

# Trades in Alberta

Easy-to-read information

Alberta Government



## What are the trades?

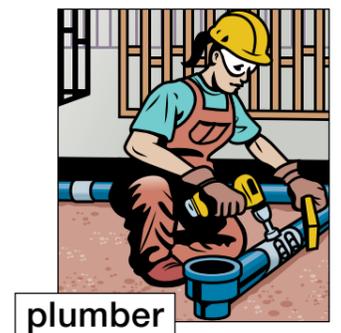
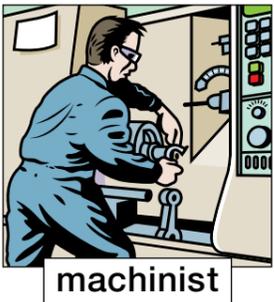
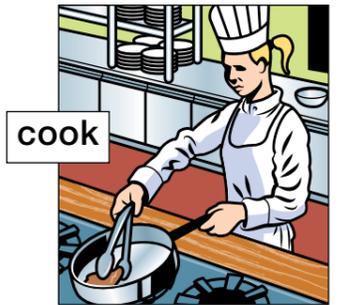
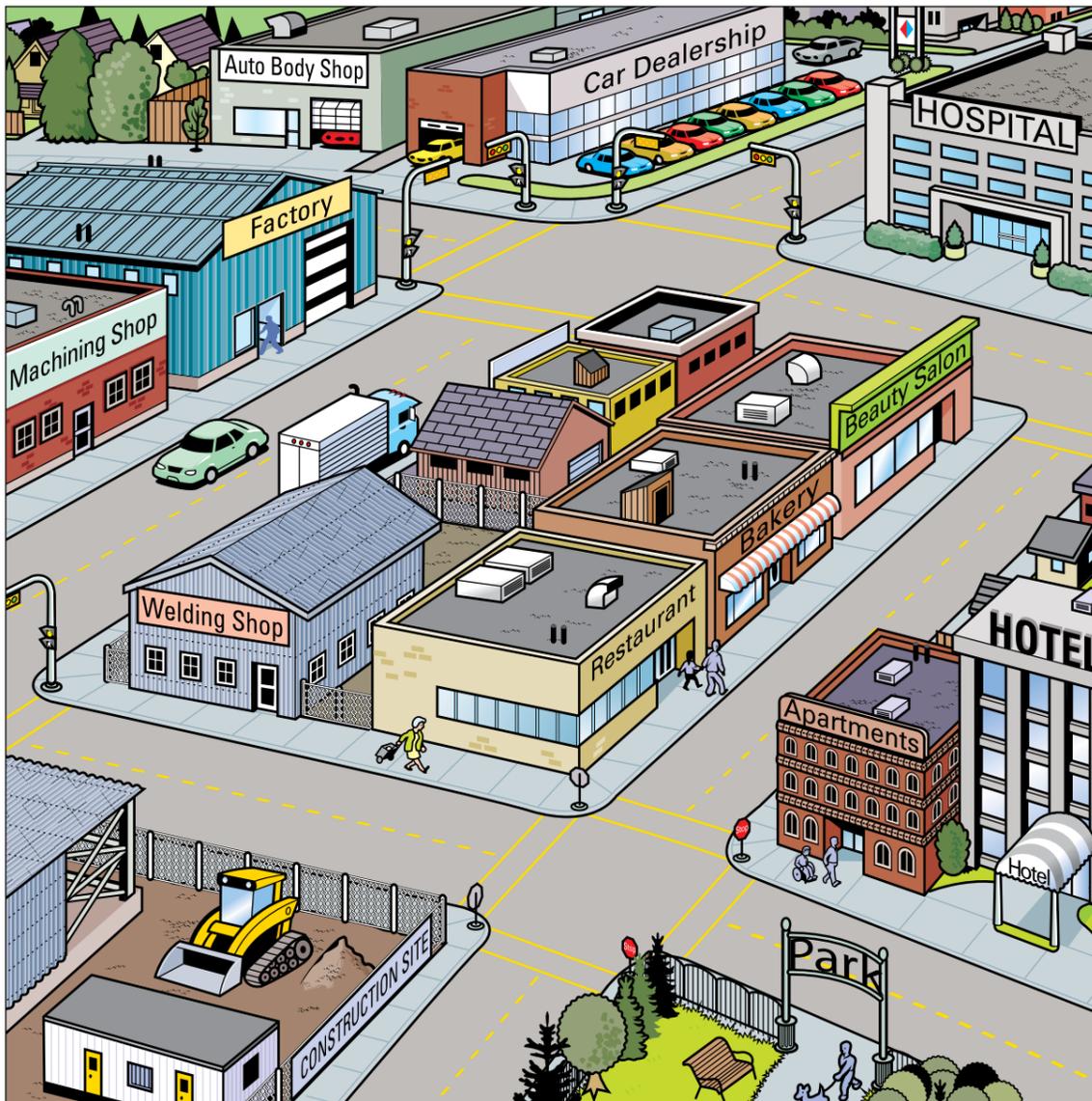
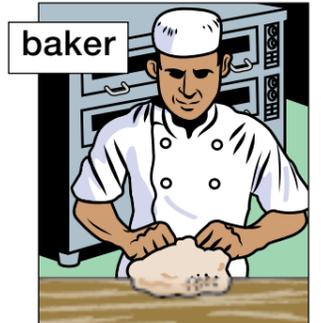
- ✓ There are 49 designated trades in Alberta. For example, welder is a trade.
- ✓ Many people work in the trades. They are tradespeople.

