.C. asked drivers to voluntarily quarantine after trips to the U.S. as part of the B.C. trucking protocol.
- As a result of concerns about viral transmission in early spring 2020, long haul drivers in B.C. lost access to many of the services they rely on - card lock sites (fuel stations specifically for commercial trucks), restaurants, washrooms, and some rest areas. In response, the B.C. Truckers Association teamed up with private businesses to bring in food trucks for drivers from April to August 2020. In addition, the B.C. government made provisions for mobile washrooms at inspection stations, and rest areas for commercial vehicles.
- Although truck drivers remain in high demand, the new COVID-19 safety protocols continue to make interprovincial and intra-provincial transportation more challenging for drivers.

### **8231 Underground production and development miners**

- Underground production and development miners drill, blast, operate mining machinery, and perform related duties to extract coal and ore in underground mines and to construct tunnels, passageways and shafts to facilitate mining operations. They are employed by coal, metal and non-metallic mineral underground mines and by specialized contractors in mine construction, shaft sinking and tunnelling.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic was declared in March, resulting in health measures, travel restrictions, and other disruptions that caused employment for underground production and development miners to fall significantly in British Columbia.
- Employment for this occupation was 66% lower in April 2020 compared to April 2019. However, employment for underground production and development miners in British Columbia improved significantly beginning in May.
- Underground production and development miners work in the following industry:
  - mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.
- Underground production and development miners were negatively impacted by the global decline in demand for commodities over the first half of 2020 as a result of pandemic-related world-wide national lock-downs. Prices for B.C.'s key metals and minerals, particularly metallurgical coal, had already started to decline pre-pandemic with expectations for slowing global economic growth.
- However, new employment opportunities are expected as demand for BC's copper and gold is tied to an anticipated rebound in global infrastructure investment in the wake of the pandemic.