



Building bright futures

Electricity Sector
Labour Market Information Project:

BC Region





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Table of Contents

Summary of Findings.....	1
Section 1: Background	2
1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study	2
1.2 Research Considerations	2
Section 2: Context	3
Section 3: Employment Profile	4
3.1 Support and Non-Support Staff	4
3.2 Number of Employees by Occupation	4
Section 4: Supply of Workers	5
4.1 Co-op Students, Summer Students, and Interns	5
4.2 Supply of Engineers	6
4.3 Apprentices in Key Trades	8
Section 5: Age and Retirement Trends	9
5.1 Age of Employees	9
5.2 Retirements per year	10
5.3 Retirements by major occupational group	10
5.4 Pension Eligibility.....	12
Section 6: New Hires	14
6.1 Common sources of Recruitment for New Hires	14
6.2 Common Sources of Competition for Employees.....	16
Section 7: Vacancy Rates	17
7.1 Vacancy Rates Reported.....	17
Section 8: Supply/Demand Gap Analysis.....	18
8.1 Low Growth:	19
8.2 High Growth.....	20
Conclusion and List of Participating Companies	22
Acknowledgements	23

Summary of Findings

The Electricity Sector Council (ESC) is undertaking research to explore the sector's labour market needs. This report is based on the data collected for the 2008 Labour Market Information Project, commissioned by the ESC in partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). The report is a regional analysis, which provides a comparison of the regional data with the national data. It presents some of the key metrics that employers in Canada's electricity sector can use to better plan for future human resource needs. A regional perspective is helpful for employers to more accurately gauge their position in relation to the national average.

The report is not meant to be representative of all establishments in the region, but rather of the establishments that provided data for the 2008 ESC Employer Survey.

Below are some of the key findings from the regional analysis.

Key Findings

- Vacancy rates among non-support staff in BC's electricity sector are similar to the national electricity sector rates reported in the 2008 ESC Employer Survey, at around 3%. However, occupations in the Trades in BC experienced higher rates, at 5.1%, than the national rates reported for the Trades, at 3.5%. Lower rates were reported in Engineer and Tech occupations.
- Employers in BC reported higher incidents of new hires coming from the pool of recent immigrants, at 10% compared with only 4% nationally. However, they reported lower incidents of hiring recent graduates, at only 9% compared with 19% nationally.
- Whereas the national figures reflect the greatest portion of estimated retirements to be among Manager/ Supervisor occupations, BC respondents report the highest estimated rates among Trades occupations.
- A larger percent of BC's electricity sector's non-support workforce was eligible for their full pension in 2006 than reported in the national figures (17% provincially compared to 8% nationally); and a smaller percent were eligible for their partial pension (10% provincially compared to 34% nationally).
- In the high growth scenario, BC's labour supply/demand gap is expected to be larger than the national average among engineer and technician/technologist occupations, with an estimated 8.2% labour gap in 2009 and a 7.9% labour gap in 2012. The national figures are projected to be 4.5% and 6.0% respectively.

Section 1: Background

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the Labour Market Information Project was to assist the ESC in understanding the current and future supply and demand of labour in the electricity sector.

One outcome of the presentation of results to the project Steering Committee in June was a desire to undertake further analysis of the results on a regional scale. A regional analysis of key metrics is essential to assist companies within each region to better assess their strengths and weaknesses, and better understand the opportunities and threats they may face in light of the projected labour shortages.

Based on previous studies conducted for the ESC, regional breakdowns are as follows:

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Atlantic Provinces

Each report includes background information on the Human Resource context within each region, in addition to the analysis of key metrics presented in the Labour Market Information project report. Contained in this report is an analysis of the responses provided by employers in BC.

1.2 Research Considerations

The primary reason the regional analysis was not included in the main project report was that for many questions, the number of companies responding was very few. The result was that 1) the data could not be considered as representative of the entire universe, and 2) the anonymity of the respondents would be compromised. In keeping with research integrity, the following report does not claim to be representative of all establishments in the electricity sector, operating in BC/ Alberta. Rather, this report provides respondents with a picture of where they stand in relation to the national average. It should be noted that some respondent organizations did not provide information for all survey questions; therefore, survey results based on smaller samples or employee counts should be interpreted with caution.

Section 2: Context

In BC, an ageing population is having a significant effect on the provinces' labour force. In BC, the number of workers aged 45 and over grew by nearly 50% between 1997 and 2007, and account for almost 40% of the province's labour force¹. According to BC provincial government estimates there will be an overall shortage of 511,000 workers by 2017².

As of the end of August, 2008, the national unemployment rate was 6.1% and the national employment rate was 63.4%. The following table provides a comparison of the national average with the BC rates.

Exhibit 2.1: Employment and Unemployment Rates as of August, 2008		
	National	BC
Employment	63.4%	63.7%
Unemployment	6.1%	4.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, August, 2008

As the table above illustrates, BC recorded higher employment rates and notably lower unemployment rates than the national average. The region has been experiencing low unemployment rates for the past few years. These record low numbers have resulted in increased pressure on employers, as it becomes more difficult for them to hire employees with the skills and qualifications required for the job.

¹ Statistics Canada Labour Force Historical Data, 2007, referenced in http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/PC_mature_workers.pdf

² Ibid.