- ✓ Tradespeople often make things or fix things.
- ✓ Some tradespeople work indoors. Some work outdoors.

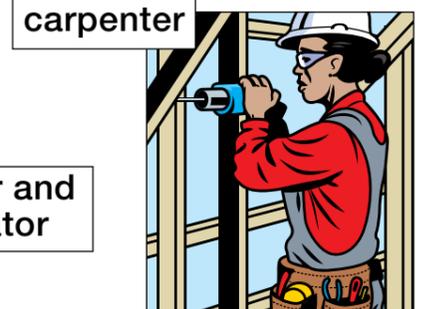
- ✓ Alberta has an apprenticeship program. You can become an apprentice and learn a trade. You learn on the job and take technical training too.

Do you know anyone in these trades?

Would you like to work in any of these trades?



\*Note: Construction craft worker is not a trade. It is a designated occupation.



city/tradespeople: GP

Trades in Alberta comes with Teaching Notes. The notes have exercises to help you with your reading and writing.



You can find the Teaching Notes on the ALIS website. See page 8.



# John is a tradesperson

## Meet John

John is a tradesperson. He is an **auto body refinisher**.

John works at an auto body shop. The shop repairs cars and trucks.



John has a **journeyperson certificate**. He is called a **certified journeyperson**.

## Duties at work

John helps fix cars and trucks. For example:



He gets cars and trucks ready for painting.



He paints cars and trucks.

## Likes his job

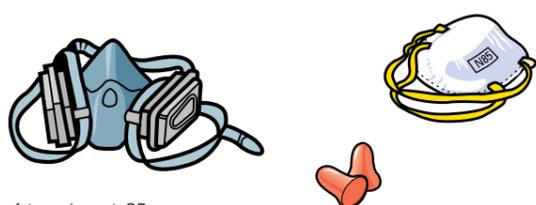
✓ John works 40 hours a week, 5 days a week.

✓ He likes his job. He likes to work with his hands.

✓ He likes the money too. He makes about \$26 per hour.

## Works inside

John works indoors. He works safely. He wears masks, safety glasses and earplugs.



safety equipment: GP

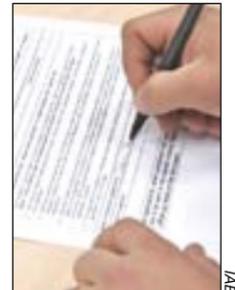
## How did John become a tradesperson?

