



INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADES
PEOPLE MOVING TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

EU-STEP



Dear Reader!

The British Columbia Construction Association, the largest construction association in British Columbia, would like to help its close to 2,000 members find skilled construction workers.

The economy in British Columbia is booming and therefore construction is booming as well. The shortage of skilled construction workers makes finishing projects on time and within budget a challenge for many companies in construction. Carpenters, roofers, glaziers, bricklayers, and rebar workers are in high demand, to name but a few.

The Construction Sector Council's recent report, *Construction Looking Forward, Labour Requirements from 2007 to 2015 for British Columbia* estimates a replacement demand of 24,470 skilled workers who will retire over the course of the next eight years. And this is just to keep the workforce at the level of the year 2006.

With this brochure we hope to give you enough information to convince you that British Columbia is a great place to live and work. The construction industry in BC needs you if you are skilled and motivated.

If you have any comments on how to improve this brochure please give me your feedback as we will update this regularly.

Looking forward to seeing you in British Columbia.

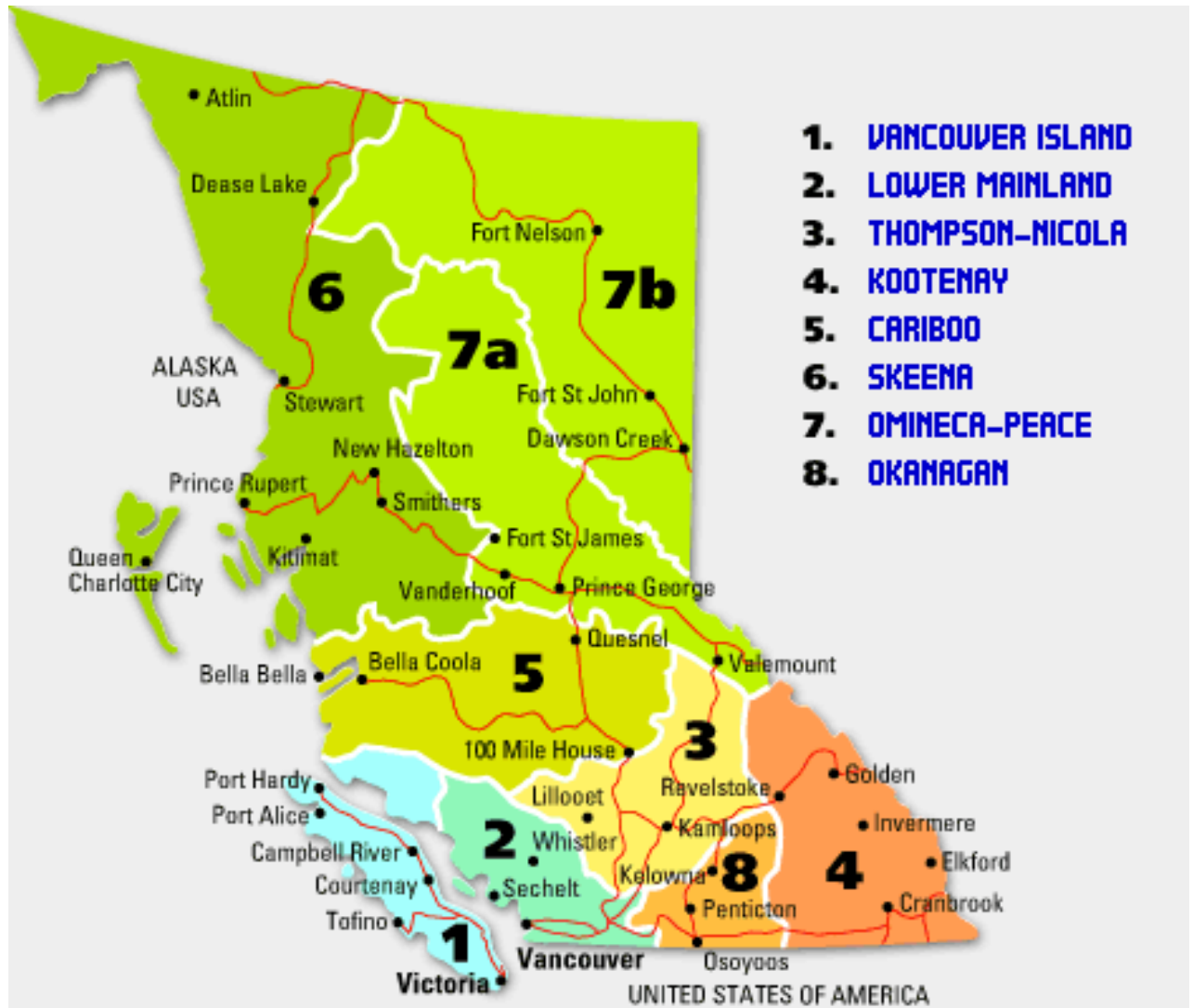
Best regards,

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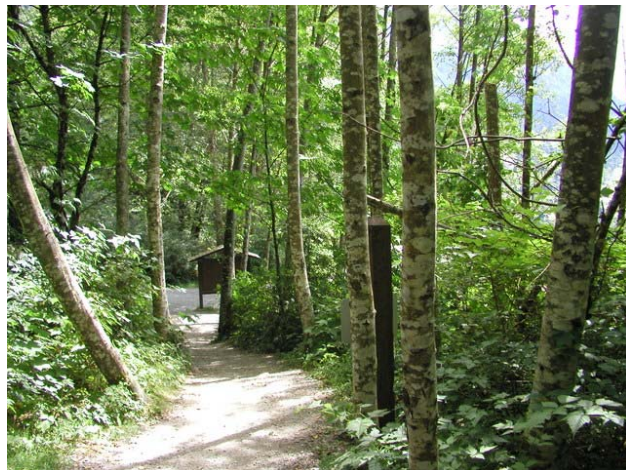
MAP OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



BC FAST FACTS

- Capital city: Victoria on Vancouver Island
- Population: 3,907,738 (Vancouver pop. 2 million and Victoria pop. 326,000)
- Canada's third most populated province (after Ontario and Quebec)
- Only province in Canada with a "West Coast special": ski and golf in the same day
- Westernmost of Canada's 10 provinces
- History: Entered Canadian confederation in 1871
- Total Area: 944,735 sq km (364,764 sq mi)
- Highest Point: Fairweather Mountain, 4,663 m (15,299 ft)
- Lowest Point: Pacific Ocean, sea level
- Longest River: Fraser River, 1,368 km (850 mi)
- Largest Lake: Williston Lake (reservoir), 1,761 sq km (680 sq mi)
- Largest Island: Vancouver Island, 32,137 sq km (12,408 sq mi)
