Building B.C.'s forestry workforce



Forestry has long been a foundation of British Columbia's economy, supporting workers and communities across the province. As demand grows for lower-carbon building materials, mass timber and other value-added wood products could create new opportunities to diversify the sector and build on existing expertise.

- The forestry sector employed 42,800 people in B.C. in 2024: 14,800 in upstream activities and 28,000 in downstream wood and paper manufacturing.
- In 2025, the forestry sector produced 19.4% of B.C.'s international exports, making it one of the province's largest export sectors.
- B.C. is Canada's leading mass timber jurisdiction, with supportive policies, 22 companies, more than 700 workers and 370 mass timber buildings completed or underway.



The forestry sector includes upstream activities such as logging and downstream wood, paper, and value-added product manufacturing.

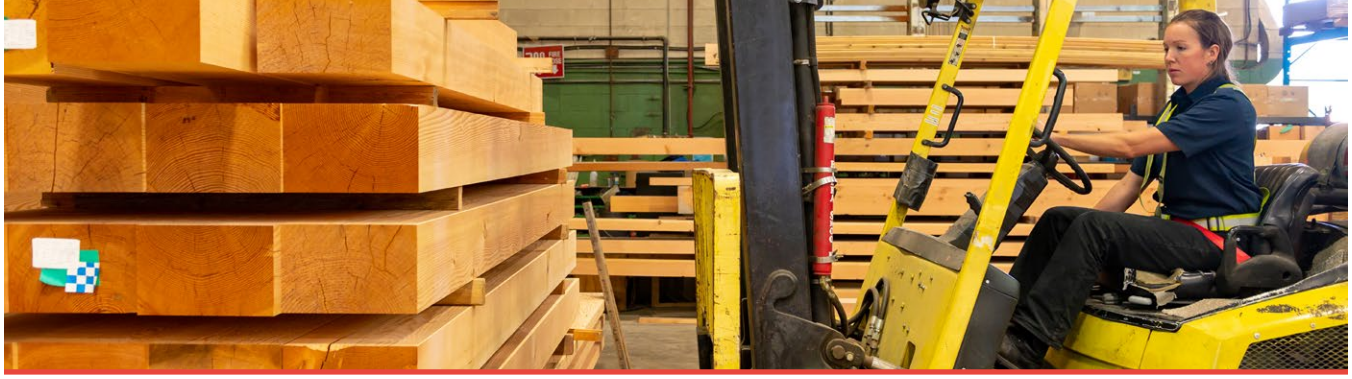
What kinds of jobs are part of B.C.'s forestry sector?

- Logging labourers, machine operators, and fellers
- Forestry technologists and technicians
- Wood and paper processing machine operators
- Supervisors in logging and forest product processing

Growth opportunity

Expanding markets for B.C. wood products can create jobs across the forestry supply chain and help diversify economies in forestry-dependent communities.

- Mass timber development could create an additional 1,880 jobs in technology, upstream forestry, engineering and design, and 2,350 manufacturing jobs by 2035.
- Value-added products, including mass timber, can expand domestic and export markets, while provincial policies that encourage their use can help grow demand for B.C. wood products.



Workforce challenge

Forestry communities are experiencing significant economic challenges as the sector adapts to market pressures and mill closures. In 2014, upstream forestry activities and downstream manufacturing employed 65,200 people, 52% more than in 2024.

- Workers need opportunities to develop new skills for mass timber and other value-added manufacturing.
- Training and experience with new technologies are less accessible to workers in many rural and northern communities.

What will unlock growth?

Expand reskilling opportunities

Governments, employers, industry and training providers should help experienced wood-product manufacturing workers gain the skills needed for higher value-added wood manufacturing.

Support new markets

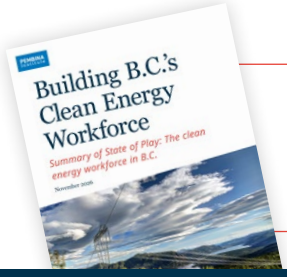
Governments and industry should encourage investment in new markets that create diverse job opportunities in forestry-dependent communities.

Build local workforce capacity

Governments, employers, industry and post-secondary institutions should improve access to training and hands-on learning in rural and northern communities.

Why does this matter for B.C.?

Forestry remains an important part of B.C.'s economy and supports many rural and northern communities. With a strong workforce strategy that includes planning, skills development and training, new markets for wood products can create opportunities for workers while helping communities diversify their economies.



Read Summary of *State of Play: The clean energy workforce in B.C.* for economy-wide workforce recommendations: pembina.org/pub/state-of-play-clean-energy-workforce-bc

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