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BRITISH COLUMBIA

CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE LOOKING FORWARD

HIGHLIGHTS
2025-2034



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SUMMARY

British Columbia’s construction sector saw a modest overall contraction in 2024 as growth in the province’s residential sector was not enough to offset a decline in non-residential activity.

Residential construction activity has stepped down from the recent peak reported in 2021, as interest rates and consumer concerns over rising home prices slowed investment in 2022 and 2023. The sector saw growth in 2024 as an increase in residential renovations offset a slowdown in new-housing construction.

The non-residential sector, meanwhile, stepped down from the recent peak recorded in 2023 as work concluded on several major projects, including pipelines and highways, while other tracked projects passed peak levels.

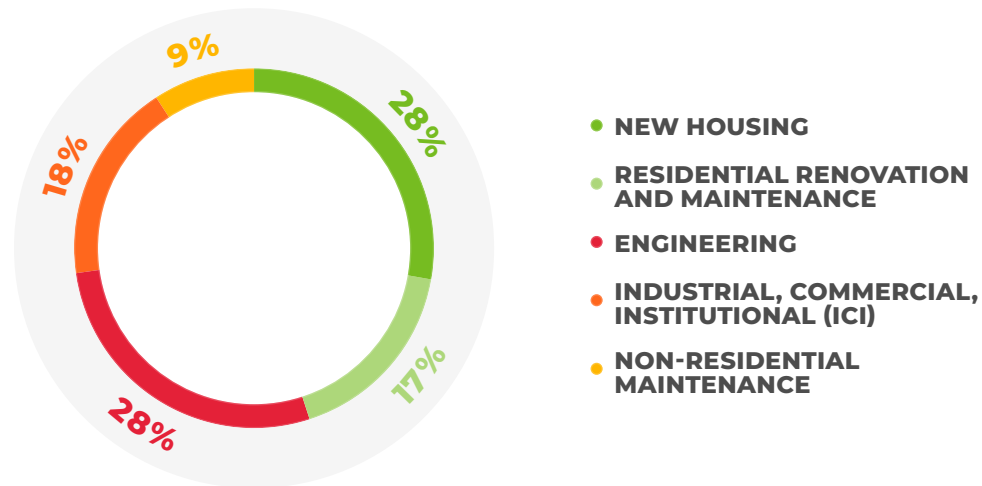
The BuildForce Canada *2025–2034 Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward* outlook scenario for British Columbia calls for a modest increase in residential activity to offset a small contraction in non-residential activity.

The former sees contractions in new housing activity through to 2031 as population growth slows and as housing affordability and land limitations influence growth in the Greater Vancouver Area in particular. These contractions, however, are offset by growth in renovation investment, which occurs in response to these cost concerns, as well as changing consumer preferences.

Investment levels in the non-residential sector are projected to ebb and flow through the forecast’s short-term period, in line with high levels of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) construction and with the timing of work on major engineering construction projects. Growth moderates into 2031 as projects pass peak periods and end.

As construction demands rise across the forecast period, British Columbia’s construction labour force will need to increase by 16,300 workers by 2034 to keep pace with growth. The expected retirement of some 43,800 workers, or 23% of the 2024 labour force, over the forecast period adds to demand pressures.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT IN 2024, BRITISH COLUMBIA*



- NEW HOUSING
- RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION AND MAINTENANCE
- ENGINEERING
- INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL (ICI)
- NON-RESIDENTIAL MAINTENANCE

10-YEAR WORKFORCE OUTLOOK FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA



* Due to rounding, numbers may not add up to 100%.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Employment is expected to rise in both the residential (1%) and non-residential (10%) sectors across the forecast period.
- Although investment in new housing activity is projected to contract by 12% across the forecast period, these losses are offset by growth of 51% in residential renovations.
- A contraction in new housing employment (-21%) is offset by growth in employment relating to renovations and maintenance activity, with both rising by 36%.
- Non-residential construction investment contracts slightly by 2034 as growth in industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings (8%) is offset by a contraction in engineering construction (-6%).
- Non-residential employment is projected to rise 10% across the forecast period. Most of this growth (+7%) is expected between 2025 and 2027.

BRITISH COLUMBIA CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

NOTE TO READER: The investment trends and employment projections presented in this report were developed with industry input prior to the emergence of potential trade tensions between Canada and the United States. The forecast therefore does not take into account the possible application of tariffs on Canadian exports to and imports from the United States, nor does it account for any resulting changes in trading patterns between Canada and its other key trading partners.

Activity in British Columbia's construction sector experienced a modest contraction in 2024 as a small gain in the residential sector was more than offset by a larger contraction in non-residential construction.

Growth in residential sector investment was driven by an increase in residential renovations. Work in this sector is becoming increasingly popular in British Columbia, given the limited availability of land in the Greater Vancouver Area, and the cost of renovations compared to new builds. New-housing activity stepped down modestly in 2024, as housing starts contracted by 11%.

Non-residential construction investment stepped down from its 2023 peak as work concluded on several major projects, including major pipelines and several large-scale highway projects. Even so, investment remained elevated compared to historical norms, with strong levels of engineering construction activity and the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings.

Economic growth in British Columbia has slowed in recent years. Real GDP growth stepped down from a post-pandemic high of 7.1% in 2021 to a forecast low of 1.1% in 2024. This trend was due to the effects of rising interest rates on consumer spending, as well as on exports and manufacturing sales.

The provincial economy is expected to see stronger growth between 2025 and 2027 as interest rate pressures ease and household spending resumes. Energy exports will add to growth, particularly as the production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) ramps up, which in turn may support further investment in non-residential construction. The long-run outlook projects average annual growth rates of at least 2%.



These trends are expected to combine to increase overall activity in the construction sector through 2024, as growth in the residential sector offsets a slight decline in non-residential construction.

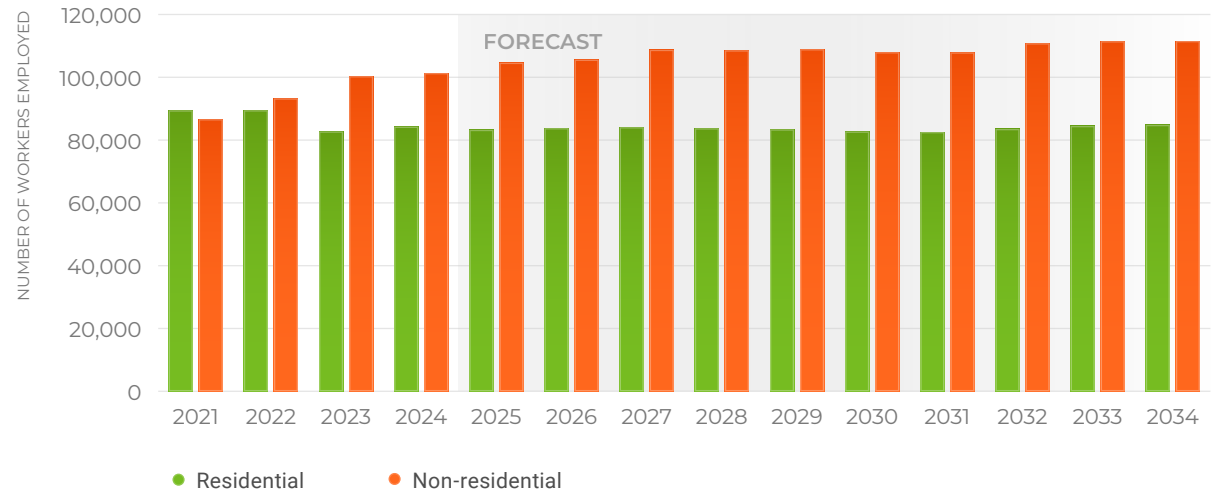
A closer look at residential construction activity levels over the forecast period reveals two trends. Investment in new housing is expected to contract almost continuously into 2031 as several factors, including slowing population growth and increasing affordability challenges, curtail activity. At the same time, investment in residential renovations is projected to see significant gains that are driven by a stable labour market, rising disposable incomes, and an increasing need to upgrade the housing stock.

Non-residential construction investment levels are also influenced by diverging factors. Engineering construction activity, which is elevated coming into the forecast period, cycles up briefly in 2027 before declining into 2031. Investment in ICI buildings, conversely, is projected to rise in 2025 before being largely sustained to 2027, and then grow steadily after 2028 with ongoing activity in institutional projects initially and, later, growth in commercial and industrial buildings.