- Provincial Flower: Pacific dogwood
- Provincial Tree: Western redcedar
- Provincial Bird: Steller's Jay
- Provincial Gemstone: Jade

SOURCE: www.hellobc.com



Trail that circles Buntzen Lake - British Columbia

BEFORE YOU FLY

Important Information:

Visa- and travel information can be found on the website of the Canadian Embassy or Consulate in your home country. For contact details please consult:

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/embassies/menu-en.asp>

If your English skills are sufficient you will be able to find valuable information on the website of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC):

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/welcome/index.asp>

Before you leave your home country to come to work in Canada, either temporarily or permanently, there are a lot of things to be considered and checked. An example would be what happens to your pension plan should you have one and to any insurance policies that you have. Most of them will not be valid in Canada and should therefore be terminated before coming to Canada. Please take good care to have your affairs in order before you arrive because it is very tedious to try and clarify things in retrospect and from a distance.

Information on Moving, Checklists, Communities, Schools, Etc.

www.canadainternational.gc.ca provides plenty of information for the prospective immigrant.

Please note that electrical appliances (toaster, TV, hair dryer) may not work in Canada. There are different electrical outlets and voltage in North America. If you are planning to move to Canada permanently, please consider purchasing these items once you get here.

Garage or yard sales are quite popular in Canada and you will be able to buy a lot of household items incl. furniture literally on the street. Usually these notices are posted in the respective neighborhood on short notice. There are two IKEA stores in the Lower Mainland (Richmond and Coquitlam) who will also deliver to your home. Another popular website for obtaining household items and furniture are the “used” websites. If you move to Vancouver please check out www.usedvancouver.com or for Victoria it is www.usedvictoria.com, all larger communities in BC have this website available.

