

RAILWAY CONDUCTOR PROGRAM

BRITISH COLUMBIA
INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

SCHOOL OF
TRANSPORTATION

bcit.ca/transportation/motive



Self-Assessment

Will I enjoy the working conditions of a Railway Conductor?

- Standard salary pay scale starts from \$45,000 to \$65,000 per year, and usually with guaranteed pay on “spare board” work. After gaining a few years of experience (and overtime,) you can expect to earn \$80,000 or more per year.
- The job may become a lifelong career with opportunities to advance and network in the railway transportation industry spanning across the continent.
- Typical employer is a large, seniority based, unionized organization.
- For the first three to seven years, work is 24/7 on call, mostly on spare board, with two hours of notice. Expect long, odd hours, and shift work including weekends and statutory holidays. Depending on the work location, you may work away from home for up to two days at a time.
- Outdoor work could be day or night shifts, in all types of weather conditions. Be prepared to supply your own clothing and dress appropriately for sun, rain, wind, sleet and snow.
- Work is physically demanding. You must be able to lift up to 85 lbs., walk on uneven terrain, and perform work while the train is moving.
- Work can be dangerous. You need to be safety-oriented, and note that the Conductor is usually the first person who appears at the scene of an accident.
- Work on and around large, heavy, moving, and stationary equipment is required.
- Work independently or in small teams with little or no supervision.

Do I have the skills needed to be a successful Railway Conductor?

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills to convey accurate information.
- Proper hand signals, and clear voice, enunciation and proper protocols on radio equipment. It is important to note that the use of radio communication is more frequent than face-to-face communication.
- Skills such as conflict resolution, coaching and ability to work with small teams of two to three people, with different co-workers in every shift.
- Mechanical and technical aptitude to operate and carry out basic repairs on freight equipment and track appliances.
- Commitment to customer service and safe work practices.
- Carry out inspections and tests in accordance to railway rules and specifications.
- Use and interpret technical documentation, railway terminology, and railway rules and regulation.
- Identify and document defects, and make necessary repairs on railway equipment.
- Basic computer skills to log data, access information, complete self-training and operate computerized locomotive.



MORE INFORMATION

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[bcit.ca/transportation/study/
Programs/2070/ipcert](http://bcit.ca/transportation/study/Programs/2070/ipcert)

What would be required to be employable as a Railway Conductor?

- A valid class 5 driver's licence and reliable transportation is an asset as employees are required to arrive at the home terminal within a two-hour call window. Some employers may also require employees to operate company vehicles.
- All employers require new employees to undergo a criminal record check. Applicants should ensure that they have the ability to pass a criminal record check, or obtain a pardon, prior to entering the program.
- All railways have a zero tolerance policy towards the use of alcohol and drugs. Applicants should be prepared to submit to a mandatory drug and alcohol test upon employment, and should expect random alcohol and drug use tests throughout employment. BCIT will enforce the same zero tolerance policy during training.
- There are a number of strict medical rules and requirements that apply to railway employees, and these may exclude certain candidates from employment, for example: colour blindness, and certain prescription medications. Also, there is a mandatory railway medical exam that must be successfully completed upon employment. Please consult the [Railway Association of Canada](#) website for the [Medical Rules Handbook](#) for specific details.
- High school graduation or GED required.
- Periodic re-certifications and technical training are required throughout employment.
- Flexibility to go where the jobs are, with the understanding that jobs may not be in the Lower Mainland, and there may be layoffs in the first years of this career.
- This program prepares graduates for employment with Class 1 railways and shortlines in North America, industrial railways, sidings and spurs at grain elevators, dockyards, rail suppliers, and regional carriers.

Do I have the entry requirements for the Railway Conductor Program?

- For information visit; bcit.ca/study/programs/2070ipcert#entry

Will the program work for me?

- This is a full time program comprised of 19 courses, with a 40-hour practicum, that spreads over 17 weeks for six hours per day. Upon graduation, you will be awarded an Industry Partnership Certificate from both BCIT and the Railway Association of Canada.
- The practicum training provides you with real-life railroading experience. Part of the training will be conducted out of town. You are responsible for travel expenses such as fuel, ferry, accommodations, and meals.
- Training will also take place at other locations outside of BCIT and you will be expected to pay for your travel expenses.
- To comply with railway industry protocols and for your safety, cell phones or electronic devices are not permitted in the classroom.
- You must have a reliable watch that indicates hours, minutes, and seconds, and will be required to supply your own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ie work gloves, clear protective glasses, and CSA approved 6" high, steel toed, leather lace-up boots, with ankle support, and minimum 3/8" heel height at right angle from the sole.
- Most courses require a passing grade of 70%, however, two safety-sensitive courses (RWCD 1050 Rules, Authorities and Record Keeping, and RWCD 1052 Transportation of Dangerous Goods) require passing grades of 85%.
- Exam requirements: 14 of the 19 courses have one or more exams (multiple choice, short answers, essay style, or scenarios) or combinations of exams, written assignments and / or case studies. The other five courses are evaluated through either hands-on activities or written assignments. Homework will be assigned every day.