These trends combine to stabilize residential employment across the forecast period, leading to a 1% increase over 2024 levels by 2034. Non-residential employment rises by 10%, with notable gains in ICI building and maintenance levels. See Figure 1.

British Columbia's construction sector will need to recruit 60,100 workers over the forecast period. This figure includes the need to replace some 43,800 workers who are expected to exit the industry due to retirement by 2034. Although the recruiting of first-time new entrants from the local population is expected to partially offset the impact of retirements on the labour force, these new workers do not possess the skills and experience of retiring workers, which may compound potential skilled labour shortages locally.

FIGURE 1:
CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OUTLOOK, BRITISH COLUMBIA



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

POPULATION GROWTH SUSTAINED BY IMMIGRATION

British Columbia's population is slightly older than the national average.

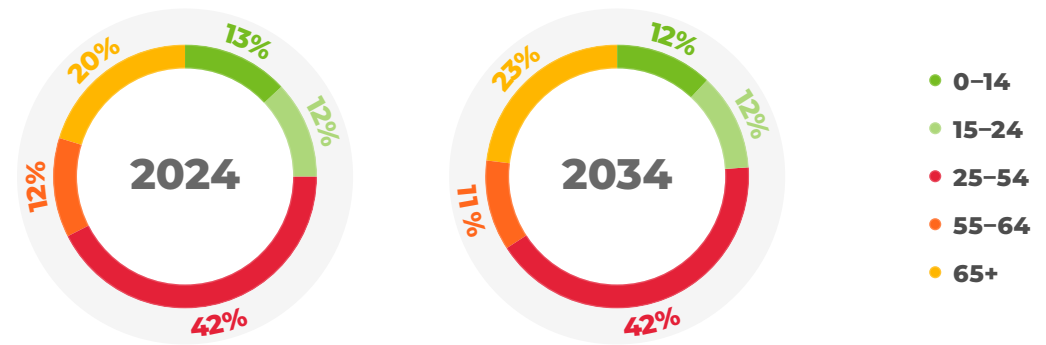
As Figure 2 shows, the proportion of people aged 65 years and older was 20% in the province in 2024, and is expected to rise to 23% by 2034. By comparison, the national figure for this age group was 19% in 2024, rising to 21% by 2034.

Meanwhile, the proportion of British Columbia's population that is 15 to 24 years of age, and which is about to enter the labour force, was 12% in 2024, and is expected to remain so by 2034. Canada, too, will see this demographic remain unchanged at 12% over the next 10 years.

These population shifts could have significant impacts on the province's economy and construction demands, including housing, commercial, and institutional buildings, as well as infrastructure requirements.

Furthermore, the departure of older workers from the labour force can leave experience gaps that cannot easily be replaced in the short term, and which may contribute to productivity challenges.

FIGURE 2:
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION, BRITISH COLUMBIA*



* Due to rounding, numbers may not add up to 100%.

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

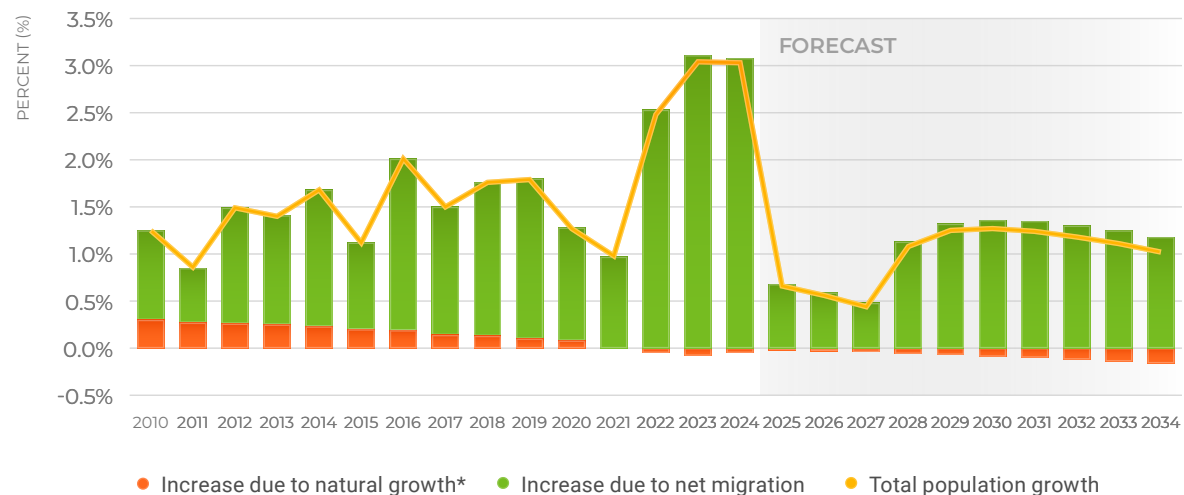
British Columbia typically benefits from high levels of migration – both from abroad and from elsewhere in Canada. It is viewed as a desirable location, although concerns over affordability have dampened this trend in recent years.

The province benefitted from unusually high levels of migration between 2022 and 2024 as Canada welcomed an influx of permanent and non-permanent residents during those years. These levels are likely to drop significantly through the near-term forecast period as Canada introduces lower immigration levels targets. Later years (i.e., 2028 and beyond) see immigration levels rise again, but more in line with those reported in the pre-pandemic years.

Meanwhile, British Columbia’s natural rate of population growth* has turned negative since 2022. Although the recent influx of migrants to the province is expected to elevate that rate slightly in the near term, the rate is expected to trend downward to the end of the decade.

Combined, these factors lead to annual population growth rates of 0.6% in the short-term and average 1.2% across the remainder of the forecast period. See Figure 3.

FIGURE 3:
SOURCES OF POPULATION GROWTH (%), BRITISH COLUMBIA



* Natural rate of population growth refers to the growth in the population due to the number of births relative to the number of deaths, which leads to a positive or negative natural rate.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)



SECTOR INSIGHTS

The following sections provide sector-specific insights into the provincial residential and non-residential labour markets.

The BuildForce LMI system tracks supply and accounts for the change in the available labour force, including retirements, new entrants¹, and net mobility². For British Columbia, rankings are reported for 26 residential and 33 non-residential trades and occupations.

¹ **New entrants** are measured by applying the traditional proportion of the provincial labour force that enters the construction industry. The projected estimate across the forecast period assumes that the construction industry can recruit this group in competition with other industries.

² **Net mobility** refers to the movement of labour in and out of the local construction industry labour force. In-mobility captures the movement into the labour force of out-of-province industry workers and/or workers from outside the industry. Many members of this group will move quickly out of the provincial labour force as work declines, referred to as out-mobility.

PROVINCIAL RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Residential construction investment levels are expected to remain at a relatively stable level across most of the forecast period, but a closer look at the sector’s various components reveals diverging trends.

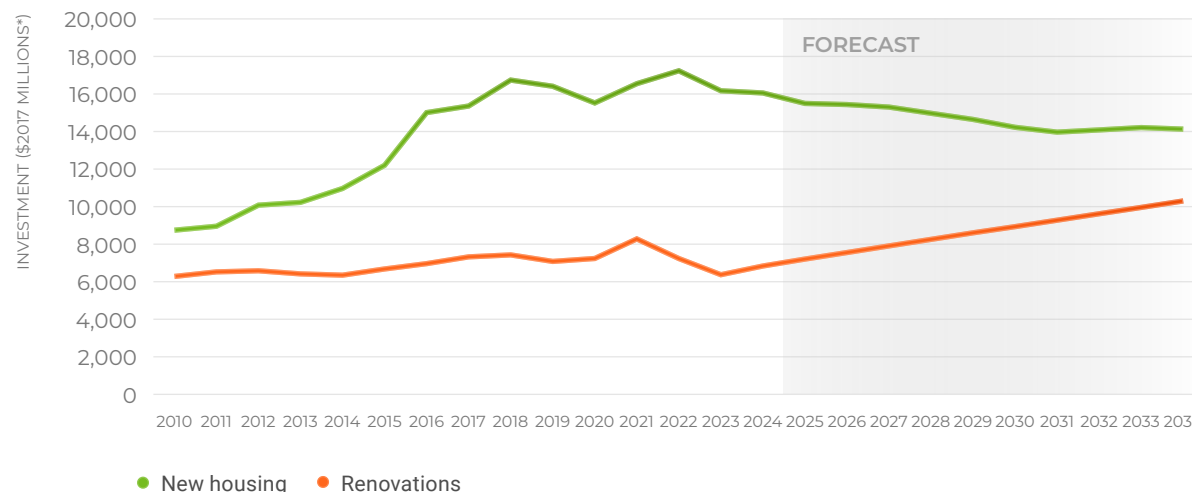
Investment in new-housing construction was notably affected by the downward pressures on demand created by elevated interest rates in 2023 and 2024, with starts for single-detached dwellings contracting by 45% over the past two years.