Section 3: Employment Profile

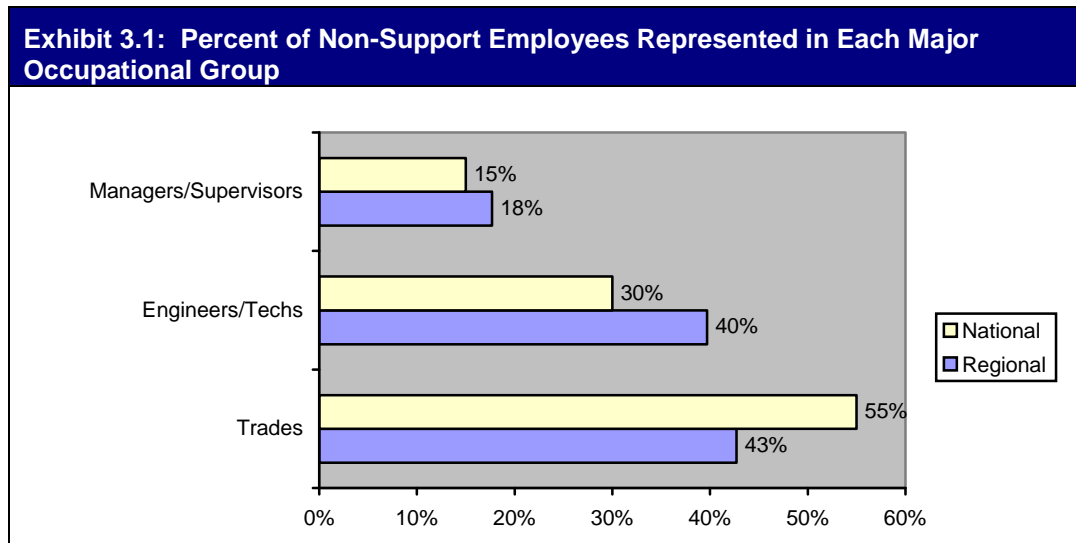
This section outlines the general employment profile of BC respondents to the 2008 ESC Employer Survey.

3.1 Support and Non-Support Staff

In total, employers in BC reported employing 2,992 non-support staff. According to total employment reported for the region, non-support staff comprises 54% of employment in the electricity sector in BC. This proportion is slightly lower than the national figures, where approximately 64% of the sector's workforce is classified as non-support.

3.2 Number of Employees by Occupation

The following graph presents the percent of non-support employees represented in each major occupational group, compared with the national percentages.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, n=87

NOTE: totals do not include 'other managers', 'other engineers and technicians', or 'other non-support occupations', as these were not included in the survey design.

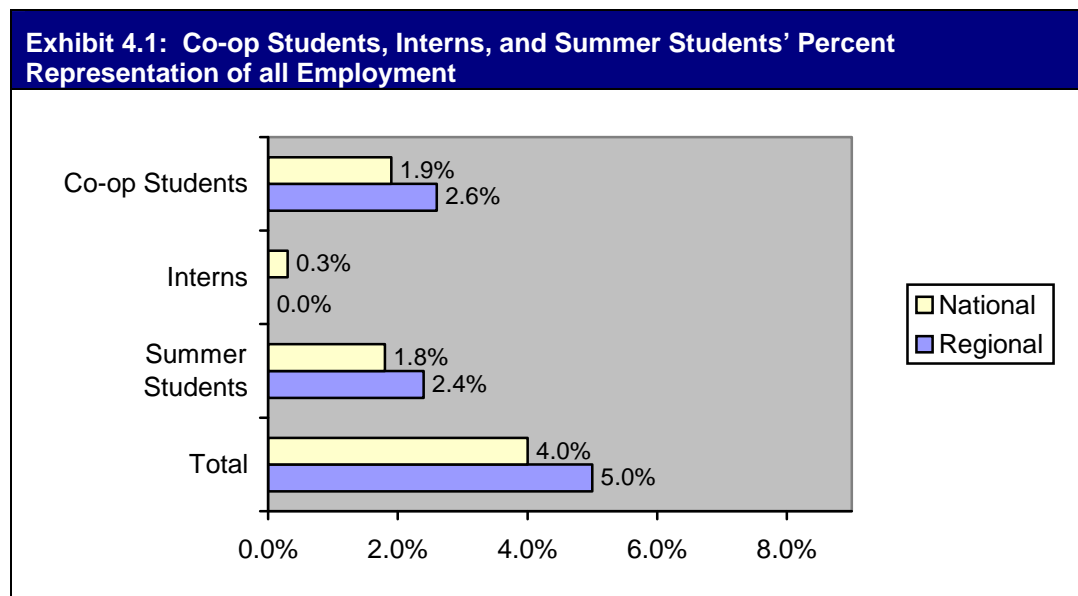
As the graph illustrates, a larger portion of non-support staff are represented in the Engineers and Techs occupations at the national level than at the provincial level.

As a percent of total employment, there are slightly more managers and engineers in BC, and notably fewer trades people, compared with the national averages. The precise reasons for the lower percent of employees in the trades and the higher percent of engineers and techs in BC cannot be discerned from the data.

Section 4: Supply of Workers

4.1 Co-op Students, Summer Students, and Interns

There were a total of 2,818 co-op students, interns, and summer students taken on in 2007 across the country by employers in the electricity sector. Regionally, there were 276. The following graph details the percent of total employment that each group represents.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=81 nationally, n=4 regionally)

Note: Percentages are based on all employment. The 'n' includes all companies who provided data for at least one of the categories, and the percentages are calculated based on total employment of these companies.

