

Surface Mining / Quarrying / Construction Drillers & Blasters Oil & Gas Well Drillers

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Surface Mining, Quarrying & Construction Drillers & Blasters (NOC 7372)

Oil & Gas Well Drillers (NOC 8232)

Drillers & Blasters may also be called:

- surface mining blaster
- construction blaster
- construction driller
- foundation drill operator
- open-pit blaster
- open-pit driller
- rotary drilling machine operator

Oil & gas well drillers may also be called

- assistant driller
- directional drilling operator
- downhole tool operator
- drill stem tester
- service rig operator

1. What Would I Do?

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers operate heavy drilling machines to drill holes in open-pit mines, quarries and at construction sites.

Blasters work mostly in mining and construction. You use materials such as dynamite to open new quarries and mine shafts or to create controlled openings in rock for construction projects.

Oil and gas well drillers operate equipment to drill deep into the earth to extract oil and natural gas.

As a **Driller (Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction)** you:

- set up drill rigs at drilling sites
- operate rotary drilling machines to:
 - bore large blast holes in open-pit mine or quarry
 - drill blast holes in rock at road or other construction sites
 - drill holes for building foundations or pilings
- repair and maintain drilling equipment

As a **Blaster (Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction)** you:

- examine blast areas to determine amount of explosives needed and where to put them
- place explosives and attach detonators
- oversee the explosion and make sure all explosives are detonated

As an **Oil & Gas Well Driller** you:

- operate and maintain drilling equipment
- direct the activities of the rig crew and the operation of the rig equipment

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profiles for:**
 - ***Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters***
<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/7372>
 - ***Oil & Gas Well Drillers***
<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/8232>

- **Careers in Construction – Driller/Blaster**
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/drillerblaster>

- ***Career Cruising database*** (*Profiles for Surface Drillers, Explosives Specialist and Oil & Gas Well Drilling Crews*)
Available from the VPL Digital Library
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

*As a **surface driller**, you are physically fit and strong and mechanically inclined.*

*As a **blaster**, you are able to remain calm under pressure, have good hand-eye coordination & vision.*

*As an **oil & gas well driller**, you need mechanical and analytical ability, good hand-eye coordination, physical strength & stamina.*

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters work outdoors in all types of weather and inside heavy equipment. You may be exposed to flying particles, falling objects, explosives in dangerous locations and loud noises.

Oil & Gas Well Drillers often work in remote locations. You work outdoors, often in extreme weather conditions. You may be exposed to dust, loud noises and fumes from drilling rigs.

Sources:

- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for Surface Drillers, Explosives Specialist and Oil & Gas Well Drilling Crews)
- WorkBC Career Profiles
<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/7372>
<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/8232>

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, your average annual salary ranges from:

- \$53,000 - \$66,000 for **Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters**. You may be paid by the hour, by the foot drilled, or by a combination of the two. If you work for companies on a full-time basis you may receive benefits such as dental coverage, paid sick days and vacation. Self-employed drillers must provide your own benefits.
- \$66,000 - \$95,000 for **Oil & Gas Well Drillers**. Your salary depends on the number of hours worked and drilling activity can fluctuate greatly. In addition to your wage you usually receive living allowances when you have to work in a remote location. Full-time crew members may also receive benefits, such as dental coverage and paid sick leave.

In BC's regions, **Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters** can expect to make:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	20.50	28.50	33.00
Cariboo Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kootenay Region	20.00	29.00	32.70
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	22.00	29.09	33.00
Nechako Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thompson--Okanagan Region	22.00	28.00	35.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	25.00	29.10	33.00

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng>

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Oil & Gas Well Drillers can expect to make:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	18.33	36.00	43.50
Cariboo Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kootenay Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	15.00	35.00	42.20
Nechako Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thompson--Okanagan Region	19.75	40.00	44.20
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	19.50	33.00	42.20

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng>

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile
- *Career Cruising* database

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Drillers and Blasters

The Construction Sector Council predicts the job outlook for Drillers & Blasters in BC will fluctuate from good to balanced over the next 9 years.