**2011** — ■ Got a **high school diploma**

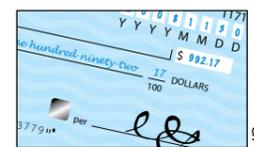


**2012** — ■ Found an employer  
■ Became a **registered apprentice**

**HELP WANTED**  
**Auto Body Apprentice**  
Busy automotive collision shop requires an auto body refinisher apprentice with high school diploma. Send resumé to Donald



**2012** — ■ Started the 2-year program for **auto body refinisher**  
■ Learned on the job (1600 hours)  
■ Got work experience  
■ Earned wages  
■ Took classes (4 weeks), and passed the exam for the 1st year of the program



**2013** — ■ Started the 2nd year of the program  
■ Wages went up  
■ Got work experience  
■ Learned on the job (1600 hours)  
■ Took classes (6 weeks), and passed the exam  
■ Became a **certified journeyperson**  
■ Got a **journeyperson certificate** (Some people call it a **ticket**.)  
■ Wages went up



**Today** — ■ Works at the same auto body shop

# How to choose a trade

## 1 Think about your interests and skills

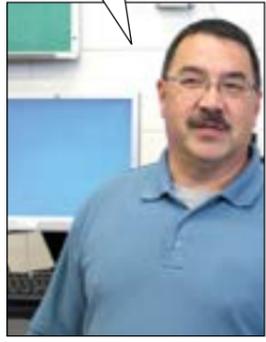
### Interests

✓ Interests are things you like to do. For example:

- I like to cook.
- I like to fix things.
- I like to learn by doing.



I like to use computers.

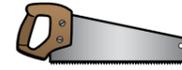


What do you like to do? You might like to do these things in a trade.

### Skills

✓ Skills are things that you do well. For example:

- I can paint.
- I can use some hand tools and power tools.
- I can bend, kneel and lift things.



I can follow directions well.



What do you do well? You might like to do these things in a trade.

## 2 Think about your work experience and education

### Work experience

✓ You get experience when you work at a job. You learn many things.



✓ You get experience when you volunteer too.

I have worked in restaurants.



What work experience do you have? It might help you choose a trade.

### Education

✓ Education can be many things. For example:

- high school diploma
- high school equivalency diploma
- high school courses
- upgrading



I have a high school diploma.



What education do you have? Will it help you enter a trade?

## 3 Find out about different trades

✓ Talk to people in the trades. Ask questions about their jobs.

How did you learn to be a mechanic?



What are your job duties?



✓ Ask for information from your teacher or **career advisor**.

More and more women are becoming tradespeople. There are special programs to help women enter the trades.



✓ Look at websites on the Internet. See page 8.



✓ You can get information at an Apprenticeship office.

I'd like information about the parts technician trade.



Here are some questions to ask:

- I want to become an apprentice in \_\_\_\_\_. What education do I need?
- How can I find an employer?
- ☞ See page 8 for a list of Apprenticeship offices.

## Two kinds of trades

There are 49 designated trades in Alberta. Some are compulsory certification. Some are optional certification.

### 1 Compulsory trades

There are 19 **compulsory certification trades**. For example:

- auto body refinisher
- automotive service technician
- boom truck operator
- hairstylist
- plumber
- welder



boom truck

Who can work in compulsory certification trades in Alberta?

- people with a journeyman certificate or a recognized certificate

(For example, Alberta recognizes some certificates from other provinces.)

or

- a registered apprentice

### 2 Optional trades

There are 30 **optional certification trades**. For example:

- carpenter
- cook
- roofer



Who can work in optional certification trades in Alberta?

- people with a journeyman certificate or a recognized certificate

(For example, Alberta recognizes some certificates from other provinces.)

or

- a registered apprentice

or

- people with skills recognized by their employer  
(These people can work without a certificate.)

## How do people enter the trades?

### Rose wants to be a welder

compulsory



Rose learns skills at work. She learns skills during her technical training too.

Rose enjoys learning. She got her **high school equivalency diploma** when she was 21.

Rose also enjoys working with her hands. She decided to become a welder.

- ✓ Rose found an employer and became an apprentice.
- ✓ The welder program takes 3 years. Rose is in her 3rd year.
- ✓ At the end of her program, she will be a welder. She will be a certified journeyman.

### Eric wants to be a carpenter

optional

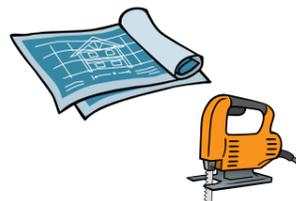
Eric grew up on a farm. He likes to work with his hands.



- ✓ Eric wants to be a carpenter. He finds out about the carpenter trade.

Carpenters need many skills. For example, they need to know:

- how to read blue prints
- how to use power tools



#### Finds out about programs

Eric is deciding what to do.

