

Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers (NOC 7284)

Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers may also be called:

- plasterer or plasterer apprentice
- acoustical ceiling installer
- ceiling installer
- drywall applicator
- drywall finisher
- drywall installer and finisher apprentice
- drywall taper
- sheetrock applicator
- lather or lather apprentice

1. What Would I Do?

Plasterers, drywall installers and **finishers** and **lathers** are three closely related trades that build and finish walls in commercial and residential construction. These workers are involved in the application and finishing of such materials as fireproofing, thin wall, veneer plaster, rigid insulation and patent texturing materials

Plasterers apply finish and maintain and restore plaster or similar materials on interior and exterior walls, ceilings and building partitions to produce plain or decorative surfaces. Your duties can include:

- clean and prepare surfaces
- mix plaster ingredients in trough to desired consistency

- apply, level and smooth coats of plaster or stucco using trowels, floats, brushes and spraying equipment
- finish corners and angles and create decorative designs in finish coat
- mould and install ornamental plaster panels, cornices and trim
- spray acoustic materials or texture finish over walls and ceilings

Drywall installers and finishers install and finish drywall sheets and various types of ceiling systems. Your duties can include:

- measure, cut and fit drywall sheets for installation on walls and ceilings
- position and secure sheets to metal or wooden studs or joists
- cut and install metal corner beads to protect exterior corners
- fill joints, nail indentations, holes and cracks with joint compound using trowel and broad knife
- tape over joints using taping machine and embed tape in compound
- smooth out excess compound and allow coat to dry and apply successive coats of compound and sand seams and joints so that walls are perfectly smooth
- fabricate and install suspended metal ceiling grids and place in panels to form acoustical and coffered ceilings.

Lathers install support framework for ceiling systems, interior and exterior walls and building partitions. Your duties can include:

- prepare wall and ceiling layouts
- install metal stud framing and furring for interior drywall or plaster walls and ceilings, using hand and power tools
- attach metal or gypsum lath to studs or furring using nails, screws, clips or wire ties
- cut openings in lath for heating and ventilation piping, ducts and electrical outlets
- install corner beads and wire mesh around beams to which plaster is to be applied

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers and lathers**

<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/7284>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers should:

- *be physically fit and able to lift heavy objects*
- *work well with your hands*
- *have good vision and spatial perception*
- *have good hand-eye coordination*
- *have good eye for detail; artistic ability can be an asset*
- *have good math skills*
- *be comfortable working at heights from ladders or scaffolding*

Plasterers may work either indoors or outdoors, and may also work at heights using ladders or scaffolding. ***Drywall installers*** and ***lathers*** usually work indoors, and may use ladders or scaffolding. Many drywall tapers work on stilts, and face a risk of injury from falls. ***Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers*** may work in confined spaces and be exposed to dust and debris.

Sources:

- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for Plasterer and Drywall). Available from the VPL Digital Library
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
- WorkBC Career Profiles:
<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/7284>
- CareersinConstruction.ca:
<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/plastererdrywall-installer-and-finisherlather>

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the average annual salary for plasterers ranges from \$33,000 - \$44,000. In BC's regions, plasterers, drywall installers & finishers can expect to make:

**Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers - NOC 7284
 Hourly Wages**

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	15.00	24.00	31.00
Cariboo Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kootenay Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	15.00	21.00	27.00
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	15.00	24.00	31.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	15.95	25.00	30.00

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

Full-time, salaried positions are rare for plasterers. People in this trade usually earn an hourly wage. Depending on their employer, full-time plasterers may receive benefits such as paid vacation, paid sick days, and dental coverage. Some plasterers belong to unions. This means that their wages and benefits are negotiated on their behalf by union representatives.

Like other construction trades, plastering is affected by the economy. In poor economic times, there will be less construction work and, therefore, fewer job opportunities for plasterers. The amount of work available is also affected by the

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles <http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/7284>
- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for Plasterer and Drywaller)
 Available from the VPL Digital Library
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

For the 2013-2015 projection period, employment opportunities will be fair for Plasterers, Drywall Installers and Finishers and Lathers (NOC 7284) in British Columbia with average employment growth.

Due to the large size of this occupational group, there will be numerous opportunities for work in this profession. Industry sources report that the recent economic downturn reduced the demand for these workers, although this is expected to change as the economy improves. Demand for workers in this occupational group will be driven primarily by construction activity and the need to replace workers who retire.

Employment Outlook

0.9% Expected annual demand growth rate (2014-2024)	1,890 Job openings (2014-2024)
Occupation Outlook for B.C.:	
% of job openings from replacement	68%
% of job openings from expansion	32%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	0.9%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	1,890

Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC
- JobBank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>

5. How Do I Become a Plasterer, Drywall Installer & Finisher

In British Columbia, trade certification for drywall finishers & plasterers is available but not mandatory

You can find employment as a plaster & drywall finisher without formal training. However, most employers prefer to hire applicants who have completed a four-year apprenticeship program and gained certification through BC's Industry Training Authority.

Apprenticeship involves both classroom studies and on-the-job training under the supervision of a certified tradesperson, called a journeyperson.

To obtain a Certificate of Qualification as a drywall finisher, you write the Interprovincial Exam to qualify for the Interprovincial Standards' Red Seal. With a Red Seal, you can work in this trade anywhere in Canada.

If you have significant work experience in the trade but have never been certified in Canada, you may apply to *challenge* the certification. Being approved to challenge means that if you meet the criteria for your trade, you will not be required to go through the full program. Instead, you are allowed to become certified by writing and passing the final exam(s).

For more information about apprenticeship programs and certification see:

More information:

- **Industry Training Authority BC - Drywall Finisher**
<http://www.itabc.ca/program/drywall-finisher>
- **Red Seal Program**
<http://www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Plasterers, Drywall Installers & Finishers work in a variety of settings including:

- construction companies
- plastering, drywalling and lathing contractors
- may be self-employed

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 daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **BC Construction JobStores:** industrial, institutional and heavy construction jobs, (free: registration required)
<http://www.bcconstructionjobstores.com/>
- **Indeed.com**
http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **WorkBC Job Postings**
<http://www.workbc.ca/JobSeekers/SearchResults.aspx>
- **Job Bank**
http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/job_search.do
- **MyJobSite: Careers in construction and design**
<http://www.myjobsite.ca/>

Finding “Hidden Jobs”

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will 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 plasterers in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **British Columbia Construction Association Directories**

<http://www.bccassn.com/page/online%20directories.aspx>

- **Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association**

GVHBA membership directory, available at Central Library, Vancouver Public Library, **OR** online at: <http://www.gvhba.org/> (click on 'Find a Builder' or 'Find a Renovator')

- **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 "plasterers" ** and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

**You can also try entering "drywall contractors" to find more company names

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.

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/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**
<http://govolunteer.ca/>
- **Habitat for Humanity**
<http://www.habitatgv.ca/> (can volunteer at construction sites or at ReStores)

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?

With education and experience, workers may progress to foreperson or supervisory positions or they may start their own businesses. They may also become construction estimators, project managers or contractors.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **STEP**

<http://www.stepbc.ca/>

STEP is a no-fee employment program that helps immigrants get jobs in the construction industry

- **Careers in Construction**

<http://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/careers/career-finder>

- **BC Construction Association**

<http://www.bccassn.com/>

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**

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

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

- **BC Fastest Growing Industries:**

http://pwp.vpl.ca/siic/career-advice/#fast_industries

http://pwp.vpl.ca/siic/files/2014/10/Fastest_Growing_Industries_Construction.pdf

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/>.