Employment Outlook

Drillers and blasters (NOC 7372)

0.6% Expected annual demand growth rate (2014-2024)	190 Job openings (2014-2024)
Occupation Outlook for B.C.:	
% of job openings from replacement	79%
% of job openings from expansion	21%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	0.6%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	190

Chart from WorkBC (NOC 7372)

Oil & Gas Well Drillers

Industry experts forecast there will be between 285 to 410 new positions for oil & gas well drillers in BC by 2022. The greatest demand will be for those involved in the drilling /development of wells to produce **natural gas**.

Employment Outlook

Oil and gas drillers and related occupations (NOC 823)



Chart from WorkBC (NOC 8232)

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles
- Careers in Construction <http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers>
- Labour Market Outlook to 2022 for Canada's Oil and Gas Industry, http://www.careersinoilandgas.com/media/186873/canada_labour_market_outlook_to_2022_report_may_2013-1-.pdf

5. How Do I Become A Driller or a Blaster?

Surface Drillers

- Certification is not required to work in BC
- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- Experience as a heavy equipment operator may be required
- On the job training under the supervision of experienced workers is usually provided

Blasters

- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- On the job training is usually provided
- Experience as a blaster helper in surface mining and quarrying or construction may be required

Oil & gas well drillers

You usually require

- Completion of a Rig Technician apprenticeship (see the Industry Training Authority of BC, <http://www.itabc.ca/program/rig-technician>)

OR

- 3 – 6 months of formal training and at least four years of relevant work experience

Sources:

- WorkBC <http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/8232#section-job-requirements> ;
- Industry Training Authority of BC www.itabc.ca

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Surface Mining, Quarrying and Construction Drillers & Blasters work for:

- *mining, quarrying and construction companies*
- *drilling and blasting contractors*

Oil & gas well drillers work for:

- *drilling and service rig contractors*
- *petroleum-producing companies*

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun & The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings and careers section and also the online version at:

<http://www.workopolis.com/jobsearch/whitelabel/vancouver.sun/home/>

Online Job Postings

- **WorkBC Jobs**
<http://www.workbc.ca/JobSeekers/SearchResults.aspx>
- **Indeed.com**
<http://ca.indeed.com/>
- **Northeastern BC Job Search**
<http://www.jobsearchonline.bc.ca/Job%20Search/oilandgasjobs.htm>

- **BC Construction JobStores**

industrial, institutional and heavy construction jobs

<http://www.bcconstructionjobstores.com/> (free registration required)

Finding “Hidden Jobs”

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below help you with finding jobs in this “hidden” job market.

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use company directories to produce lists of employers who employ drillers and blasters in Vancouver or throughout BC. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Energy Services BC Directory**

<http://www.energyservicesbc.org/directory/>

- **Member Directory. Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors**

http://www.thehitch.ca/?page_id=32

- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**

<http://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members.php>

- **Reference Canada**

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on “Start Search” beside Canadian Businesses, then select the “Advanced Search” button. Select both “Keyword/SIC/NAICS” under Business Type and “City” under Geography. In the top search box enter “construction” and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the “View Results” button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**

<http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience.

Use the library catalogue, <http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

Surface Drillers and blasters may progress to supervisory positions with experience.

Drillers and blasters often perform both drilling and blasting activities.

Oil and gas well drillers may advance to rig management or other management positions. You may also move into drilling-related equipment sales or rig training, regulatory or safety positions.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors. CAODC**
<http://www.caodc.ca/>
- **CareersinConstruction.ca**
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-finder>
- **Careers in Oil and Gas**
<http://www.careersinoilandgas.com/>
- **RigTech**
<http://www.rigtech.ca>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search: Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]
- **Industry Profile: Oil & Gas**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search: Industry Profile oil gas]
- **Industry Profile: Mining**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search: Industry Profile mining]

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.