- ✓ He can become an apprentice. The program takes 4 years. He will be a journeyman carpenter when he finishes.

or

- ✓ Eric can learn carpentry skills in other ways. For example:

✎ He can get a carpentry diploma at a college or technical school. It takes 2 years.

He can use the diploma as credit towards a carpenter apprenticeship.

**Tip:** Why is it good for Eric to become a certified journeyman? For some jobs, employers may prefer to hire journeymen.

#### Carpenter wanted

- ✓ Permanent, full time
- ✓ Minimum 5 years experience  
—prefer certified journeyman
- ✓ Need own tools, safety boots

### Jess wants to be a hairstylist

compulsory

Jess is in high school. She is in **RAP\*** (say: rap).

In RAP, a high school student becomes an apprentice and gets high school credits too.

- ✓ Jess takes math, English and other courses at school.

She also works as an apprentice at a beauty salon. She earns wages.

- ✓ After high school, Jess will continue as an apprentice.



Jess

Jess is learning how to cut, style and colour hair.

\* **Note:** RAP is short for Registered Apprenticeship Program.

## Muna wants to be a cook

optional

Muna works in a restaurant. She is a kitchen helper.

Muna keeps the kitchen clean and tidy. Sometimes she helps prepare food.



### Takes English classes

Muna speaks English well. But she has problems reading and writing.



Muna takes English classes.

### Wants to be a cook

Muna talks to a career advisor at school. They talk about Muna's interests and skills.

Cook is a good trade for Muna. She finds out about being an apprentice. She finds out about other ways to become a cook too.

You need very good English to be an apprentice.



Muna decides to take an **employment preparation program**. She will learn many things.

For example:

- how to look for a job
- how to answer questions at a job interview

Later, she can explore becoming a cook apprentice.

## Meet Dave

Dave works for a construction company. Last year, Dave's boss wanted him to become an apprentice.

### Dave was worried

Dave wanted to become an apprentice. But he was worried about the technical training. He has a **learning disability**.

Dave visited the technical school in his area. He met with a **disability advisor**.



Dave learned more about his disability. He found out the school can give him extra help.

### Dave's first year

Dave is an apprentice now. During his technical training, he gets help from a tutor. He gets extra time for exams.

Dave says, "I was nervous at first. But I am very glad that I asked for help."

## Kaz wants to be a mechanic

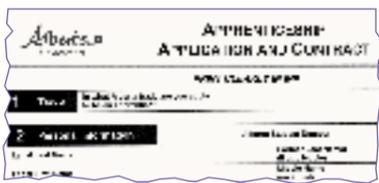
compulsory

Kaz wants to be an automotive service technician (mechanic).

✓ He went to an Apprenticeship office first. He got information.

✓ Then Kaz found an employer and became an apprentice. It took time to find an employer. But Kaz didn't give up.

Kaz and his employer signed a contract.



✓ Kaz's employer helped him apply for a **Prior Learning Assessment**.

Kaz took an exam. The exam tested his skills.



✓ Kaz did very well on the exam. He has many skills. He will get credit for these skills.

He will start in the second year of the program.

✓ The program is hard work. He enjoys learning on the job.



✓ Kaz will be a certified journeyman at the end of his program.

## Did you know?

People with **disabilities** can work in the trades. For example, a tradesperson might be deaf.



- Some employers can give help through a sign language interpreter.
- All technical training schools can give help through a sign language interpreter.

You can get more information from an Apprenticeship office or a post-secondary school. See page 8.

🔍 You can find out more information about different trades. Go to: [tradesecrets.alberta.ca](http://tradesecrets.alberta.ca) Click on **Trades & Occupations**



# More about apprenticeship programs

## How do you become an apprentice? First, you must find an employer.

Employers hire apprentices. Employers agree to train and supervise their apprentices.

Did you know? Most employers like to hire apprentices with high school diplomas.

NOW HIRING	
Journeyman Welders	YES
Apprentice Welders	YES
Labourers	YES
Fitters	NO
Instrumentation Tech.	NO



### How to find an employer

It takes time to find an employer. Be patient. Don't give up. Here are some tips:

#### 1 Make a list of employers to talk to

✓ Ask friends, family and neighbours for names of businesses.

✓ Look for ads and signs.

✓ Look at job boards.

✓ Look in the Yellow Pages.



#### 2 Make a resumé

✓ A **resumé** has information about your work experience and education.