Activity in the sector is expected to slow into the early 2030s, driven by a range of factors, including slowing population growth, increased concerns over affordability, land limitations in major urban centres, and urban densifications. These declines are concentrated among multi-family units, primarily in large urban centres; demand for single-detached homes outside major urban centres is projected to grow steadily.

Meanwhile, demand for residential renovations is expected to increase significantly across the forecast period, with investment rising by 51% over 2024 levels by 2034. These gains are supported by a stable labour market, rising disposable incomes, and an increasing need to upgrade the housing stock. Additionally, older residents are expected to invest in home improvements to enable them to age in place.

Figure 4 shows the anticipated renovation and new-housing investment trends for residential construction.

FIGURE 4:
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INVESTMENT, BRITISH COLUMBIA



* \$2017 millions indicates that the investment values are in year 2017 dollars (base year), that is, adjusted for inflation. This is used to calculate the real physical year-to-year change of the value of construction, factoring out growth (increase in value) due to increases in prices.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

Residential employment is mostly unchanged across the outlook period, with diverging trends between new-housing (-21%) and renovations (+36%) and maintenance (+36%).

Table 1 summarizes the estimated percent change in residential employment by sector across three periods: the short term (2025–2027), the medium term (2028–2030), and the long term (2031–2034).

Note that this analysis is based on existing trends and market forces and does not take into account aspirational public-sector initiatives to increase the housing supply. Direct government interventions such as tax incentives and subsidies are, however, factored into the forward analysis as they have a more immediate impact on prevailing market forces and consumer behaviour.

**TABLE 1:
CHANGES IN RESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT
BY SECTOR, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

SECTOR	% CHANGE 2025–2027	% CHANGE 2028–2030	% CHANGE 2031–2034
Total residential employment	0%	-2%	3%
New housing	-8%	-10%	-5%
Renovations	12%	10%	11%
Residential maintenance	12%	10%	10%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)



RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 26 covered trades in the province. See Table 2.

MARKET RANKINGS

- 1** | Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other current working conditions. Excess supply is apparent and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets.
- 2** | Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other working conditions.
- 3** | The availability of workers meeting employer qualifications in the local market may be limited by large projects, plant shutdowns or other short-term increases in demand. Employers may need to compete to attract needed workers. Establish patterns of recruiting and mobility are sufficient to meet job requirements.
- 4** | Workers meeting qualifications are generally not available in local markets to meet any increase. Employers will need to compete to attract additional workers. Recruiting and mobility may extend beyond traditional sources and practices.
- 5** | Needed workers meeting employer qualifications are not available in local markets to meet current demand so that projects or production may be delayed or deferred. There is excess demand, competition is intense and recruiting reaches to remote markets.

TABLE 2: RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Bricklayers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Gas fitters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Home building and renovation managers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Insulators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tilesetters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and related machine operators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

PROVINCIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

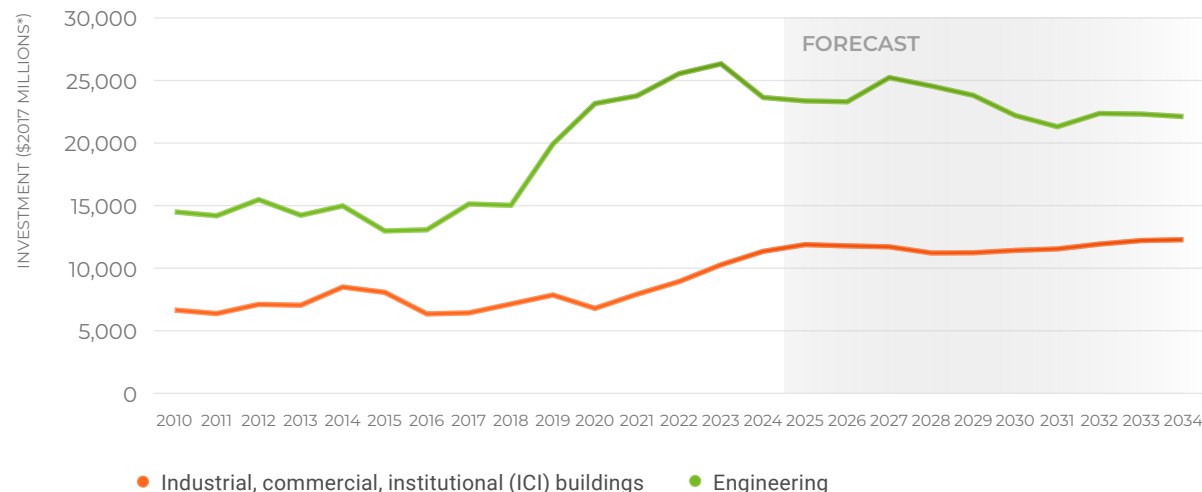
Non-residential construction activity is elevated coming into the forecast period, and has risen substantially since 2016. Driving growth in the sector in recent years has been a series of major projects such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities, pipelines and highway works, as well as a significant volume of projects throughout the industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings sector. See Figure 5.

Over the long-run, non-residential construction investment is projected to ebb and flow with the timing of tracked major projects, but remain at elevated levels.

Engineering construction activity is expected to moderate slightly into 2026 as work reaches completion or passes peak activity levels on such major projects as the Peace River Site C Dam, the first phase of the LNG Canada project, and the Pattullo Bridge Replacement. Investment then rises to a forecast peak in 2027 as work peaks on the Woodfibre and Cedar LNG facilities, as well as the proposed second phase of the LNG Canada project, various utility projects, and the George Massey/Fraser River Tunnel Replacement. Later years see investment levels trend lower, but remain elevated well beyond historical levels.

ICI buildings construction activity, meanwhile, has been increasing since 2021 and is projected to continue to do so into 2025, driven by a large volume of projects in the healthcare and education sectors. Activity is largely sustained across the forecast period, and at a historically elevated level. Work is driven initially by a long list of healthcare and education projects in all regions and later by strong growth in commercial and industrial buildings projects.

**FIGURE 5:
NON-RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INVESTMENT, BRITISH COLUMBIA**



* \$2017 millions indicates that the investment values are in year 2017 dollars (base year), that is, adjusted for inflation. This is used to calculate the real physical year-to-year change of the value of construction, factoring out growth (increase in value) due to increases in prices.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

As a result of these trends, non-residential construction employment is expected to rise by 10% above 2024 levels by 2034, with much of this growth occurring during the initial forecast years of 2025 to 2027. Growth is greatest in non-residential maintenance (27%) and ICI buildings (17%) employment, while engineering construction employment is largely unchanged.

Note that the data in this outlook scenario is based on current known project approvals and schedules. A long list of proposed new resource development projects awaiting a positive final investment decision are not factored into this analysis. Positive final investment decisions for these projects can significantly impact long-term employment trends, and would add to the industry’s need to attract, train and retain new workers.

Table 3 summarizes the estimated percent change in non-residential employment by sector across three periods: the short term (2025–2027), the medium term (2028–2030), and the long term (2031–2034).

**TABLE 3:
CHANGES IN NON-RESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT
BY SECTOR, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

SECTOR	% CHANGE 2025–2027	% CHANGE 2028–2030	% CHANGE 2031–2034
Total non-residential employment	7%	-1%	3%
Industrial buildings	34%	11%	11%
Commercial and institutional buildings	1%	0%	6%
Heavy industrial	22%	-1%	5%
Other engineering	-1%	-10%	-1%
Roads, highways and bridges	-10%	-3%	-26%
Non-residential maintenance	11%	8%	6%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)



NON-RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 33 covered trades in the province. See Table 4.

