



CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE LOOKING FORWARD



NATIONAL SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS
2018–2027

Recruitment focus a must for Canada's construction industry

We've known for some time that it was coming. Now that demographic shift we've heard so much about, is here. The mass exodus of baby boomers from Canada's workforce is reshaping our economy, straining health care budgets, and turning up the pressure on recruiters. With so many workers retiring from construction, staying focused on recruitment and training is no longer an option. It's a necessity.

Canada's construction industry is about to lose a generations' worth of skill and experience. More than one quarter of a million construction workers who've spent the better part of a lifetime building, repairing, and maintaining Canada's infrastructure are retiring in the next 10 years. Making up for the loss of 21 percent of the construction workforce isn't easy, especially when the pool of available younger workers is shrinking. It's a demographic one-two punch that the industry can only dodge if it plans now.

With such a large number of industry employees leaving the workforce over the next decade, a steady focus on recruitment, training, and mentoring will be critical, though extremely challenging from a human resource management perspective. The pool of workers traditionally available to the industry is shrinking, in part because of demographics, but also due to increased recruitment competition from other industries. At the same time, demand for construction services is expected to be lower than over the past 10 years, which means finding time on tools for new recruits will be challenging. Not preparing for this demographic shift could leave the construction industry vulnerable to potential skills and capacity gaps, undermining not only the industry, but impacting the broader Canadian economy as well.

The impact of Canada's aging workforce is a trend that BuildForce Canada tracked in our [2018–2027 Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward](#) forecast. Over the next decade we expect construction activity to soften in most provincial markets as the population ages and demand weakens for Canadian natural resources. Fewer major projects and delays in the start of others are also expected to continue as a result of changing global demands and unease over where oil prices are headed. Despite these challenges, the workforce is estimated to rise by approximately 22,000 workers by the end of the decade, with modest gains in non-residential job growth expected to outpace

small declines in residential construction. Public infrastructure modernization and growing demand for residential renovation and heavy industrial maintenance activity should also help to sustain industry employment over the decade. Major transportation, utility, and other infrastructure projects should nudge non-residential employment up a further 3 percent, or 18,400 workers, to a near-term peak in 2020. That growth is concentrated in Ontario and BC, driven by major nuclear refurbishment, LNG, energy, and transportation infrastructure projects. Steady job growth related to an anticipated increase in demand for commercial and institutional building construction will prevail in most provinces. While slower population growth may ease demand for new housing construction, any declines should be offset mainly by rising renovation and maintenance activity.

This decade, Canada needs as many as 277,000 construction workers to meet labour demands and counter rising retirements. With these challenges in mind, the industry will need to step up recruitment efforts and do all it can to encourage far more new Canadians, women, and Indigenous people to join Canada's construction workforce.

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