#### 3 Visit many businesses

✓ Visit the businesses on your list. Leave your resumé.

✓ You may get an **interview**. Dress well. Arrive early. Be courteous.



#### 4 Call again later

✓ Keep your list of employers. Add new names to the list.

✓ Later, you can call the employers again. They may want apprentices in the future.

## Entering a program

### Entrance requirements

**1** You can enter a program if you meet the **entrance requirements**. They are courses or other education that you need to have.

You must meet the entrance requirements before you start your technical training. Trade programs have different educational requirements. For example, you may need:

■ a high school diploma with specific courses

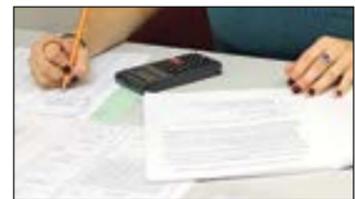
or

■ a pass mark in all five Canadian General Educational Development (GED) tests.

### 2 Entrance exams

✓ You can also enter a program if you write and pass an **entrance exam** for your trade.

✓ The exam tests your skills. For example: your skills in English, reading, math and science.



✉ Ask for information at an Apprenticeship office. See page 8.

# Apprentices earn money while they learn

## Learn on the job and take technical training

### Apprentices are employees

✓ They earn wages. Their wages go up each year as they complete their exams and on-the-job training.

✓ They learn on the job from other tradespeople at their workplace.



✓ They get work experience.

✓ Learning on the job is about 80 per cent of most programs.

### Apprentices are students too

✓ They take classes. Classes are at a **post-secondary school**.



✓ They get time off from work to take classes.

✓ Most **technical training** is 4 to 12 weeks per year. It is about 20 per cent of most programs.

✓ Technical training can be hard. Apprentices must study a lot.

## Costs

Apprentices pay for technical training. They pay **tuition\***, a materials fee, and for books.

They also pay for rent, food and other things while they take technical training.



### Help to pay for costs

✓ Most apprentices can get **EI (Employment Insurance)** while they take technical training.

✓ Apprentices can apply for scholarships and grants too. They don't have to pay back this money.

Talk to your employer or career advisor about costs for technical training.

# Get ready to enter the trades

## Plan ahead

Do you want to enter a trade in the future? Talk to your teacher, tutor or career advisor.

Plan ahead. You can do many things now. Here are some ideas:

### 1 Finish high school

Most employers like to hire apprentices with high school diplomas.

✓ Are you a teen? You will have more choices if you get your high school diploma.



✓ Are you an adult without a high school diploma? Ask about ways to get a high school equivalency diploma. You can get information from a high school in your area.

### 2 Do volunteer work

Volunteer work is work that you do for free. You learn new skills. You get experience.

### 3 Improve your speaking, reading and writing skills

Call the Literacy Helpline for information about adult programs in literacy, in academic upgrading and in ESL (English as a second language).

**Phone:** 1-800-767-3231 (free)  
**E-mail:** office@literacyalberta.ca



### 4 Take an employment preparation program

You can learn how to find a job and how to keep a job.



### 5 Take a pre-trades program

Alberta has many **pre-trades programs** (or pre-employment programs). For example: welder pre-trades programs.



A pre-trades program often lasts 6 to 18 weeks. You pay for tuition, books and other things.

You learn basic skills in the trade. You learn about safety on the job.

How does a pre-trades program help you? It may be easier to find an employer and become an apprentice.

**Note:** Ask about special programs for youth, women, Indigenous people or people with disabilities.

## Occupations

Alberta has 12 **designated occupations**. You can take programs and get certificates in these occupations. Here are 2 designated occupations:

- construction craft worker
- oil and gas transportation services (for example: bed truck operator)



Bed truck operators often move buildings and equipment at drilling rigs.

**Note:** A certificate is optional. You can work in the 12 occupations with or without a certificate.

### Ted



Ted is a labourer. He has many job duties. For example, he cleans up construction sites. He uses a packer.



Ted wants to improve his skills. He wants to become a **construction craft worker**. Ted can become a **trainee**. The program takes one year.

- 1 Ted must find an employer.
- 2 Ted and the employer must sign a contract. The employer agrees to train and supervise Ted.
- 3 Ted will learn many things. For example:

- how to flag
- how to run tools and machines on construction sites



- 4 At the end of the program, Ted will get an **occupational certificate**. Then he might get a better job. His wages might go up.