It should be noted that, as far as can be discerned, the main universities in BC do not offer internship programs to their engineering students. The data also show that co-op students make up a slightly smaller percent of non-support employment than they do nationally, but summer students make up a slightly higher percent than they do nationally. In total, however, co-op students, summer students and interns represented 5% of all employment in BC, which is higher than the national average.

4.2 Supply of Engineers

As reported in the main LMI report, the number of graduates from engineering programs in Canadian universities has increased overall by 7% between 2003 and 2005. However, the number of students enrolled in electrical engineering programs decreased by 10% over this same time period.

Reproduced below are the national figures of the number of enrolments and graduates in 2003 and 2005 by program, and the percent change of each. All the data contained in this section of the report comes from Statistics Canada's Post Secondary Information System (PSIS). The most recent data available at the time of reporting was from 2005. Readers are reminded that more recent figures, when they become available, may present different trends.

Exhibit 4.2: Student Enrolment and Graduates in Engineering Programs (National Figures)			
Year	2003	2005	% change
Number of Students Enrolled			
Electrical Engineering	17,382	15,693	-10%
Mechanical Engineering	14,742	15,600	6%
Civil Engineering	7,929	9,186	14%
Chemical Engineering	5,124	5,631	9%
Materials Engineering	504	924	83%
Systems Engineering	666	657	-1%
Nuclear Engineering	21	177	743%
Total	46,368	47,868	3%
Number of Graduates/ Completers			
Electrical Engineering	3,702	3,849	4%
Mechanical Engineering	2,979	3,849	29%
Civil Engineering	1,518	1,710	13%
Chemical Engineering	1,083	1,092	1%
Materials Engineering	120	144	20%
Systems Engineering	153	141	-8%
Nuclear Engineering	3	3	0%
Total	9,558	10,212	7%

Source: Statistics Canada PSIS Data

The BC provincial figures are presented in the table below. A quick comparison of the figures show that provincially, there was a 3% decrease in the number of graduates of engineering programs, compared with a national increase of 7%. Strikingly however, is that there was an overall 14% increase in enrolments in engineering programs in BC compared with only 3% nationally.

Exhibit 4.3: Student Enrolment and Graduates in Engineering Programs (Regional Figures)			
Year	2003	2005	% change
Number of Students Enrolled			
Electrical Engineering	903	1,143	26.6
Mechanical Engineering	747	777	4.0
Civil Engineering	621	603	-2.9
Chemical Engineering	270	345	27.8
Materials Engineering	171	219	28.1
Systems Engineering	0	0	0
Nuclear Engineering	0	0	0
Total	2,712	3,087	13.8%
Number of Graduates/ Completers			
Electrical Engineering	189	219	15.9%
Mechanical Engineering	204	189	-7.4%
Civil Engineering	18	183	1.7%
Chemical Engineering	63	57	-9.5%
Materials Engineering	66	33	-50.0%
Systems Engineering	0	0	0
Nuclear Engineering	0	0	0
Total	702	681	-3.0%

Source: Statistics Canada PSIS Data

The figures in the table above differ from the national figures most significantly in relation to Electrical Engineering. Provincially, both enrolment and graduation increased notably by 27% and 16% respectively. The next most notable increases in enrolment were seen in Materials Engineering and Chemical Engineering.

4.3 Apprentices in Key Trades

Employers were asked to report on the number of apprentices they had taken on in 2007 for four key trades in the electricity sector. The following exhibit presents a comparison of BC's data with the industry averages.

Exhibit 4.4: Apprentices Employed in 2007 for Key Trades						
	Total Employees in Occupation at Responding Companies		Apprentices Taken on in 2007		Apprentices as % of Total Employees in Occupation	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Power System Electricians	4,103	229	829	38	20.2%	16.6%
Power Line and Cable Workers	5,660	393	1,033	87	18.3%	22.1%
Power Systems Operators	746	89	234	10	31.4%	11.2%
Power Station Operators	1,319	33	237	0	18.0%	0%
Total	11,828	744	2,333	135	19.7%	18.1%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=60 nationally, n=4 regionally)

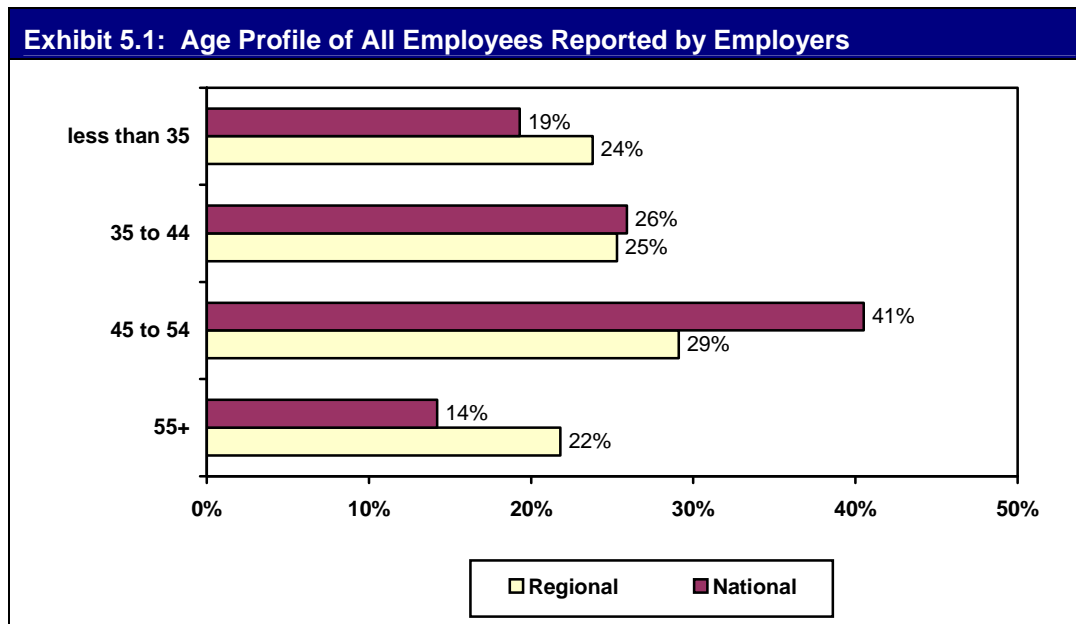
The exhibit above suggests that overall, apprenticeships in BC comprise a slightly lower percentage of employment for the given occupation than the national average. The most notable differences between BC and the national averages are among Power Systems and Power Station Operators. Employers in BC employed notably fewer apprentices in each of these occupational groups as a percent of employment, compared to figures reported across the industry.

