

Medical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Medical Laboratory Technologist and Technician [NOC 3211 & 3212]

Job Description

Medical laboratory technologists [NOC 3211] conduct a variety of medical laboratory tests to assist in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.

As a *medical laboratory technologist* you perform the following duties:

- Conduct analyses of blood, urine and other body fluids
- Prepare tissue sections for microscopic examinations
- Conduct blood group, type and compatibility tests for transfusion purposes
- Set up, operate and maintain laboratory equipment
- Conduct quality control assessment of testing techniques

You may specialize in the following areas:

- clinical chemistry - chemically analysing blood and other body fluids
- clinical microbiology - culturing and identifying micro-organisms and determining antibiotic sensitivities
- hematology - studying blood cells
- histotechnology - preparing tissue specimens for microscopic examination
- transfusion medicine - taking and testing blood to determine its suitability for transfusions and preparing blood products
- cytotechnology - microscopically examining prepared cellular slides for evidence of abnormality or disease

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- clinical genetics - analysing patient tissue to determine the presence of a pre-existing genetic condition.

Medical laboratory technicians [NOC 3212] conduct routine medical tests and set up, clean and maintain equipment.

As a *medical laboratory technician* you perform the following duties:

- Collect blood or other samples from patients
- Conduct routine laboratory tests and sample analyses
- Log patient samples and prepare them for testing
- Set up, clean and maintain medical laboratory equipment

Sources:

WorkBC Career Profile <http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/> [Search 3211 & 3212]

Alberta Learning Information Centre (ALIS) Occupational Profile
<http://occinfo.alis.alberta.ca/occinfopreview/info/browse-occupations/occupation-profile.html?id=71003140>

Industry Overview

There is currently a shortage of medical laboratory technologists and technicians in B.C.

There is an increased demand for *general medical laboratory technologists*. You may be in particularly high demand if you are willing to move to rural and remote communities in BC.

You may find new job opportunities in hospitals and medical laboratories that provide contracted diagnostic services. New job creation for clinical genetics technologists is also expected as a result of the growth of molecular testing.

Source: Work BC Career Profiles

Job Outlook in BC



Chart from WorkBC

The **Employment Outlook for BC** provides job openings projections for medical laboratory technologists & technicians within BC regions:

Region	2010 Estimated Employment	2015 Estimated Employment	Avg Annual % Change, 5 Years, 2010 to 2015
Vancouver Island	590	660	2.4%
Lower Mainland / Southwest	2,230	2,480	2.2%
Thompson-Okanagan	300	330	2.3%
Kootenay	80	90	3.2%
Cariboo	90	100	3.8%
North Coast & Nechako	50	60	3.1%
Northeast	30	40	4.0%

Source: Regional Employment Projections, BC Stats. Projections for development regions.
<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/LabourIncome/EmploymentUnemployment/RegionalEmploymentProjections.aspx> [accessed October 2014]

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You can learn more about working in BC from the following sources:

- **Work BC Career Profiles**

<http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/> [search NOC 3211 & NOC 3212]

- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Medical Lab Tech)

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

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

Types of Employers

Medical laboratory technologists and technicians work in many settings including:

- Hospitals
- Medical laboratories & clinics
- Canadian Blood Services
- Research institutes
- Universities and government research laboratories

Salary

The average salary for ***medical laboratory technologists*** working full-time in BC is between \$53,000 and \$66,000 a year.

In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	11.54	28.48	37.82
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	11.54	28.00	37.82
Thompson--Okanagan Region	11.54	28.48	37.82
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	11.54	28.48	37.82

Chart from Job Bank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> [NOC 3211]

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Medical laboratory technicians in BC make between \$44,000 and \$53,000 a year. In some cases a highly trained, experienced technician may make more than \$60,000 a year.

In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	19.23	22.00	40.00
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	15.00	22.00	40.00
Thompson--Okanagan Region	20.45	21.49	24.66
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	19.23	22.00	40.00

Chart from Job Bank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> [NOC 3212]

In addition to a salary, most full-time medical laboratory technologists and technicians receive benefits, such as paid sick days, vacation time, and dental coverage.

Working Hours

Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians work 35 – 40 hours per week. Your working hours vary depending on the type of laboratory. You may work rotating shifts of days, evenings and nights, including weekends and holidays.

