

Food Counter Attendants & Kitchen Helpers

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Food Counter Attendants & Kitchen Helpers (NOC 6711)

Food Counter Attendants & Kitchen Helpers may also be called:

- *food preparer*
- *busboy, busgirl, busser*
- *server assistant*
- *cook's helper*
- *cafeteria attendant*
- *dishwasher*
- *fast-food preparer*
- *food service helper*
- *kitchen helper*

1. What Would I Do?

*Food Counter attendants and food preparers take customer orders, accept payment and serve customers at food counters. They may also prepare, heat and finish cooking simple food items. As a **food counter attendant / food preparer**, your duties can include:*

- use a cash register to take customer orders, accept payment and give change
- answer customer questions about menu items and serve customers at counters or buffet tables
- preparing food such as sandwiches, hamburgers, salads, milkshakes, ice cream dishes and beverages, including coffee-type drinks

- clean, peel, slice and trim food items using manual and electric appliances
- stock refrigerators, cupboards and salad bars
- keep records of the quantities of food used
- clean and sanitize kitchen areas including, work surfaces, cupboards and storage areas, as well as dispose of kitchen garbage
- clear and clean tables, trays and chairs
- reset tables with clean tablecloths, napkins, silverware, glasses and dishes -

Kitchen helpers, food service helpers and dishwashers: usually clear tables, clean kitchen areas and wash dishes and help workers who prepare or serve food and beverages.

As a ***kitchen helper or a food service helper***, your duties may include:

- wash work tables, meat blocks, cupboards, walls and appliances and clean kitchen work areas, equipment, utensils and dishes
- sweep and mop floors, and perform other duties to assist cook and kitchen staff
- remove and clear kitchen garbage
- remove dishes before and after courses, scrape and stack dishes, carry linen to and from laundry area
- clear and clean tables and trays in eating establishments
- bring clean dishes, flatware and other items to serving areas and set tables
- refill condiments and other supplies at tables and in serving areas
- unpack and store supplies in refrigerators, cupboards and storage areas
- help to wash, peel and prepare basic food items

As a ***dishwasher***, your duties may include:

- wash dishes, glassware, flatware, pots and pans either with a dishwasher or by hand
- place dishes in storage areas, sweep and scrub floors, sort and remove garbage and wash garbage cans
- may also clean and prepare food, keep kitchen work areas clean and orderly
load and unload trucks picking up or delivering food and supplies

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6711>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Food counter attendants and kitchen helpers should be:

- *energetic*
- *efficient*
- *able to multi-task*
- *able to work quickly*
- *able to remember customer orders*
- *good with people*

They should have:

- *excellent customer service skills*
- *basic mathematics and arithmetic skills*

Food service counter attendants, food preparers and kitchen helpers work days, evenings weekends and holidays. Hours tend to be irregular but flexible and split shifts are common. Food service counter attendants and food preparers typically stand for long periods of time and often carry heavy trays. They work in kitchens that are hot, humid, fast-paced and can be greasy and noisy.

Sources:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6711>
- *Career Cruising* database (Profile for 'Fast food worker') Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the average annual salary for **Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers** ranges from \$11,000 - \$33,000. In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers, NOC 6711
Hourly Wages

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	10.25	10.75	15.66
Cariboo Region	10.25	10.50	22.49
Kootenay Region	10.25	11.00	17.00
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	10.25	10.70	15.50
Nechako Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	10.25	10.75	15.66
Thompson--Okanagan Region	10.25	10.50	15.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	10.25	11.00	15.00

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

Many employers provide discounted or free meals, as well as uniforms. In addition, those who work full-time may receive benefits such as dental care. Part-time workers generally do not receive benefits.

Sources:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6711>
- *Career Cruising* database (Profile for 'Fast food worker') Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
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4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

For the 2014-2016 period, the employment outlook is expected to be fair for Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related Occupations in British Columbia. The outlook also notes employment growth is expected to be weak and a small number of people are expected to retire.

Employment Outlook

1.3% Expected annual demand growth rate (2014-2024)	13,250 Job openings (2014-2024)
Occupation Outlook for B.C.:	
% of job openings from replacement	43%
% of job openings from expansion	57%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.3%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	13,250

Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6711>
- JobBank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>

5. How do I become a food counter attendant or kitchen helper?

In B.C., no standard training or education is required for food service counter attendants, kitchen helpers and food preparers. However, you may need some secondary school education. Other training or requirements may include:

- food safety training and customer service experience
- on-the-job training under the supervision of other experienced workers
- FOODSAFE Certificate Level 1 for front line food service workers (cooks, servers, bussers, dishwashers, and deli workers). FOODSAFE covers food safety information, foodborne illness, receiving and storing food, preparing food, serving food, cleaning and sanitizing

For more information see:

- FOODSAFE Program: <http://www.foodsafe.ca/>
- Go2HR <https://www.go2hr.ca/training/foodsafe-correspondence> (FOODSAFE courses by correspondence)

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Food counter attendants and kitchen helpers may work in:

- *small, medium and large businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, hotels, fast food outlets, cafeterias and hospitals*

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

- **go2HR**
<https://www.go2hr.ca/jobboard> [search for 'dishwasher' or 'busser']
job board for tourism and hospitality jobs in BC
- **Raisin Jobs**
<http://www.raisinfeeds.com/jobs/>
- **Indeed.com**
http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
<http://ca.indeed.com/Fast-Food-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>
<http://ca.indeed.com/Food-Service-Worker-jobs-in-Vancouver,-BC>
- **BC Jobs.ca**
<https://www.bcjobs.ca/restaurants-food-service-jobs>

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 are in the fast food and restaurant business. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **British Columbia Restaurant & Foodservices Association, Directory**

<http://bcdfa.com/company/directory>

- **Directory of Restaurant and Fast Food Chains in Canada**

available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resource, C380 D5983a

- **go2HR Tourism Companies**

<https://www.go2hr.ca/tourism-companies>

select the sector, ‘Food & Beverage Services’

- **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 “Restaurants” OR “fast food” 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.

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/> [search 'kitchen' or 'food']

▪ **Charity Village**

<http://charityvillage.com/> [under search box, select 'volunteer listings, then enter 'kitchen' or 'food' or 'food prep']

▪ **Salvation Army**

<http://www.salvationarmy.ca/volunteer/>

Volunteer opportunities may be available in the Salvation Army's meal programs, shelters, and transitional housing

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?

Movement into other occupations within food preparation and service, such as cook or waiter, is possible with further training and experience. Individuals may also move into shift supervisor and management positions.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Restaurants Canada**

<https://www.restaurantscanada.org/en>

information on the restaurant and food service industry in BC and Canada

- **BC Restaurant & Foodservices Association**

<http://bcrfa.com/>

information and news on the restaurant and food service industry in BC

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

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

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

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/>.