



## *Longshore Worker*

### *Education and Training*

Longshore workers are very specialized at what they do. Most training is done on the job and individuals are assessed via basic competency tests as to what type of longshore job they'll best fit into. High school graduation is normally required, as is patience and perseverance to become a regular worker and gain entry into the ILWU union.

### *Nature of Work*

Although the longshore union represents several office type positions, working in an industrial setting on the waterfront is to be expected. In general, longshore workers operate heavy-duty machinery to move cargo through the dock, onto and off of vessels, trucks and/or railways. In order for the full functioning of the machinery, longshore workers may work in gangs led by a foreman.

As international trade operates around the clock, and what's coming in does not always equal what's moving out, terminal requirements for labour is inconsistent. As such, longshore work is unique in the way it's administered. In general, longshore workers gather at the union dispatching hall, terminals advise the union of their labour requirements for the day, and then based on seniority the workers are allocated to the various terminals. Work opportunities are 24 hours a day and 7 days a week with 2 non-working days off per year.

### *Earnings*

Low:	\$24,000
Average:	\$80,000
High:	\$100,000

### *Main Duties*

Longshore workers are responsible for the movement of traded cargo passing through the waterfront. Responsibilities may be from unloading or loading a vessel, railway or truck, to organizing the cargo on the dock waiting to be moved.

The many different types of cargo - containers, bulk products, and break-bulk - all require specialized machinery for their movement and therefore specialized knowledge to operate the machinery. It's not common to be a 'jack of all trades', rather on the waterfront it's more common to see 'masters of one', as such lateral movement within the union is limited.

### *Essential Characteristics*

- Ability to understand cargo flows
- Safe work practices
- Manual dexterity, physically fit
- Attention to detail
- Ability to work well as a team

### *Typical Employer*

Companies operating marine terminals where rail, road, and ships meet

### *Additional Information*

BC Maritime Employers Association  
[www.bcmea.com](http://www.bcmea.com)  
 International Longshore and Warehouse Union  
[www.ilwu.ca](http://www.ilwu.ca)