TABLE 4:
NON-RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – NON-RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Boilermakers	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Bricklayers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Crane operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Drillers and blasters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electrical power line and cable workers	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Gas fitters	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – NON-RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Industrial instrument technicians and mechanics	4	3	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	3
Insulators	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	5	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
Tilesetters	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and related machine operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

LOWER MAINLAND CONSTRUCTION FORECAST

The Lower Mainland³ construction market, which accounted for 57% of the province's construction employment, reported a small overall gain in construction activity in 2024. Growth in the region's non-residential sector offset a slight decline in the residential sector.

Residential investment levels have been elevated in recent years, given an influx of international migrants to the region. Despite this fact, housing starts declined by 18% in 2024, with losses greatest among single-detached units. Some of this contraction was offset by growth in residential renovation activity.

Non-residential investment levels increased again in 2024, driven by ongoing work on projects in the healthcare and education sectors, and on liquefied natural gas facilities, pipelines, several water and wastewater projects, and major public transit projects.

The outlook calls for investment levels in both sectors to contract modestly to the end of the decade. Residential construction activity is expected to cycle lower into 2028 as population growth slows in the region. Housing starts in particular track a modest, but steady decline across the entire outlook period. Some of this contraction is offset by continuous growth in residential renovations activity.

Investment in non-residential construction is projected to stabilize across the near-term, given a large volume of major projects underway and proposed in both the industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings and engineering construction sectors. Activity moderates across the ICI sector before ramping up in later years. Engineering construction activity, meanwhile, ebbs and flows with the timing of major projects, but levels remain elevated to the end of the forecast period.

Following these trends, employment in both sectors is expected to diverge across the forecast period. Residential employment is projected to contract by 11% compared to 2024 levels, with losses exclusive to new-housing construction. Employment in the non-residential sector, however, ends the decade 6% above 2024 levels.

Over the same period, as many as 22,600 workers are expected to exit the region's labour force through retirement. This, combined with an anticipated labour force contraction of 1,800 workers due to slower construction growth, leaves the region with an overall hiring requirement of 20,800 workers. Although the recruiting of first-time new entrants from the local population is expected to partially offset the impact of retirements on the labour force, these new workers do not possess the skills and experience of retiring workers, which may compound potential skilled labour shortages locally.

³ The Lower Mainland region is defined by the economic regions of Greater Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, Squamish, and Lillooet.

LOWER MAINLAND RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Housing starts in the Lower Mainland reached a recent peak of almost 37,300 units in 2023. Levels stepped down in 2024 under pressure from rising interest rates and weakening consumer spending levels. With international migration to the region anticipated to slow in the near-term forecast period (i.e., 2025 to 2027) as adjusted federal immigration targets take hold, household formation levels (not shown here) are expected to contract. This, in turn, drives down housing starts across the forecast period.

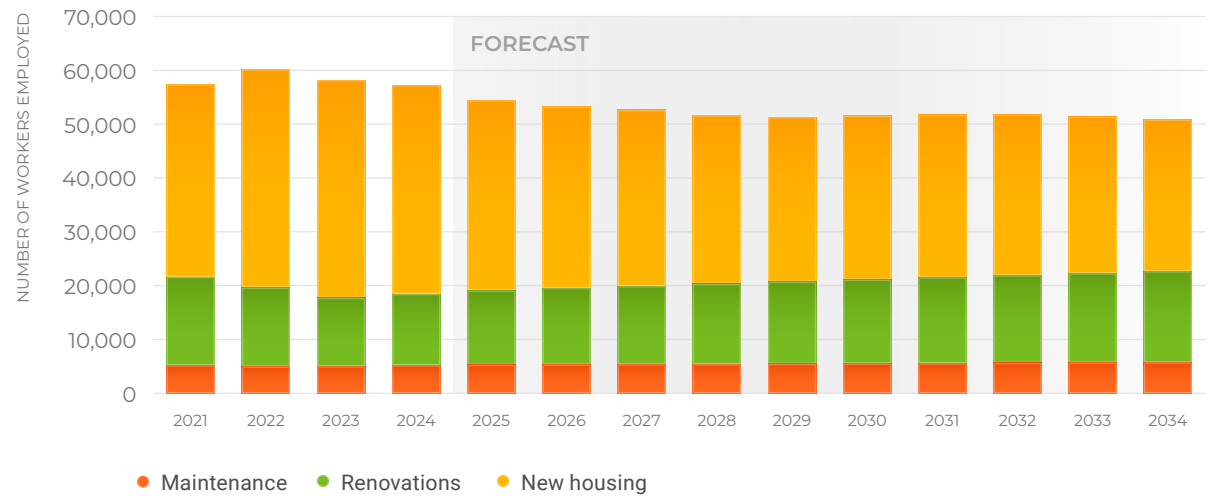
New-housing investment levels, which closely follow housing start trends, are expected to cycle down into the early 2030s, at which point the market sees modest growth in demand for single-detached units. Investment in residential renovations, meanwhile, grows continuously across the forecast period as the sector benefits from lower borrowing costs and the lower cost of renovations compared to new-home purchases.

As a result of these factors, residential employment is projected to see a steady series of contractions into 2029, with losses exclusive to the new-housing component. Levels stabilize in later years, while strong gains in employment relating to renovations offset some of the downward pressure created by reduced new housing demands. Overall residential employment ends the decade 11% below 2024 levels.

Figure 6 shows anticipated employment trends by sector for residential construction across the forecast.

As previously indicated, the analysis in this report is based on existing trends and market forces. It does not take into account aspirational public-sector initiatives to increase the housing supply.

FIGURE 6:
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OUTLOOK,
LOWER MAINLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

THE AVAILABLE LABOUR FORCE

Reduced construction demands are projected to contract the region’s residential sector labour force by 5,700 workers by 2034. The retirement of 12,600 workers during this period will bring hiring requirements to 6,900 workers. Meanwhile, the industry is expected to add as many as 8,300 new-entrant workers from the local population under the age of 30. Given these factors, the industry may face a moderate surplus of as many as 1,400 workers by 2034. Some of these workers may pursue employment in the region’s non-residential construction sector as a result.

RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 26 covered trades in the region. See Table 5.

TABLE 5: RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, LOWER MAINLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Bricklayers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Floor covering installers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Gas fitters	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Home building and renovation managers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Insulators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tilesetters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and related machine operators	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

LOWER MAINLAND NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Non-residential construction activity in the region comes into the forecast period on an upward trend. Growth is driven by a large volume of projects across the engineering construction sector and in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings. The former is being driven by work on liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities, several water and wastewater projects, and major public transit projects. The latter is driven by a large number of projects underway in the education and healthcare sectors.

The outlook calls for non-residential construction investment levels to stabilize in the near term before contracting slightly to the end of the decade.

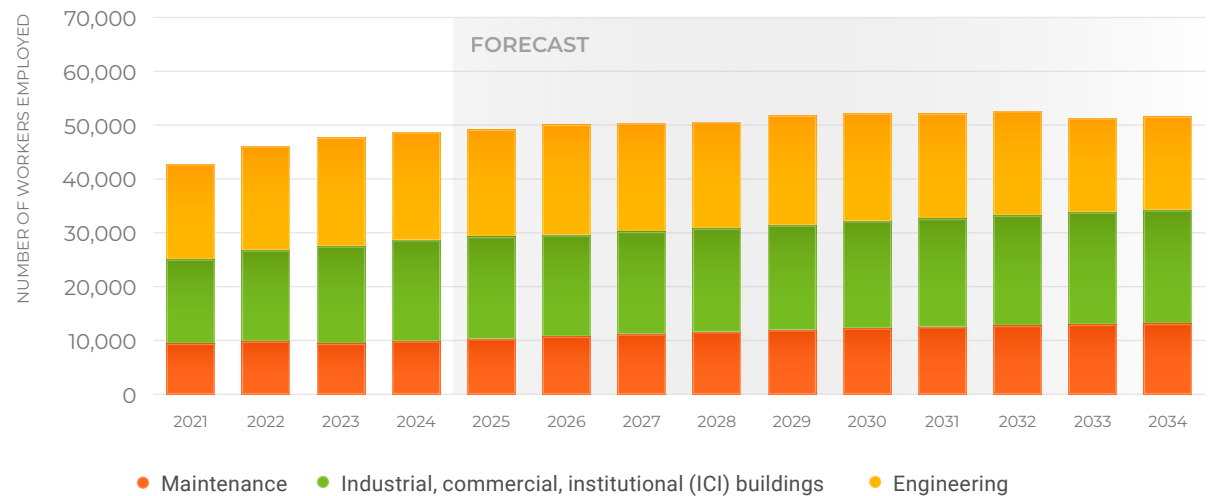
Initially, investment levels are driven by the large volume of engineering construction works described above. Later years see engineering construction levels decline as work concludes on these projects, although levels remain well above historical norms.