Source: WorkBC Careers Profiles

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- you must be detail oriented and able to follow strict procedures
- requires a high level of accuracy, both in work procedures and in maintaining concise records
- good communication and interpersonal skills
- ability to work both independently and as part of a team

Source: WorkBC Careers Profiles

Education and Experience

To work as a ***medical laboratory technologist or technician*** you require:

- completion of a two or three year medical laboratory education program approved by the British Columbia Society of Laboratory Science (<http://www.bcsls.net/pages/ed-training.html>)
- certification by the BC Society for Medical Laboratory Science and/or Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science is not mandatory, but is usually required by employers

Qualifications

This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia.

However, many employers prefer you to be certified by the BC Society for Medical Laboratory Science (for *medical laboratory technicians*) or Canadian Society for Medical Science (for *medical laboratory technologists*). To learn about certification see:

British Columbia Society for Medical Laboratory Science

<http://www.bcsls.net/pages/member-overview.html>

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS)

<http://www.csmls.org/Certification/What-is-Certification.aspx>

Internationally Trained and Medical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians

If you wish to become a certified member of the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science you must:

- apply for a prior learning assessment (PLA). The PLA evaluates your education, training and work experience and compares it to the national standard.
- write the CSMLS National Certification Examinations (if your PLA assessment is satisfactory)

For more information see:

CSMLS Internationally Educated Technologist Certification Process

<http://www.csmls.org/Certification/Certification-Process/IEMLT.aspx>

HealthMatch BC

<https://www.healthmatchbc.org/Allied-Health/Medical-Laboratory-Technologists/Licensing-Registration.aspx>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at <http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
Access at VPL locations only

Online Job Postings

- **BC's Provincial Health Authorities**
BC's health authorities provide health services to British Columbians in all BC regions
 - **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**
<http://www.vch.ca/careers/>
 - **Fraser Health Authority**
<http://careers.fraserhealth.ca/Search-Jobs.aspx>
 - **Interior Health Authority**
<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/sites/Careers/Pages/default.aspx>
 - **Northern Health Authority**
<http://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
 - **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)**
<http://www.phsa.ca/Careers/default.htm>
 - **Vancouver Island Health Authority**
<http://www.viha.ca/careers/>

- **Indeed.ca**
<http://www.indeed.ca/>

Professional Associations Career Resources

- **BC Society of Laboratory Science**
<http://www.bcsls.net/pages/careers.html>
- **Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science Job Bank**
<http://www.csmls.org>
Job postings from across Canada. [Available to members only]

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For **medical laboratory technologists**, look for these related job titles:

- Immunology Technologist
- Clinical Laboratory Technologist
- Cytotechnologist
- Histology Technologist
- Histopathology Technologist
- Immunology Technologist (immunohematology)
- Tissue Technologist – Medical Laboratory

Source: <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/QuickSearch.aspx?val65=3211>

For **medical laboratory technicians**, look for these related job titles:

- Clinical laboratory technician
- Biochemical technician
- Medical laboratory assistant
- Pathology assistant
- Phlebotomist

Source: <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/QuickSearch.aspx?val65=3212>

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of hospitals, medical laboratories and pharmaceutical businesses in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Business in Vancouver – Book of Lists**

Biggest Life Sciences Companies in BC.

Available online at: <http://www.biv.com/article/20130423/BIV050103/130429985/-1/BIV0501/biggest-life-sciences-companies-in-bc> and at the Central Library, 338.9711 B97b

- **Canadian Medical Directory**

Available at the Central Library, 610.92 C21

- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**

Available at the Central Library, 362.11025 C21a

- **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 "laboratories" 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).*

4. Applying for a Job

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

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

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

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

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

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

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**

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

[Search Networking for Employment]

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

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

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Medical laboratory associations in BC and Canada can provide assistance and information. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **BC Society of Laboratory Science (BCSLS)**
<http://www.bcsls.net/>
- **Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS)**
<http://www.csmls.org/>
- **HealthMatch BC**
<https://www.healthmatchbc.org/Allied-Health.aspx>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession: Examples at the Central Library:

- **Canadian Healthcare Technology**
Available in print at Central Library, 610.2805 C2121 or online at
<http://www.canhealth.com/>
- **Canadian Journal of Medical Laboratory Science**
Available in print at Central Library, 610.5 C2122

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library,
Vancouver Public 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/> .*