Given the relatively small number of respondents, it is difficult to speculate as to the reason behind the lower provincial percentages. However, one possible explanation could be that there is only one institution in BC that offers pre-apprenticeship training and courses for Power System and Power Station Operators. Thus, there is a relatively small pool of potential trainees who are available to employers.

Section 5: Age and Retirement Trends

5.1 Age of Employees

The graph below details the age profile of both support and non-support employees in the electricity sector, as reported by employers in the 2008 ESC employer survey.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=84 nationally, n=4 regionally)

The data show a difference between BC and the national average. Employers in BC reported higher percentages in both the less than 35 age group and the 55+ age group, and notably fewer employees in the 45 to 54 age group. The much higher percentage of employees in the 55+ age group signals that BC will likely be the first province to experience significant retirements over the next 5-7 years. However, the relatively even distribution of employees across all four age groups bodes well for employers in terms of having a relatively steady stream of incoming and outgoing employees. These data suggest that employers have been bulking up their younger workforce in an effort to mitigate the looming retirements likely to occur among employees in the 55+ age group.

5.2 Retirements per year

In total, employers in BC experienced a 5% retirement rate, with 131 retirements in 2006. By 2012, the number of retirements is projected to be 103, which represents a slight decrease from 5% to 4% of current employment.

These figures are consistent with the age data presented above in that they reflect a fairly consistent rate of retirement, which is in step with the portion of employees in each age group. However, it is difficult to know precisely the correlation between the reported expected retirements and the age data because there is no differentiation between the younger portion of a given age group and the older portion. That is to say, there is no way of knowing how many employees in the 45 to 54 age group are between 45 and 50, and how many are between 50 and 54. This would certainly have an effect on the expected number of retirements, and the time period for their expected retirement. Nonetheless, the data present a picture of expected steady retirements in the near future.

5.3 Retirements by major occupational group

As can be seen in the table below, employers in BC have experienced more retirements as a percent of employment in 2006, with almost 5% of their workforce retiring. The most notable difference was among Engineers and Techs, with 6% retirements reported in BC, compared with 2% nationally.

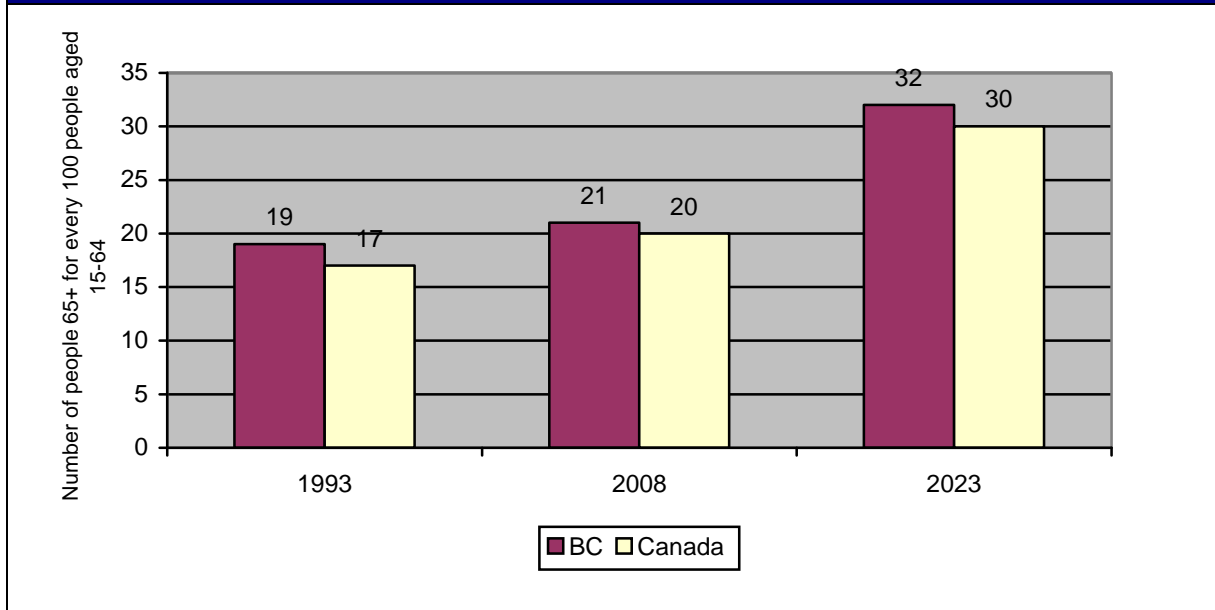
Exhibit 5.2: Actual and Estimated Retirements Reported by Employers by Occupation						
Occupation Group	Retired in 2006		Estimated Retirements in 2009		Estimated Retirements in 2012	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	4%	6%	6%	4%	9%	2%
Engineers and Technicians/ Technologists	2%	6%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Trades	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	5%
Other Critical Key Occupations	5%	2%	8%	3%	8%	3%
Total	2%	5%	5%	5%	6%	4%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=82 nationally, n=4 regionally)

As the figures above indicate, respondents in BC are predicting the percent of retirements to decrease in each occupational group. However, these data need to be considered with caution as there were only 4 respondents.