In the ICI buildings sector, investment levels reach a forecast peak in 2025 with continued work on several projects, including the St. Paul’s Hospital, Surrey Hospital, and the Royal Columbian Hospital Redevelopment. As these projects pass peak levels or conclude, investment slows into 2028. Later years see growth driven principally by strong demand for commercial buildings.

Overall, non-residential construction employment is expected to rise by 6% above 2024 levels by 2034, as strong gains in employment relating to ICI buildings (12%) and maintenance activity (34%) offset a contraction of 13% in engineering-related employment.

Figure 7 shows the anticipated employment trends by sector for non-residential construction across the forecast.

**FIGURE 7:
NON-RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OUTLOOK,
LOWER MAINLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA**



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

THE AVAILABLE LABOUR FORCE

Increased construction demands are expected to require the region’s non-residential labour force to increase by 3,800 workers by 2034. An estimated 10,000 workers are expected to exit the industry due to retirement over the forecast period, bringing the region’s total hiring requirement to 13,800 workers. This hiring requirement will be at least partially closed by the addition of 9,500 new-entrant workers under the age of 30 from the local population. Even so, the region faces a projected labour force deficit of 4,300 workers by 2034. This gap may be partially closed if displaced residential workers in the region can be integrated into the non-residential labour force.

NON-RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 31 covered trades in the region. See Table 6.

TABLE 6:
NON-RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, LOWER MAINLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – NON-RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Bricklayers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Construction estimators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Construction managers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Crane operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Drillers and blasters	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Electrical power line and cable workers	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – NON-RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Electricians	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Gas fitters	5	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Insulators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	4	3	4	3	2	4	3	3	3	3	3
Tilesetters	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Truck drivers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Welders and related machine operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

VANCOUVER ISLAND CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

Construction in the Vancouver Island region⁴ is typically driven by activity in the residential sector. Competing pressures over the early part of the 2020s, however, have changed this narrative. Rising interest rates and slowing population growth have contracted investment in the local residential sector to the point where the expanding non-residential sector is now the principal driver of construction investment.

Overall construction investment stepped down in 2024. A contraction in both new housing construction and in renovations drove residential investment levels down by just under 6%. Offsetting this loss somewhat was a modest increase (+1%) in non-residential construction activity that was driven by continued high levels of activity in both engineering construction and in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings.

The outlook calls for investment in both residential and non-residential construction to increase across the forecast period, although growth in both is stronger in the later forecast years.

Residential construction activity is expected to see growth in 2025 and 2026 and then trend lower through the remainder of the 2020s as overall housing starts decrease in line with weaker population growth. The later years of the forecast see investment in new housing return to growth with a recovery in demand for single-detached units. Meanwhile, investment in residential renovations is projected to rise continuously.

Non-residential construction activity is expected to record incremental gains into 2027. This occurs with ongoing work on several major projects in both the engineering construction sector and in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings. Levels decline modestly between 2028 and 2030 with the completion of some of the ongoing work on healthcare and education projects, and with the conclusion of seismic work on the John Hart Dam.

Construction employment in the region is expected to increase across the forecast period, with growth exclusive to the non-residential component (9%). Employment in the residential sector is virtually unchanged from 2024 levels by 2034.

Over the same period, the region will have to contend with the need to replace some 7,400 workers, or 22% of the 2024 labour force, who are expected to exit the industry due to retirement. Combined with the need to recruit some 1,900 workers to build new capacity for growth, the industry's overall hiring requirements is estimated at 9,300 workers. Although an estimated 5,700 new entrants under the age of 30 are expected to join the local labour force by 2034, the Vancouver Island region could nonetheless face a labour force deficit of some 3,600 workers. Closing this gap will require the industry to recruit from outside traditional channels.

⁴ The Vancouver Island & Coast Economic Region includes a number of regional districts, including the Capital Region, Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo, Alberni-Clayoquot, Strathcona, Comox Valley, Powell River, Mount Waddington, and Central Coast.

VANCOUVER ISLAND RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Housing starts nearly tripled in the Vancouver Island region between 2014 and 2021, driven by elevated levels of household formation (not shown here). They have receded since, under pressure from rising interest rates and affordability concerns.

The outlook calls for housing starts to increase briefly in 2025 before declining to 2031. Starts in multi-family units, and apartments in particular, are forecast to contract as international migration slows. Demand for single-detached units, meanwhile, remains elevated across the forecast period, rising notably in 2031 and beyond, and driving an overall growth in housing starts through this period.

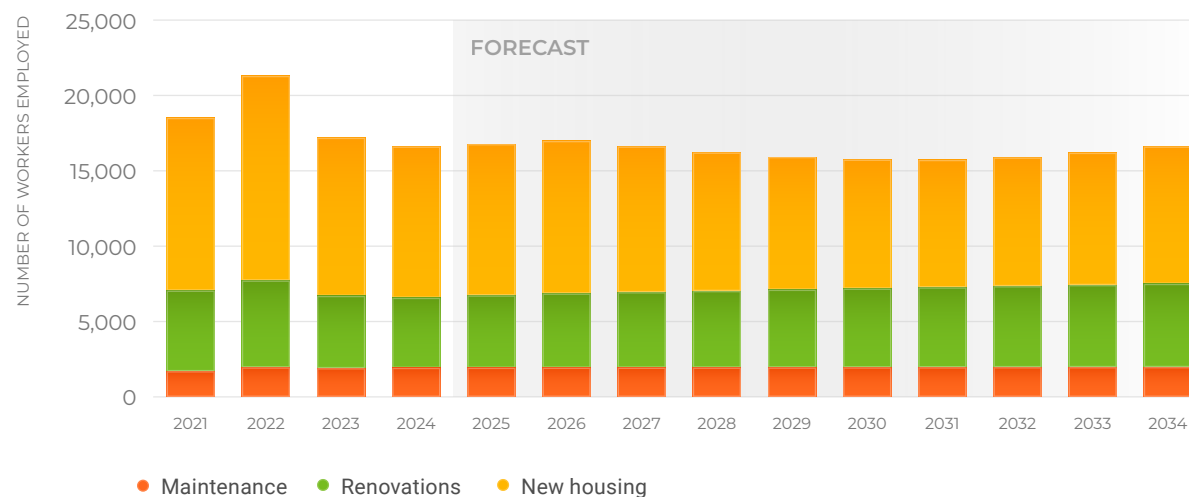
Investment in new housing is expected to trend down into 2031 before trending upward to the end of the decade as starts for multi-unit dwellings, which are projected to contract between 2025 and 2030, stabilize, and demand for single-detached units rises.

Residential renovations investment is expected to rise steadily across the outlook period, driven by an aging housing stock, higher property prices, and a population that chooses to age in place in their older years.

As Figure 8 shows, residential employment is expected to remain unchanged between 2025 and 2034. Levels cycle up modestly in 2025 and 2026 with growth in new housing before weakening into 2031 and growing again thereafter. Gains in renovation (19%) and maintenance (3%) employment offset a contraction of 9% in employment related to new housing.

As previously indicated, the analysis in this report is based on existing trends and market forces. It does not take into account aspirational public-sector initiatives to increase the housing supply.

FIGURE 8:
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OUTLOOK,
VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

THE AVAILABLE LABOUR FORCE

A slight increase in construction demands should elevate the region's residential labour force by 300 workers across the forecast period. Meanwhile, the industry is expected to see the retirement of some 4,100 workers by 2034, leaving it with a total hiring requirement of 4,400 workers. Some of this requirement is expected to be closed by the recruitment of 2,700 new-entrant workers under the age of 30 from the local population.

RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 18 covered trades in the region. See Table 7.

