

Tour & Travel Guides

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Tour & Travel Guides (NOC 6531)

Tour & Travel Guides may also be called:

- *Tour Directors*
- *Sightseeing Guide*
- *Tourist Guide*
- *Bus Tour Guide*
- *Tour Escort*
- *Walking Tour Guide*

1. What Would I Do?

Tour and travel guides escort people on trips or give tours of locations of interest. You provide background information, describe features and answer questions from visitors and tourists.

As a tour or travel guide, your duties can include:

- escort individuals or groups on tours of cities, waterways and other establishments
- conduct tours that may be one day or multiple days in length
- describe points of interest, answer questions and provide information
- provide historical and cultural facts related to the site

- ensure that that reservations for transportation and accommodations are confirmed and that itineraries are met
- resolve problems with itineraries, service and accommodations
- may collect tour fees, which may require the use of a point of sale (POS) wireless terminal

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Tour & Travel Guides**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6531>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Tour & Travel Guides should have:

- *strong verbal communication skills for public speaking*
- *good planning skills and the ability to multitask*
- *conflict resolution skills and the ability to manage large groups*
- *knowledge of other languages*
- *good physical stamina and high energy level as travel days can be very long*

You should be:

- *detail-oriented, customer-service oriented and excellent drivers*

You may travel with tourists to their destination or you may work at a place of interest, such as a city, historical site or theme park. You may work multi-day trips requiring overnight stays in hotels.

Most tour and travel guides work irregular hours since tours may take place during evenings and weekends and on holidays. The workdays can be very long and tour & you may sit in buses for long periods, or be on their feet all day.

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile
- *Career Cruising* database (Profile for 'Tour Guide') Available from VPL Digital Library
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for *tour & travel guides* is \$31,284.

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	12.65	15.00	23.35
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	12.65	15.00	20.80
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	12.65	17.00	25.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage [Search 6531]

Your earnings depend on experience, employer, location, and the number of hours worked. Many guides work on a part-time basis. Depending on the type of tour you give, the job may also be seasonal.

Depending on your employer, full-time tour guides may receive dental coverage, paid vacations, and other benefits. If you are self-employed you must provide your own benefits.

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile and *Career Cruising* database

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Limited new opportunities tour and travel guides will arise in expanding tourism businesses although there will be a need to replace those who retire.

Industry sources report a growing need for multilingual tour guides, so there will be increasing demand for those with other languages. Tour participants are also now more interested in background information on a tour, such as details about the natural setting, political background and Aboriginal culture. Guides who can educate, as well as entertain will be in high demand.