According to a paper published by the Government of Alberta entitled Mature Workers in Alberta and British Columbia: Understanding the Issues and Opportunities, the workforce in BC is slightly older than the national average. The graph below provides a picture of BC's population 65 years of age and older relative to the working age population. The values represent the number of people aged 65+ for every 100 people aged 15-64.

Exhibit 5.3: Number of People Aged 65+ for Every 100 People Age 15-64

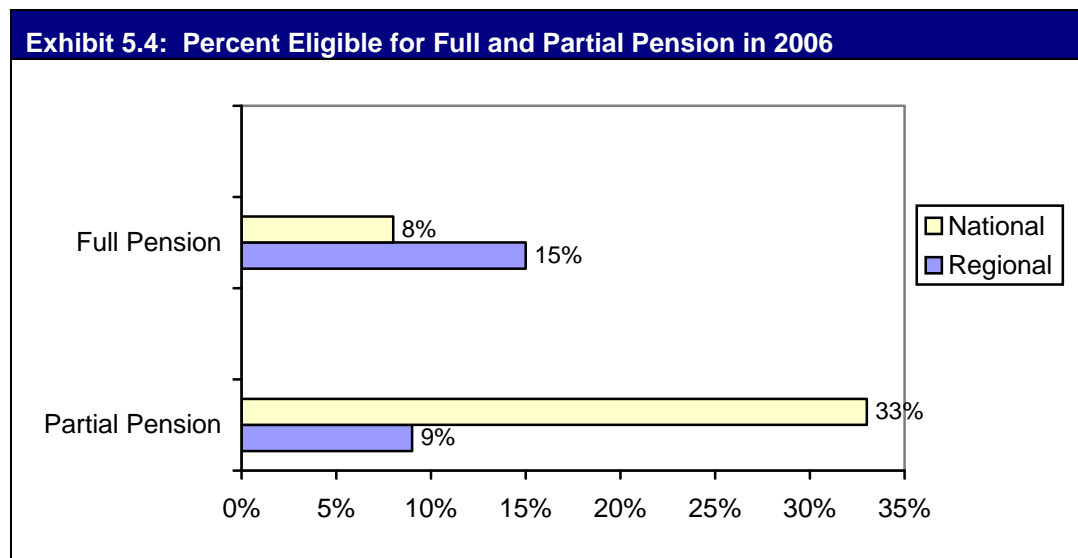


Source: Statistics Canada, Alberta Finance and Statistics, BC Stats, accessed at http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/PC_mature_workers.pdf

The graph above suggests that the proportion of older workers in BC is higher than the national average. BC has typically been an attractive retirement destination. As such, more older workers migrate from across the country. An implication of this trend is that employers in BC have a broader older workforce to recruit from. As the forestry industry shrinks, employers in the electricity sector will be able to tap into former forestry workers. As the graph above suggests, this pool of workers will likely be fairly young compared with the national average.

5.4 Pension Eligibility

Overall, a much smaller percentage of employees in BC were reported to be eligible for their partial pension in 2006 than the national average, and more were reported to be eligible for their full pension. The graph below illustrates these findings.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=49 nationally, n=3 regionally)

A more detailed table below presents the percent of employees within each occupation who were eligible for either their full or partial pension in 2006. Readers are reminded that the data presented in this table cannot be considered as representative of the entire region, as the number of respondents is very low for several occupations.

Exhibit 5.5: Percent Eligible for Full and Partial Pension in 2006 by Major Non-Support Occupational Group

	Full Pension Eligibility		Partial Pension Eligibility	
	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers/ Supervisors	10%	28%	37%	14%
Engineers/ Techs	9%	10%	32%	4%
Trades	6%	18%	33%	12%
Total Non-Support	8%	17%	33%	10%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=49 nationally, n=3 regionally)

The data show a higher percent of non-support employees in BC were eligible for their full pension in 2006, compared with the national average. Among Trades occupations, respondents reported that 18% of employees were eligible for their full pension, compared with less than half that (6%) nationally. A caution to readers however, is that for two occupational groups in this category, only one establishment provided data, thereby limiting the representativeness of the data. Therefore, this data should be considered with caution.