**TABLE 7:
RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, VANCOUVER ISLAND,
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Bricklayers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Carpenters	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Home building and renovation managers	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tilesetters	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

VANCOUVER ISLAND NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Non-residential construction investment in the Vancouver Island region has been on a steady upward trend since 2021, driven by a long list of projects in both the engineering construction sector and in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings. Investment levels rose again, modestly, in 2024 as activity on these projects was largely sustained.

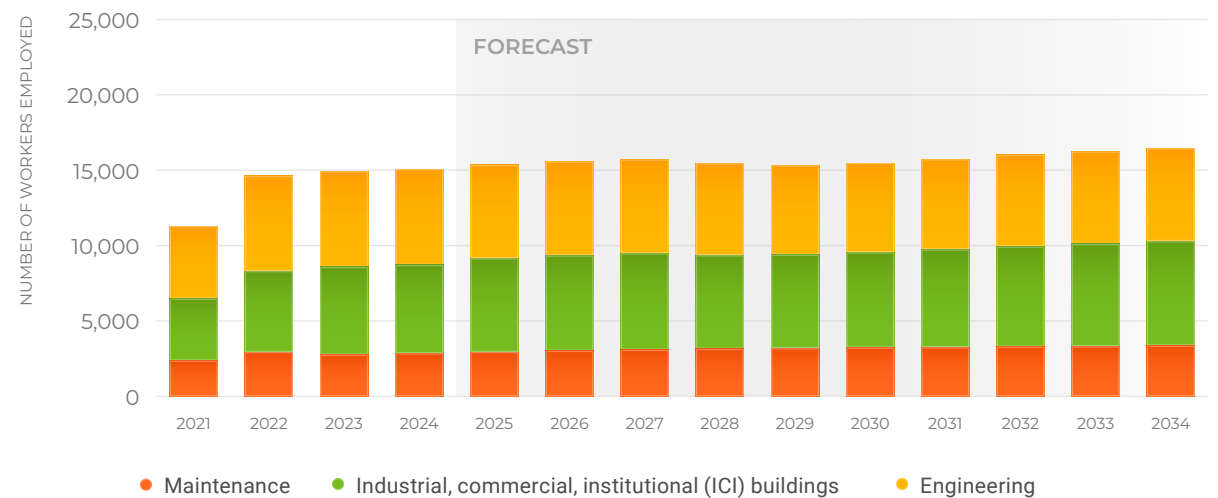
The outlook for the sector calls for investment levels to cycle across the decade. Levels rise modestly into 2027 with the continuation of work on several key healthcare projects in the region, including the Cowichan District Hospital Replacement, the Nanaimo Cancer Center, and the Westshore Long-term Care Facility, and with ongoing work on the John Hart Dam.

Investment then declines into 2030 with the conclusion of many of these projects before cycling up to the end of the decade in line with economic growth and on the strength of growth in the commercial component in particular.

Combined, these demands elevate non-residential construction employment by 9% across the forecast period. Growth is cyclical, with the sector adding workers between 2025 and 2027, then contracting in 2028 and 2029, and growing again in 2030 and beyond. Gains in ICI buildings employment (18%) and maintenance employment (18%) more than offset a contraction of 3% in the engineering construction component.

Figure 9 shows the anticipated employment trends by sector for non-residential construction across the forecast period.

FIGURE 9:
**NON-RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OUTLOOK,
VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA**



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, BuildForce Canada (2025–2034)

THE AVAILABLE LABOUR FORCE

The rise in overall employment will require the local industry to recruit an additional 1,500 workers over the forecast period. The retirement of 3,300 workers during this period will increase the overall regional hiring requirement to 4,800 workers. The addition of 3,000 new-entrant workers under the age of 30 from local recruitment efforts will help to moderate labour force pressures, but unless recruitment is increased, a potential deficit of 1,800 workers may emerge by 2034.

NON-RESIDENTIAL RANKINGS, RISKS, AND MOBILITY

Based on currently known demands, industry recruitment and retirement estimates, the following ranks apply to the 25 covered trades in the region. See Table 8.

**TABLE 8:
NON-RESIDENTIAL MARKET RANKINGS, VANCOUVER ISLAND,
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS – NON-RESIDENTIAL	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Carpenters	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Concrete finishers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction estimators	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Construction managers	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Contractors and supervisors	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Crane operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Drillers and blasters	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Electricians	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Elevator constructors and mechanics	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Floor covering installers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Glaziers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Insulators	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Plumbers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential and commercial installers and servicers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Roofers and shinglers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sheet metal workers	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trades helpers and labourers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Truck drivers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Welders and related machine operators	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LABOUR FORCE

THE AVAILABLE LABOUR FORCE

Growing construction demands over the decade, most of which are concentrated in the non-residential sector, will require British Columbia’s construction labour force to increase by 16,300 workers by 2034. Combined with the expected retirement of 43,800 workers, or 23% of the 2024 labour force, the province faces a potential hiring requirement of 60,100 workers.

Some of these hiring requirements may be met by an estimated 37,400 first-time new entrants under the age of 30 from the local population, leaving a recruitment gap of about 22,700 workers that will need to be recruited from outside the local construction labour force.

Keeping pace with recruitment and training will require a combination of strategies, including maintaining local recruitment and training efforts, particularly from groups traditionally under-represented in the construction labour force, the hiring of workers from other industries with the required skills sets, and the recruitment of immigrants to Canada with skilled trades training and/or construction experience.

Figure 10 provides a summary of the estimated changes in the construction labour force across the forecast period.

FIGURE 10:
CHANGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE, BRITISH COLUMBIA



* Net mobility refers to the number of workers needed to be brought into the industry from other industries or other provinces to meet rising demands or the number of workers that exit the industry in downturns. Positive net mobility means that industry must attract workers, while negative net mobility arises from an excess supply of workers in the local construction labour force.

Note: Due to rounding, numbers may not add up to the totals indicated.

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

LABOUR FORCE RECRUITMENT

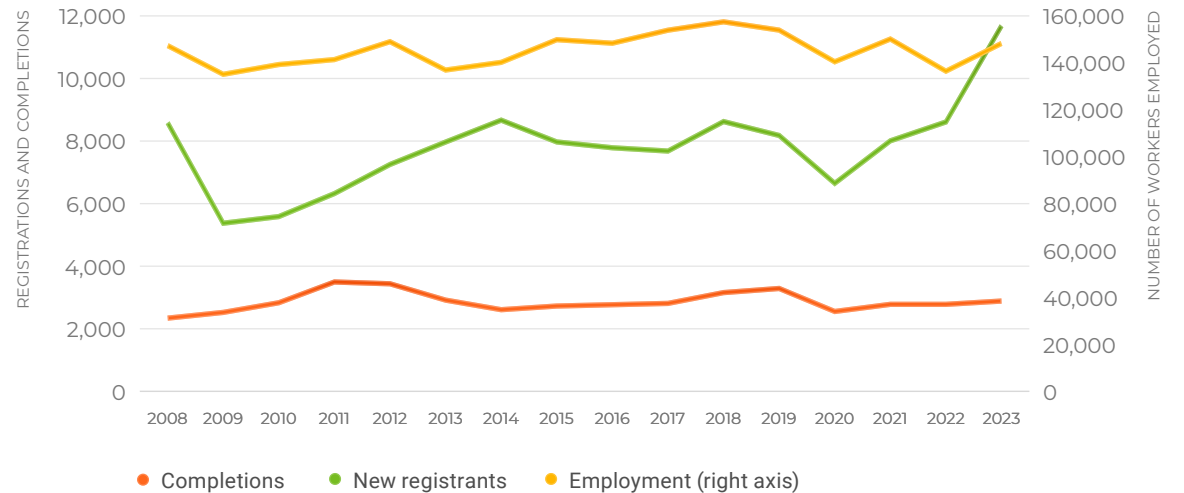
APPRENTICESHIP

The construction industry is dependent on a variety of skilled trades, some voluntary and some compulsory, as well as several skilled trades that fall outside the traditional apprenticeship development systems of the province. As such, while apprenticeship registrations cannot be viewed as a complete measure of industry recruitment, the metric is a useful barometer of industry success in the recruitment of new entrants.