Employment Outlook

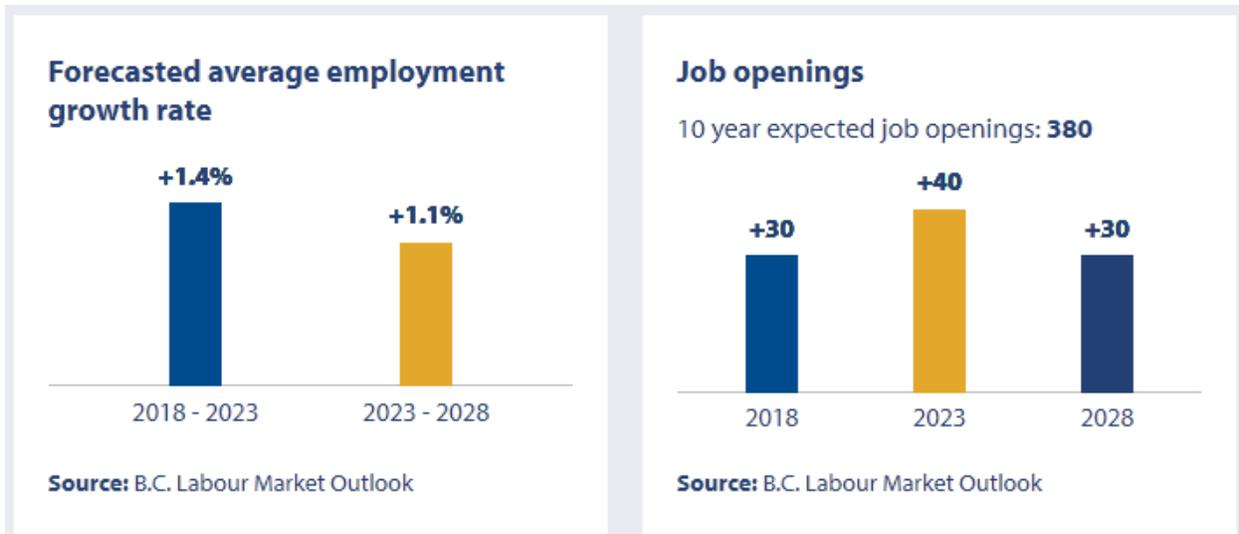


Chart from WorkBC

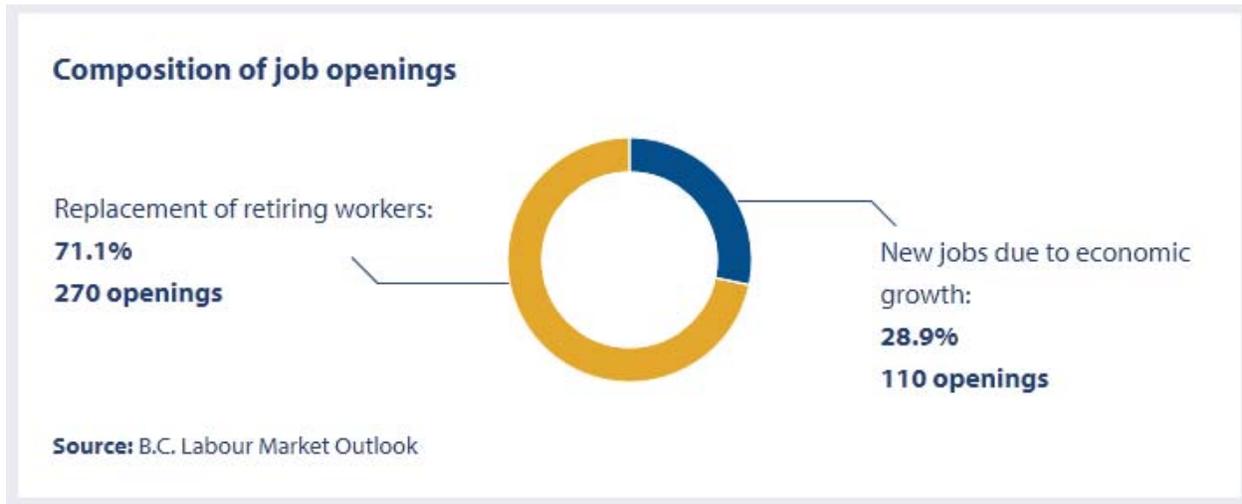


Chart from WorkBC

Source:

- WorkBC Career Profiles

5. How do I become a Tour & Travel Guide?

In B.C., no standard training or education is required for tour & travel guides. However, secondary school graduation is preferred.

Other training or requirements **may** include:

- on-the-job training under the supervision of other experienced workers
- training and certification as a tour guide through emerit.ca, a program of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (<http://emerit.ca/home>)
- knowledge of both official languages in Canada, as well as other languages

For further information, see:

- Emerit.ca, Tour Guide Program: <http://emerit.ca/category/tour-guide>
- go2HR, Tourism Training Map: <https://www.go2hr.ca/training-education/tourism-training-map>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Tour & travel guides may work in:

- *publicly owned sites such as parks and zoos*
- *travel companies*
- *museums*

You may work for:

- *tour operators, resorts and other establishments*
- *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

- **go2HR**
<https://www.go2hr.ca/jobs>
Job board for tourism and hospitality jobs in BC
- **hcareers.ca**
<https://www.hcareers.ca/>
- **Hotellerie**
<https://www.hotelleriejobs.com/en>
- **Cooljobs Canada**
http://www.cooljobscanada.com/job_search.aspx

- **Indeed.com**

http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

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 restaurant, food service and hospitality business. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **go2HR Tourism Companies**

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

- **Personnel Guide to Canada’s Travel Industry**, *online directory of Canadian companies in the hospitality, travel and tourism industry*

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

- try browsing through ‘Wholesalers/Tour Operators’ and ‘Destinations’
- also available in print at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resource, 338.479 P46

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

**You can also search for “Travel”, “Sightseeing”, and “Bus Tours”.

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/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**
<http://govolunteer.ca/>
- **Tourism Vancouver (Metro Vancouver Convention and Visitors Bureau)**
<https://www.tourismvancouver.com/about/volunteer/>
- **BC Parks, Ministry of Environment, Volunteers**
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/volunteers/opportunities/>
- *Also check at **public galleries or museums** as they may be looking for volunteer guides called 'docents'.*

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?

New employees may obtain positions as tour guide/tour leader, interpretive guide or travel expert.

With further experience and education, you may progress to jobs such as tour guide supervisor or tour operator. You may also obtain positions in the administrative office, assisting with tour bookings, market planning or tour development.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **go2HR**
<https://www.go2hr.ca/career-explorer>
information on careers in BC's hospitality and tourism industry
- **discover Tourism, (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council)**
<http://tourismhr.ca/discover-tourism/>
- **Canadian Travel Press**
<http://www.travelpress.com/>
BC Fastest Growing Industries: Tourism
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Tourism]
- **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/>.