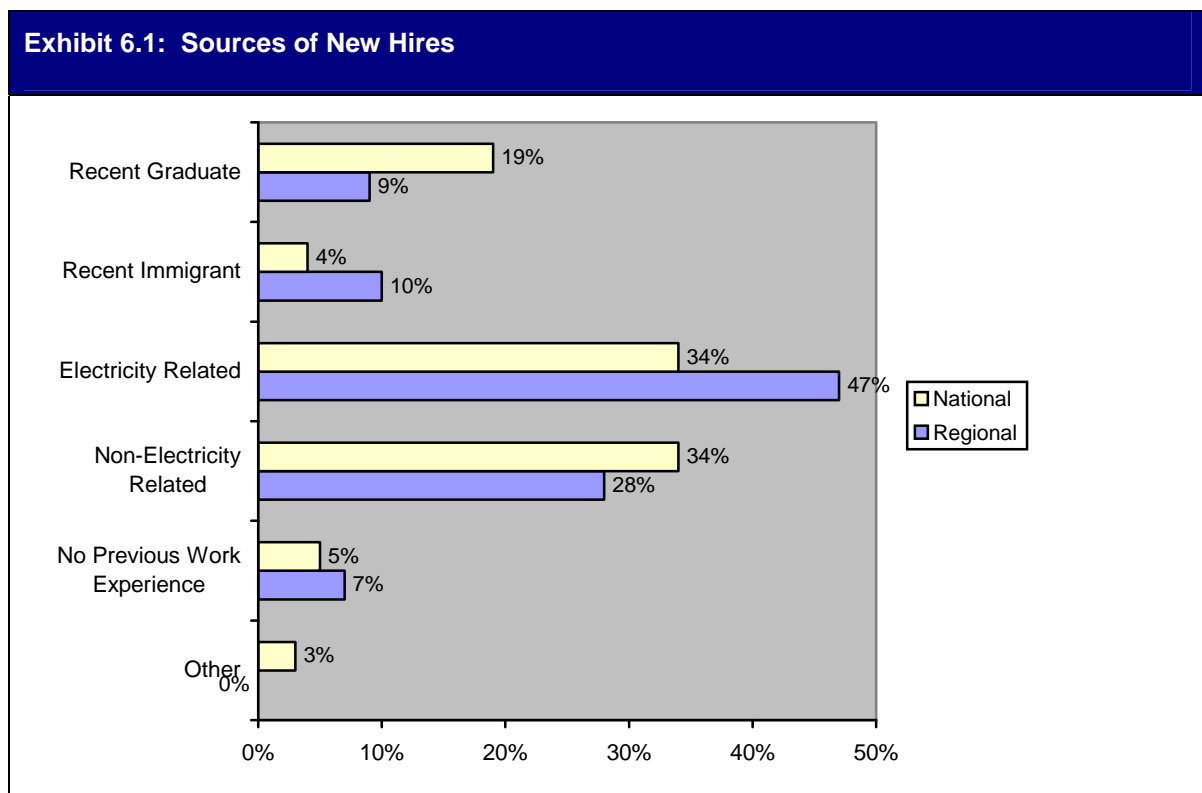
Interestingly, employers in BC reported much lower percentages of employees who were eligible for their partial pension in 2006. Again, this is consistent with the age data presented in section 5.1, which reveals a much lower percent of employees in BC in the '45 to 54' age cohort, and a higher percent among the '55 and over' cohort, when compared to the national average.

Section 6: New Hires

This section details the most common sources of recruitment for new hires, and common sources of competition for employees, as reported by employers in the electricity sector. When compared to the national figures, differences emerge between regional and national respondents' experience and perceptions.

6.1 Common sources of Recruitment for New Hires

The graph below depicts the common sources of new hires as reported by employers for new hires taken on in 2006.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, (n=53, nationally, n=4, regionally)

Among respondents in BC, the most common source of recruitment for new hires is other electricity related sources. With 47% of new hires in 2006 coming from this source, the data is supportive of the general and anecdotal feedback that many employers in the electricity sector resort to poaching employees from other companies. This seems to be particularly the case among employers in BC, as only 34% of overall new hires reported across the industry came from this source. Employers in BC were also more likely to recruit new hires as recent immigrants, with 10% from this source provincially compared with only 4% nationally.

The following table details the percentage of new hires in each major occupational group, and the source from which they were recruited.

Exhibit 6.2: Percent of New Hires Recruited from Given Source in 2006 – by Occupation Groups Weighted by Employment

Occupation Group	Source in Percent											
	Recent Graduate		Recent Immigrant		Electricity Related		Non-Electricity Related		No Previous Work Experience		Other	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	4%	0%	6%	13%	62%	71%	22%	16%	0%	0%	6%	0%
Engineers and Techs	29%	7%	8%	11%	33%	34%	25%	31%	7%	18%	0%	0%
Trades	18%	12%	2%	8%	34%	62%	38%	16%	7%	1%	2%	0%
Other Critical Occupations	10%	9%	3%	9%	24%	36%	48%	49%	5%	0%	9%	0%
Total	19%	9%	4%	10%	34%	47%	34%	28%	5%	7%	3%	0%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, (n=53, nationally, n=4, regionally)