British Columbia saw an unprecedented number of new apprentices in 2023. New registrations in the province’s 25 largest construction trades increased by 36% from the previous year. The reintroduction of skilled trade certification in the province in 2023 has been a driving factor of this growth, which required unregistered workers in select trades to be registered as an apprentice.⁵

New registrations in the seven trades requiring a skilled trade certification accounted for more than half of the increase observed in 2023.⁶ The number of program completions increased by 4% in 2023, remaining below the level observed over the last decade. The implementation of skilled trade certification will likely result in an increase in the number of certified journeypersons in the provincial construction industry over the outlook period.

FIGURE 11:
NEW APPRENTICE REGISTRATIONS, COMPLETIONS,
AND TRADE EMPLOYMENT, BRITISH COLUMBIA



⁵ Skilled Trades BC Annual Service Plan Report

⁶ The seven trades now designated as Skilled Trades Certification trades are: construction electrician, industrial electrician, powerline technician, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, gasfitter (class A & B), steamfitter/pipefitter and sheet metal worker.

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

Table 9 provides a trade-by-trade breakdown of the anticipated certification requirements to meet the construction industry's share of employment and replacement demand over the scenario period. Based on projected new registrations, 12 trades are at risk of completions not keeping pace with the number of new journeypersons required over the outlook period. Trades within this group include bricklayer, lather, painter and decorator, glazier, welder, boilermaker, heavy duty equipment operator, roofer, carpenter, insulator (heat and frost), powerline technician, and mobile crane operator.

TABLE 9:
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION CERTIFICATION DEMAND AND PROJECTED COMPLETIONS BY TRADE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2025 TO 2034⁷

TRADE	TOTAL CERTIFICATION DEMAND – CONSTRUCTION	TARGET NEW REGISTRANTS – CONSTRUCTION	APPRENTICE CERTIFICATION SUPPLY RISK – ALL INDUSTRIES
Bricklayer	300	67	●
Lather (Interior Systems Mechanic)	357	93	●
Painter and Decorator	789	226	●
Glazier	299	97	●
Welder	446	156	●
Boilermaker	379	145	●
Heavy Equipment Operator	410	159	●
Roofer	482	266	●
Carpenter	5,692	3,362	●
Insulator (Heat and Frost)	251	151	●
Powerline Technician	197	142	●
Mobile Crane Operator	139	111	●

⁷ This analysis does not account for an existing skills mismatch at the 2024 starting point.

TRADE	TOTAL CERTIFICATION DEMAND – CONSTRUCTION	TARGET NEW REGISTRANTS – CONSTRUCTION	APPRENTICE CERTIFICATION SUPPLY RISK – ALL INDUSTRIES
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	274	249	●
Instrumentation and Control Technician	41	42	●
Steamfitter/Pipefitter	264	374	●
Ironworker (Generalist)	95	139	●
Metal Fabricator (Fitter)	192	283	●
Construction Electrician	5,304	9,774	●
Heavy-Duty Equipment Technician	272	514	●
Sheet Metal Worker	627	1,343	●
Plumber	2,469	5,361	●
Sprinkler Fitter	225	499	●
Industrial Electrician	185	530	●
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	852	2464	●
Gasfitter*	163	881	●

- Certifications required exceed projected completions
- Certifications required in line with projected completions
- Projected completions exceed certifications required

* Includes both class A and B

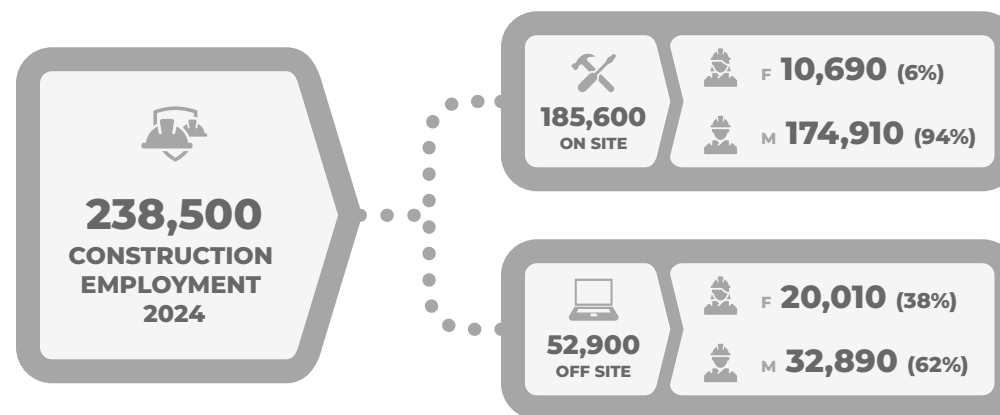
SOURCE: BuildForce Canada

UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS OF WORKERS

Due in part to lower fertility rates and smaller family sizes in Canada for more than three decades, the share of younger Canadians available to enter the labour force has been in decline for several years. As the baby boom generation of workers continues retiring throughout the decade, the competition for younger workers will be intense. To help mitigate the impact of this shift in demographics, the construction industry must diversify its recruitment. Specifically, it must increase recruitment of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in the current construction labour force, including women, Indigenous People, and immigrants to Canada by raising awareness and working with settlement organizations to promote career opportunities to individuals new to the country.

In 2024, there were approximately 30,700 women employed in British Columbia’s construction industry, of which 35% worked on site, directly on construction projects, while the remaining 65% worked off site, primarily in administrative and management-related occupations. Of the 185,600 tradespeople employed in the industry, women made up only 6% (see Figure 12).

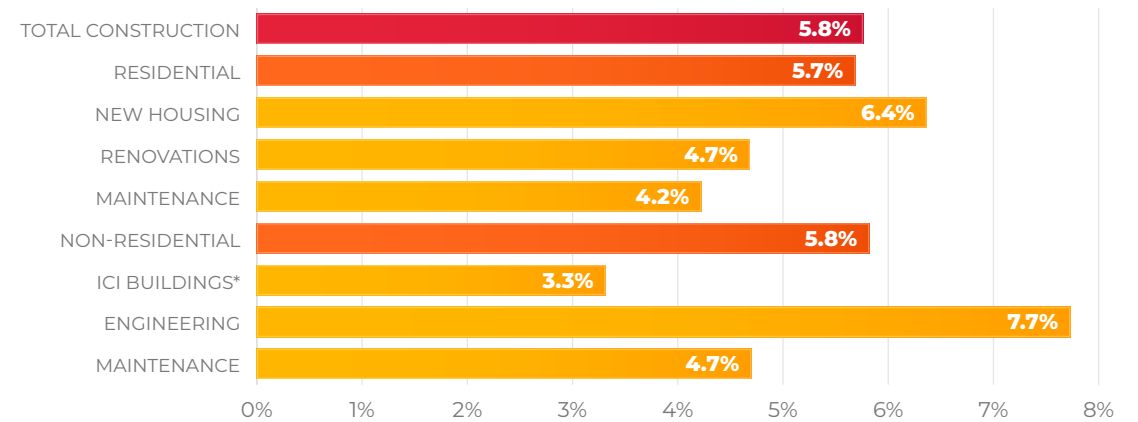
FIGURE 12:
DETAILED CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2024



SOURCE: BuildForce Canada calculations based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 2021 Census of the Population.

The estimated 10,690 tradeswomen in British Columbia are represented across all sectors of construction. Women account for a relatively equal share of total tradespeople in the residential (5.7%) and non-residential (5.8%) construction sectors. Across sectors, engineering construction has the highest representation of women, accounting for approximately 8% of the workforce (see Figure 13). The top five trades and occupations in which women tend to be employed are trade helpers and labourers (22% of all tradeswomen), construction managers (18%), contractors and supervisors (12%), carpenters (7%), and home building and renovation managers (6%).

FIGURE 13:
WOMEN'S SHARE OF TOTAL DIRECT TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS (ON SITE), BRITISH COLUMBIA



* industrial, commercial, institutional

SOURCE: BuildForce Canada calculations based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 2021 Census of the Population.

The Indigenous population is the fastest growing population in Canada, presenting significant recruitment opportunities for British Columbia’s construction industry. In 2023, Indigenous People made up 3.9% of Canada’s workforce and 5.2% of the national construction workforce.

In British Columbia, Indigenous People accounted for 6.7% of the province’s construction workforce, an increase of approximately 1% since 2014. The construction share is higher than the share of Indigenous People in the broader provincial labour force, which stands at 4.6% (see Table 10). As the Indigenous population continues to expand, sustained efforts in recruitment and retention will need to be made to increase the industry’s share of the population into the labour force.