### Goes to a literacy program

Ted is also improving his reading and writing. He goes to a free literacy program. He meets with his tutor once a week.



**Did you know?** Some people get an occupational certificate. Later, they may decide to get a journeyman certificate.

## Questions and answers

**Q:** I worked as a plumber for 10 years in Europe. I have many skills. Plumber is a compulsory certification trade in Alberta. I need a certificate to work here. What can I do?



**A:** You can apply to the **Trades Qualifier Program**. Ask for information at an Apprenticeship office.



You must take an exam. You must also have papers. For example:

- papers that show your hours of work and type of work

If you get your Qualification Certificate, you can work as a plumber in Alberta.

**Note:** Applicants can get a Qualification Certificate for both compulsory and optional certification trades.

**Q:** I am a cabinetmaker. I have my Alberta Journeyman Certificate. How can I improve my job options?



**A:** For many trades, you can get a **Red Seal**. Many employers like to hire journeypersons with a Red Seal.



You must take an extra exam. Ask for information at an Apprenticeship office.

## Where to get information

### Apprenticeship and Industry Training

You can call Apprenticeship and Industry Training toll-free at **1-800-248-4823**

#### Offices

**Bonnyville**  
Provincial Building, Floor 2  
Box 8115  
4902 - 50 Avenue  
Bonnyville, AB T9N 2J4

**Slave Lake**  
Slave Lake Government Centre  
Suite 109, Box 787  
101-3rd Street SW  
Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A0

**Calgary**  
Willow Park Centre  
Suite 200, Floor 2  
10325 Bonaventure Drive SE  
Calgary, AB T2J 7E4

**Vermilion**  
Provincial Building, Flr.1  
Box 26  
4701 - 52 Street  
Vermilion, AB T9X 1J9

**Edmonton**  
Centre for Applied Technology Building  
Suite 430, 11763-106 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5G 2R1

**Fort McMurray**  
Provincial Building, Floor 7  
Box 19  
9915 Franklin Avenue  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4

**Grande Prairie**  
Towne Centre Mall, Suite 100  
9845 - 99 Avenue  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0R3

**Hinton**  
564A Carmichael Lane  
Hinton, AB T7V 1S8

**Lethbridge**  
Provincial Building, Room 280, Floor 2  
200 - 5 Avenue South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4L1

**Medicine Hat**  
3021 Dunmore Road SE  
Medicine Hat, AB T1B 2H2

**Peace River**  
Midwest Building  
Bag 900 - 28  
9715 - 100 Street  
Peace River, AB T8S 1T4

**Red Deer**  
First Red Deer Place, Floor 3  
4911 - 51 Street  
Red Deer, AB T4N 6V4

### Websites for teachers, tutors and career advisors

[tradesecrets.alberta.ca](http://tradesecrets.alberta.ca)

✓ This website has lots of information about trades, apprenticeship programs and designated occupations.

✓ There are forms and resource materials.

[alis.alberta.ca](http://alis.alberta.ca)

☞ This website has lots of information about many occupations, including trades.

☞ You can download or order many resources. Look for these easy-to-read publications:

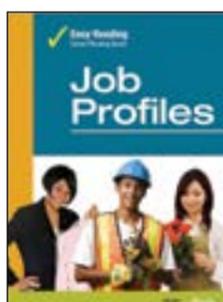
■ Learning after High School

■ Looking for a Job

■ Be Safe at Work

■ Employment Law Protects Workers

■ Easy Reading Job Profiles



**Go to:** [alis.alberta.ca/publications](http://alis.alberta.ca/publications)  
In the search box, type the name of the publication.

## Where to get this guide

### Printed copies

✓ Schools, libraries and agencies in Alberta can order free copies of **Trades in Alberta**.

E-mail: [caap@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caap@gov.ab.ca)

### On the Internet

✓ You can read **Trades in Alberta** on the Internet.



✓ You can download and print Teaching Notes.

**Go to:** [alis.alberta.ca/publications](http://alis.alberta.ca/publications)  
In the search box, type:

Trades in Alberta

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**Special thanks to the people who helped with this guide.**

**Note:** The people in the photos are volunteers. They portray fictional characters.

### Trades in Alberta

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