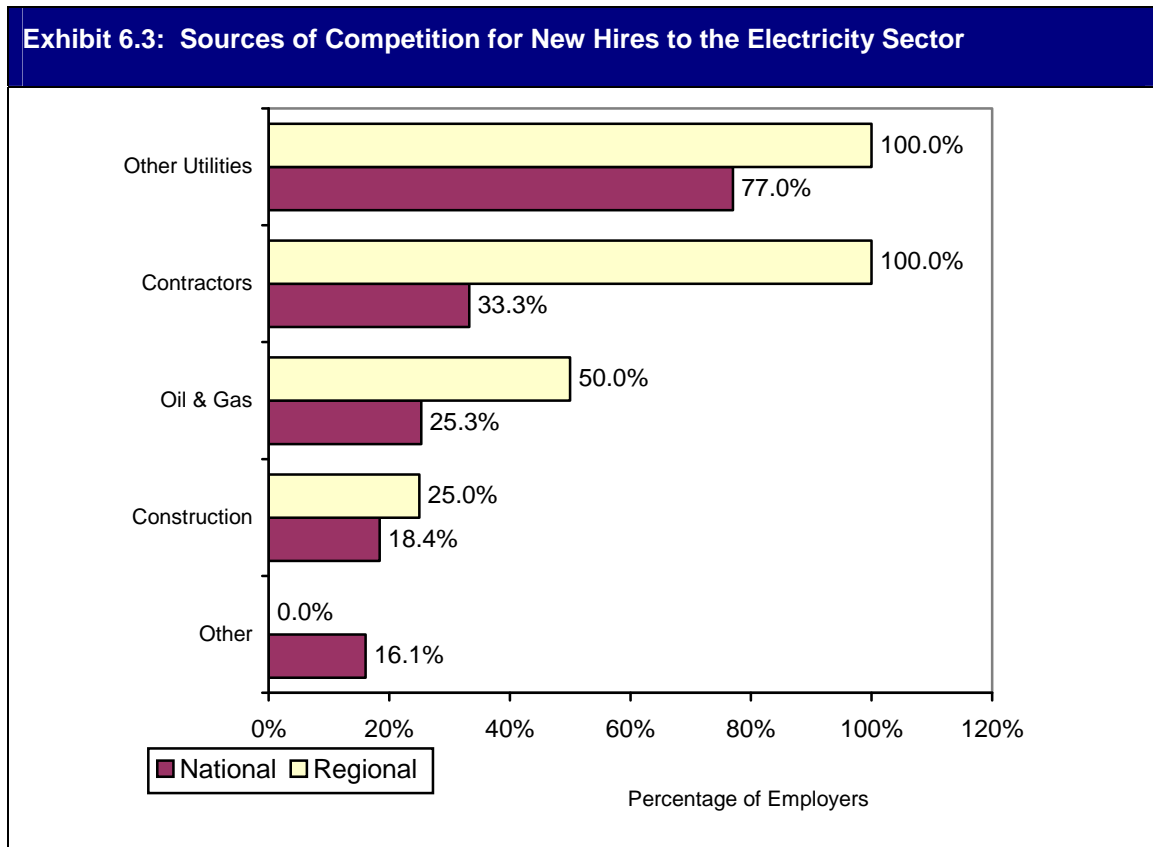
Some notable figures include:

- 62% of new hires into the trades came from electricity related sources, compared with 34% nationally;
- 18% of engineers and techs were hired with no previous work experience, compared with 7% nationally;
- In BC, recent immigrants accounted for 13% of new hires into manager and supervisor positions, compared with less than half that nationally; and
- Overall, only 9% of new hires were recent graduates, compared with 19% nationally.

The table above illustrates that employers in BC were more likely to recruit from other electricity related sources and recent immigrants, but were less likely to recruit recent graduates, than were employers across the rest of the industry.

6.2 Common Sources of Competition for Employees

Employers were asked whether or not the following were sources of competition for employees. The graph illustrates the frequency of their responses.



Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey, (n=87; national), (n=4; regional)

Although there were only 4 respondents, all reported that other utilities and contractors were the most common sources of competition for employees. While oil and gas is not necessarily a significant industry in the province, the fact that employers reported it as a source of competition signals that employers in BC likely lose their employees to employers in Alberta's oil and gas industry. This is likely because the oil and gas industry in Alberta has experienced significant economic gains in recent years. However, it remains to be seen if this trend will continue in the next five years. Anecdotally, employers in other industries have already reported that employees are beginning to return to BC from the oilsands in Alberta.

Section 7: Vacancy Rates

7.1 Vacancy Rates Reported

This section outlines the vacancies reported by employers, and the vacancy rates, broken down by major occupational group.

Exhibit 7.1: Vacancy Rates by Occupational Group

Occupation Group	Vacancies		Currently Employed		Vacancy Rate	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Managers	132	4	5,941	481	2.2%	0.8%
Engineers and Technicians/ Technologists	405	17	12,466	1,077	3.1%	1.6%
Trades	821	63	22,599	1,162	3.5%	5.1%
Total	1,358	84	41,006	2,720	3.2%	3.1%

Source: 2008 ESC Employer Survey (n=4 regionally)

Overall, respondents in BC and Alberta reported similar vacancy rates for non-support occupations, when compared with the national rates. The region reported lower than average vacancy rates among Managers, Engineers and Techs, but higher rates in the Trades.

The most significant difference between the national and provincial figures is among Electrical Power Line and Cable Workers. According to provincial respondents, the vacancy rate for this occupational group was almost 13%. Nationally, this figure is only 5%. The province however reported lower vacancy rates for all other trades and engineer and tech occupations.

Section 8: Supply/Demand Gap Analysis

The following section outlines the hypothetical labour supply and demand gap. Two scenarios are presented: a low growth and a high growth scenario. The same assumptions were made in these forecast models as were made in the models presented in the main LMI report. Where possible, the assumptions were broken down to the regional level, and applied to each region's supply and demand models. The information used to project growth in demand came from responses to the LMI survey. Demand figures were derived from the percent of reported retirements and projected growth by region. The national separation rate was applied because there was not enough regional information on separation rates to accurately determine the different regional rates. Thus, the national rate was applied. It therefore should be noted that the demand figures are limited to being based entirely on employer responses to the survey.