**TABLE 10:
REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA’S CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE**

INDUSTRY	INDIGENOUS	NON-INDIGENOUS	TOTAL	INDIGENOUS SHARE OF TOTAL WORKFORCE, %
Construction				
2014	13,100	211,800	224,900	5.8%
2023	16,300	226,800	243,100	6.7%
All Industries				
2014	101,000	2,403,100	2,504,100	4.0%
2023	134,900	2,797,900	2,932,800	4.6%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom Data Request 2023

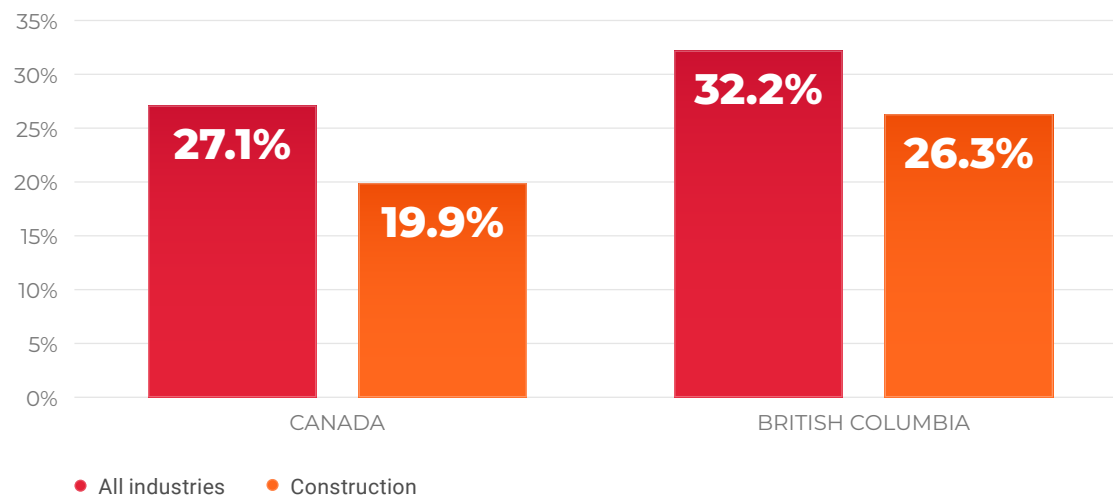


British Columbia’s construction industry may also leverage newcomers (immigrants) to Canada over the forecast period to meet labour requirements. Due to the declining natural rates of population growth, immigrants are the primary source of labour force growth in the province.

Immigrants have been playing an increasingly important role in replenishing the provincial workforce, with the share of immigrants increasing from 26.7% in 2014 to 32.2% in 2023. The province has attracted and integrated a higher rate of immigrants into the labour force compared to other provinces; however, immigrants remain underrepresented in the provincial construction industry. The construction labour force share of immigrants was 26.3% in 2023, which is lower than the share in the overall provincial labour force. (See Figure 14).⁸

Based on historical settlement patterns (and factoring in new targets for immigration), the province is expected to welcome more than 548,600 new immigrants between 2025 and 2034. As these individuals will make up an increasing share of the province’s core working-age population, additional recruitment efforts will be required to ensure the construction industry recruits its share of newcomers into the labour force.

FIGURE 14:
SHARE (%) OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE, 2023



⁸Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom Data Request 2023.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0083-01 Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, annual



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The 2025–2034 *Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward* scenario for British Columbia sees the province’s construction sector start to slow after several years of strong activity.

Residential construction investment levels have slowed in recent years, largely due to rising interest rates and elevated home prices. Levels are projected to remain comparatively stable into the early 2030s before advancing modestly to the end of the decade. Slowing demand for new housing construction through most of the forecast period is offset by healthy growth in the market for residential renovations.

Non-residential construction activity has been on an upward trend in the province since 2016, and has been supported in recent years by a large volume of projects underway in both engineering construction and the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings. Although levels stepped down in 2024, an historically large volume of work on major liquefied natural gas facilities, public transit, water-wastewater treatment and government and institutional projects should keep investment levels elevated into 2027.

Later years see investment levels cycle up and down. Investment contracts in the latter part of the 2020s, but remains high, driven by work on major projects such as the John Hart Dam seismic upgrade, Roberts Bank terminal expansion, Massey Tunnel replacement, and various wastewater treatment projects. The final years of the forecast see investment supported by overall economic and population growth.

The challenge for British Columbia’s construction sector will lie in addressing the hiring gap created by the combination of growth and prospective retirements. The industry faces a potential hiring requirement of 60,100 workers over this period, much of which is driven by the retirement of 43,800 workers, or 23% of the 2024 labour force.

Closing this gap will require a combination of strategies that include enhanced local recruitment and training, including the recruitment of permanent residents and newly arrived immigrants, and promoting career opportunities to workers with comparable skill sets who have been displaced from other industries.

The industry scenario-based approach developed by BuildForce Canada to assess future labour market conditions provides a powerful planning tool for industry, government, and other stakeholders to better track labour market conditions and identify potential pressure points. The anticipated labour market conditions reflect current industry expectations of population growth and the timing of major projects. Any changes to these assumptions present risks and potentially alter anticipated labour market conditions.

ABOUT THE BUILDFORCE CANADA LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM

BuildForce Canada's labour market information (LMI) system uses the most advanced and detailed industry model available in Canada to produce a forecast scenario that reflects current and future labour demand and supply information for the residential and non-residential construction sectors, by province.

Updated annually, the system is calibrated to the latest information on global, national, and provincial economic conditions derived from various data sources including Statistics Canada, Canadian financial institutions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and federal and provincial budget plans. Key factors driving the outlook scenario include: economic environment measures such as real GDP growth, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, commodity prices, and international trading partner trends, and population growth and demographic trends.

Unique to the BuildForce system is the integration of a major projects inventory. This is developed in partnership with provincial LMI committees – networks of industry stakeholders that include labour groups, construction associations, owners, and federal/provincial government departments – and identifies key projects that may distort construction investment trends and market conditions.

Information on economics, demographics, and major projects are combined into a dynamic, multi-sector and multi-factor macroeconomic model to generate a 10-year labour market outlook scenario for the residential and non-residential construction sectors in each Canadian province.

The system incorporates coefficients derived from Statistics Canada's input-output tables to determine industry demands and proprietary coefficients developed by BuildForce Canada to translate residential and non-residential investment data into labour demands for the 34 most common on-site trades and occupations in the construction sector. These account for 75% of the total construction labour force.

For labour supply, the system utilizes Statistics Canada's 2021 Census of Population as a starting point. That data is adjusted to reflect current public-policy and demand factors, and is further refined through consultation with the provincial LMI committees to produce measures of provincial economic and population growth, employment growth, retirements, new entrants to the labour force, and interprovincial and international migration patterns.

Provincial residential and non-residential labour market conditions, by trade and occupation, are assessed based on changes in supply and demand and summarized in the form of tables. For each year, conditions are ranked from a low of 1 (in which excess labour supply is apparent, and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets) to a high of 5 (in which there is excess demand, competition is intense, and recruiting extends beyond local labour markets). Ranks are calculated based on annual employment growth, natural or normal unemployment rates, and changes in supply (i.e., retirements, new entrants, and mobility requirements to meet demands).

Rankings for some trades or occupations may be suppressed in some provinces and regions due to the small size of the workforce (i.e., fewer than 100 workers) and limited statistical reliability when assessing labour market conditions at the sector level. Some trades are also excluded because they typically do not work in the sector being assessed (e.g., boilermakers and millwrights typically do not work in residential construction, nor do homebuilding and renovation managers work in non-residential construction).

Finally, to further improve the robustness of the system, BuildForce Canada's outlook scenario is validated by provincial LMI committees.

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For the most detailed & comprehensive construction labour market data in Canada, visit [constructionforecasts.ca](https://www.constructionforecasts.ca)

CUSTOMIZABLE TABLES AND GRAPHS AVAILABLE FOR:

- Data on more than 30 construction trades and occupations by province looking ahead 10 years
- Key economic indicators, construction investment and labour market conditions by province and/or sector
- Macroeconomic and investment data



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