Before arriving in Canada you will have to fill out a B4 Personal Effects Accounting Document and list all the household items that you will bring with you to Canada. This information is available online at:

<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/E/pbg/cf/b4/b4-07e.pdf>

The following website provides you with the school district number for your future home:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/bcmap.htm>, once you have located your school district you can insert the number into the following web address: **www.sd(your schooldistrict number here).bc.ca**, there you will find a list of schools in your area.

Important Documents:

Please take with you the following documents:

All documents pertaining to your immigration and passports for all members of your family.

Two copies of the list with the household items what you bring with you and two copies with lists of goods to follow, please see B4 Personal Effects Accounting Document. Please do not forget to ascribe a value to your household goods.

Do not forget to carry on your passport, immigration documents, driver's licence, birth certificate. Also school transcripts for your children, your certificates and accreditation are important, translated into English.

Immunization records for your children are mandatory if you register them at daycare and school.

Health Insurance:

British Columbia's health insurance (Medical Services Plan oder MSP) will grant you membership after 3 months so until then you will require an interim health insurance. You can register with a health plan online at Pacific Blue Cross:

<https://www.pbchbs.com/travelweb/>

or check Hermes Manulife at:

https://hermes.manulife.com/canada/wmlInsurancePub.nsf/Public/Travel_visitors_intro

They offer a Foreign Worker Plan or a Landed Immigrant Plan. If you would like to compare their coverage to other insurance companies you can google the following: visitors canada travel medical plan.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Immigration and Customs:

Most likely you will arrive at Vancouver Airport. On the plane you will get a customs form to fill out. Please note that you cannot bring any fresh fruit, vegetables or plants with you. Your paperwork will undergo an initial check, then you will pick up your luggage and after that you need to go to the Immigration Office to the right of the carousels with the luggage. Here your immigration documents will undergo a second screening, you may have to answer some questions. There is also a service area for immigrants, C.A.N.N., who will give you a lot of printed materials to help you get settled.

Accommodation:

You should try and check the following websites before arriving to be able to compare prices and neighbourhoods. You can sort by city, rent, number of rooms required.:

www.househunting.ca
www.bcrent.ca
www.myidealhome.ca
www.canadianresidentialrentals.com
www.craigslist.org
www.apartmentguide.ca
www.rentalsbc.com/index.html

We suggest you look for temporary furnished accommodation first and then look for a permanent place once you are here. A damage deposit amounting to half a month's rent is generally required. Often the lease is signed for one year. After that period you can give notice on a monthly basis. Curtains, lamps and major appliances are usually standard when renting.

Car/Driver's License:

In Vancouver and Victoria public transportation is available but in the more remote regions you will need a car. You can either rent a car or buy one. Info's online at www.driving.ca

If you are new to B.C. and drive a vehicle, you need to obtain a B.C. driver's license within 90 days after moving here.

It is best to apply for your B.C. driver's license well within 90 days of moving to British Columbia. New residents who hold a Canadian, American, Austrian, German, Swiss, Japanese or South Korean license can usually complete their license exchange the same day, provided they bring:

- Primary and secondary identification
- Their current license, and
- Proof of driving experience

(Acceptable translations of these documents may be required.) New residents who hold any other type of driver's license will require more time because a road test is required.

Source: http://www.icbc.com/licensing/lic_renew_replace_new.asp

Social Insurance Number (SIN):

Immediately after your arrival you should apply for a Social Insurance Number. This number is required by your employer, the Revenue Agency and other offices. In Vancouver the best Service Canada office to go to is the one at the Vancouver Sinclair Centre. Please consult the following website for information:

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/sc/sin/>

You may download a form at:

<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eforms/forms/2006/nas2120e.pdf>

MSP – Health Insurance BC:

As soon as you have obtained your SIN Number you can apply for BC health insurance if your employer does not offer a so-called benefit plan. The application form is among the papers that C.A.N.N. will provide at Vancouver Airport but you can also download it under:

<https://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/exforms/msp/H102.pdf>

Current premiums are:

\$54 for an individual

\$96 for a family of two

\$108 for a family of three or more

Bank Account / Credit Card:

It is best if you open a bank account promptly after your arrival. You can either choose one of the larger Canadian banks such as Scotiabank, CIBC, HSBC, Bank of Montreal or a smaller more regional one. You do not need your SIN number in order to open an account but some banks may insist on it. Generally you will get your bank card immediately which should also have a debit card function. With the debit card you can pay for any purchase, even very small ones, like breakfast at Tim Horton's.