The supply figures were derived from a combination of employer reported apprenticeships (for the trades, broken down by region), and Statistics Canada's PSIS data for the number of engineers reported to have graduated (broken down by region). Other sources of labour such as immigration were also included. Again, these figures were taken from the main LMI supply/ demand model and had regional weights applied based on Statistics Canada's reported immigration figures.

The following exhibits present a projected supply-demand gap in the electricity sector, based on low and high growth scenario assumptions.

8.1 Low Growth:

Exhibit 8.1: Estimated Supply and Demand Gap – Low Growth Scenario Engineers and Other Non-Support Positions		
Group/Period	Annual Estimates	
	2009	2012
Current Total Workforce¹		
Engineers	1,239	1,239
Trades/other non-support	1,891	1,891
Total	3,130	3,130
Estimated Demand – Low Growth Scenario²		
Engineers	74	62
Trades/other nonsupport	113	95
Total	188	157
Estimated Supply³		
Engineers	48	46
Trades/other non-support	29	31
Total	78	77
Supply-Demand Gap⁴ (per year)		
Engineers	(26)	(16)
Trades/other non-support	(84)	(64)
Total*	(110)	(79)

¹ Total estimated workforce in electrical occupations, 2008 ESC Employer Survey

² No additional employment growth required for demand increases or replacement requirements. Retirements based on organization estimate of likely retirements, not the proportion eligible for retirement.

³ Portion of graduates who secure employment in electricity sector upon graduation as discussed in Section 4 of the main report

⁴ Difference between estimated demand and current education supply capacity

*Note: Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding

8.2 High Growth

Exhibit 8.2: Estimated Supply and Demand Gap – High Growth Scenario Engineers and Other Non-Support Positions

Group/Period	Annual Estimates	
	2009	2012
Current Total Workforce¹		
Engineers	1,376	1,611
Trades/other non-support	1,962	2,073
Total	3,338	3,684
Estimated Demand – High Growth Scenario²		
Engineers	162	173
Trades/other nonsupport	161	149
Total	322	322
Estimated Supply³		
Engineers	48	46
Trades/other non-support	29	31
Total	78	77
Supply-Demand Gap⁴ (per year)		
Engineers	(113)	(127)
Trades/other non-support	(131)	(118)
Total*	(244)	(245)

¹ Total estimated workforce in electrical occupations, 2008 ESC Employer Survey

² No additional employment growth required for demand increases or replacement requirements. Retirements based on organization estimate of likely retirements, not the proportion eligible for retirement.

³ Portion of graduates who secure employment in electricity sector upon graduation as discussed in Section 4 of the main report

⁴ Difference between estimated demand and current education supply capacity

*Note: Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding

The table below presents a comparison of the BC projected gap with the national projections. The figures are represented as a percent of the workforce. Overall, the gap ranges from 4% to 7% of the current non-support workforce in 2009, and from 3% to 7% of the current non-support workforce in 2012.

Exhibit 8.3: Predicted Supply/Demand Gap as a Percent of Employment

Group	2009				2012			
	Low		High		Low		High	
	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Engineers	2.3%	2.1%	4.5%	8.2%	3.7%	1.3%	6.0%	7.9%
Trades/other non-support	4.5%	4.4%	6.5%	6.7%	5.9%	3.4%	8.0%	5.7%
Total	3.8%	3.5%	5.9%	7.3%	5.2%	2.5%	7.4%	6.7%

According to the hypothetical scenarios presented, BC is projected to experience a slightly smaller supply/demand gap than the rest of the industry. The only scenario for which BC might expect to experience a larger gap is in the high growth scenario in 2009. This is true for both occupational groups. In 2012, however, BC will likely not experience as significant a gap, with the exception of engineers in the high growth scenario. Readers are reminded however, that these are hypothetical scenarios.

The actual growth scenarios may be affected and/or influenced by the changing economic condition. Other factors to consider, which have not been accounted for at the regional level, include the degree to which companies rely on consulting firms or contractors to complete projects. As mentioned in the 2004/2008 Comparative Analysis, large international and multinational engineering consulting companies such as SNC Lavalin play a significant role in the supply of labour for large infrastructure and construction contracts in the country's electricity sector. Thus, readers should also be cognizant of the availability of these workers in their region when interpreting the data, and when planning their human resource strategies.

Conclusion

According to the data provided by BC employers, the number of retirements as a percent of the current workforce is expected to be fairly consistent from now through to 2012 at between 4% and 5%. The reported age data supports these findings as they reflect a relatively even distribution of employees in each group. However, given that BC employers reported a much larger percent of their employees in the oldest age group, this signals that BC may be the first province to experience significant retirements in the coming years. It should be noted that the oldest age group is 55+, and there is no distinction between the number of employees who are in their 50s compared with those in their 60s. If there is a larger portion in their 50s, the bulk of retirements might not be expected to ensue for another 7 years – that is, until workers reach the age of 65. This could explain in part the reason for the lower expected rates of retirement in 2012. The reported rates suggest that the bulk of retirements will likely begin to occur after 2012.

In addition, data provided by Statistics Canada's PSIS indicates that enrolment in engineering programs in BC's universities has increased between 2003 and 2005. Given that most programs are 4 years in length, BC employers should be able to reap the benefits of this increase now. Particularly among electrical engineers, where increases of 27% were recorded, there will likely be more trained graduates to draw from and recruit. Employers in BC reported lower incidents of hiring recent graduates compared with the national figures, but this may change in the near future as a result of the recent enrolment trends.

List of Participating Companies

The following companies in British Columbia participated in the 2008 Electricity Sector Council Employer survey:

BC Hydro and Power Authority
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