If you order a credit card at your bank (it is useful in Canada to have at least one) you will most likely need to deposit double the amount of your credit limit into a special account. A credit limit of 500 Dollars is advisable which corresponds to a special deposit of 1000 Dollars.

Shopping:

You can shop around the clock. Some of the convenience stores are open seven days/24 hours. You can either shop in large shopping malls or smaller shopping centers. Please note that almost all prices are quoted without tax. A Provincial Sales Tax (PST) of 7% is added and a Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 5%. Alcoholic beverages are sold in special stores and cannot be bought in a grocery store or at a gas station.

Smoking:

British Columbia has banned smoking in all public buildings, including restaurants and bars. Most hotels and motels have very few rooms for smokers so please make sure that you are in one before lighting up. Also rental apartments often state non-smoking as a rule for renting. In Victoria you have to be three meters away from a building to smoke a cigarette, in Vancouver it's 6 meters, which should put you in the middle of a busy street.

YOUR FIRST MONTHS IN BC

Taxes, Child Tax Credit, etc:

As a permanent resident you will be able to apply for a "GST/HST Credit" which is calculated based upon your world income from the last and current year. This tax credit will be paid out during the first year of your arrival in several installments. You should not miss out on this.

In case you have children and you have permanent resident status you should apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit, as soon as you have received your SIN number. There is also an additional credit program that pays 100 Dollars/month for children under the age of 6 – if you are under a certain wage limit – this benefit will be automatically calculated when you apply for the Child Tax Credit.

Application forms for both benefits can be collected at the C.A.N.N. office at Vancouver Airport or downloaded at:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/gsthst/menu-e.html>

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/cctb/menu-e.html>

Income tax information can be found under:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/allrates/menu-e.html>

Federal tax rates for 2008 are:

- 15% **on the first** \$37,885 of taxable income, +
- 22% **on the next** \$37,884 of taxable income (on the portion of taxable income between \$37,885 and \$75,769), +
- 26% **on the next** \$47,415 of taxable income (on the portion of taxable income between \$75,769 and \$123,184), +
- 29% of taxable income **over** \$123,184.

British Columbia Provincial tax rates for 2008 are:

5.24% on the first \$35,016 of taxable income, +
 7.98% on the next \$35,017, +
 10.5% on the next \$10,373, +
 12.29% on the next \$17,230, +
 14.7% on the amount over \$97,636

Language Courses:

As a landed immigrant or a Provincial Nominee you are entitled to language classes at no cost to you. (LINC – Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). There are language programs during the day, in the evening or on the weekends.

The following offices will assess your English skills and will then place you in the right course:

Note: LINC is called ELSA in British Columbia. ELSA stands for English Language Services for Adults.

School locations can be found under:

<http://www.elsanet.org/schools/index.html>

Disclaimer:

BCCA reserves the right not to be responsible for the topicality, correctness, completeness or quality of the information provided. Liability claims regarding damage caused by the use of any information provided, including any kind of information which is incomplete or incorrect, will therefore be rejected.

APPENDIX

In Canada it is customary to bring your own tools to work. The two lists below may vary depending on the company so please contact your employer before you go out shopping.

Recommended – Labourer Tools / Equipment minimum

1. Hard hat (in some cases provided by employer)
2. Steel toe safety boots (CSA approved)
3. Appropriate work wear – No shorts or sleeveless shirts / t-shirts
4. Hammer c/w belt and tool pouch
5. Rain gear and rubber boots
6. Pliers with cutting edge to tie rebar
7. Measuring tape – Imperial / Metric
8. 12 “ adjustable wrench
9. Utility knife c/w blades
10. Safety classes (in some cases provided by employer)
11. Gloves (in some cases provided by employer)

Additional Tools for Carpenter / Equipment minimum

1. Lockable Tool box to carry tools
2. Claw Hammer – minimum 20 oz
3. 24’ Measuring Tape – Imperial / Metric
4. Combination Square
5. Handlevel – minimum 24”
6. Hand saw
7. 2’ Framing Square
8. Chalkline c/w Chalk
9. 12” Nail Puller Bar
10. Plumb Bob
11. Vice Grip
12. Wood Chisels



Map of Greater Vancouver



Vancouver Island and Greater Victoria Maps

