

Association of Consulting Engineering Companies BC
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2021 Consulting Engineers Fee Guideline


A guideline of standard hourly rates for engineers, technologists, and technicians providing consulting services in British Columbia.


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Consulting
Engineering
firms are
partners,
experts, and
innovators
working for
**British
Columbians.**

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About ACEC-BC

Since 1976, the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies British Columbia (ACEC-BC) has been the voice of consulting engineering companies in BC. Our mandate is to advance the business interests of consulting engineering firms in BC by advocating for fair business practices and building awareness of the industry's contributions to society and innovative technical expertise.

On behalf of our member organizations, our board of directors endorse our strategic direction and ensure our operations are guided by these principles.

Our purpose is to serve the interests of members through advocacy, creating opportunity for collaboration and building profile of members and the industry. Our member's wisdom, societal contribution, and geographic reach lend credibility and gravity to this purpose.

Advocacy is our primary mission.

We are a consolidated voice for fair procurement practices, balanced contract language including proportional allocation of risk, and removal of barriers to efficient operation of our businesses in BC.

Values unite our members.

Our members and our governance act collaboratively to promote innovative thinking and investment in our community. Our words and actions ensure an inclusive environment: celebrating our diversity and striving for equity in all that we do.

80+

Member
firms in BC

40+

Municipalities
across BC

9.5k

Employed British
Columbians

\$4b

Locally to
British Columbia

Background

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies British Columbia (ACEC-BC) is a not-for-profit professional association supporting the consulting engineering industry to provide the highest standard of engineering design services, and protect the health, welfare and safety of society. The Voice of Consulting Engineering in BC, ACEC-BC promotes the advancement of the industry through the provision of information including the annual fee guideline.

For over 20-years, ACEC-BC has produced this comprehensive fee guideline to support consulting engineering firms practicing in BC and BC based clients in determining appropriate minimum fees for service.

This guideline provides information on suggested minimum hourly rates for consulting practice. The guideline recognizes average fees across the province and does not consider local or specialty markets where conditions may support higher fees.

Clients seeking information regarding selection of a consulting engineering firm should consult the Federation of Canadian Municipalities National Guide to Sustainable Infrastructure Best Practice Guide on Selecting a Professional Consultant. A link to the guide is available and other resources regarding best practice selection may be found at yes2qbs.com.



Methodology

Annually, the Board of ACEC-BC approves a fee guideline based on data impacting the cost of providing services in BC.

Data includes:

- Sector market salaries¹
- British Columbia Consumer Price Index
- Statistics Canada services index
- Sector labour markets (recruitment, retention of practitioners)
- Changes to employer costs (i.e. statutory remittances, etc.)
- Other factors impacting cost of operation

Disbursements

Disbursements – non-labour costs associated with performance of work for a client – are categorized as normal and project specific. Mark-up of disbursement varies by category in recognition of the additional effort / expense associated with specialty disbursements such as the maintenance of specialty equipment or costs of longer distance travel.

Subconsultants are considered a separate expense category. There has been no adjustment to recommended charge-out for 2021.

Normal disbursements may include:

- Communication (phone, data)
- Production of routine drawings and documents
- Local travel (up to 30km from the consultant's office)
- Courier and postage
- Standard software and other standard computer expenses
- Office supplies

Project specific disbursements may include:

- Production of non-routine tender or other documents
- Non-local travel (i.e. airfare, car rental)
- (Client approved) Living expenses for personnel
- Specialized or project specific software and / or services
- Use of specialized equipment; testing services
- Project advertising expense
- Project specific insurance
- Other third-party expenses paid by the consultant on the client's behalf
- Approvals, permits, licenses and specific taxes applied to fees

Normal disbursements are recommended to be charged at 8% of professional fees.

Project specific disbursements are recommended to be charged at cost plus 10%.

Subconsultant invoices are recommended to be charged at cost plus 5%.

It is recommended that the client and consultant review projected expenses prior to the start of the project and agree on the applicable disbursement category and reimbursement process.

¹ Western Compensation & Benefits Consultants "Consulting Engineers Compensation, Benefits & Employment Practices Survey (2019). <https://wcbc.ca/published-surveys/consulting-engineers/>

Hourly Rates

Hourly rates are the charge out fee per hour of service. Rates are recommended based on classification of professional engineering and technical service personnel based on the degree of practice independence and associated expertise required to perform at that level. Classifications are described in the following section. Rates are expressed in Canadian dollars per hour.

Professional Engineering Services

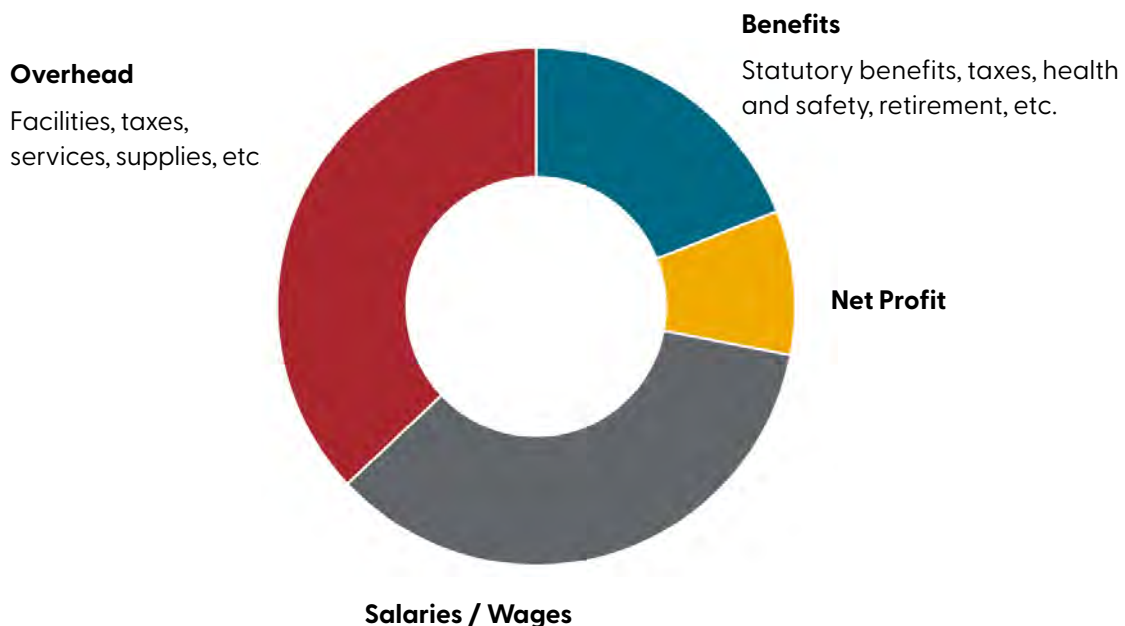
Classification	2021 Rate
E1	\$138
E2	\$163
E3	\$185
E4	\$226
E5	\$256
E6	\$308
E7	\$343

Technical Services

Classification	2021 Rate
T1	\$117
T2	\$138
T3	\$159
T4	\$174
T5	\$195
T6	\$214
T7	\$242

Distribution of Consulting Fees

For reference, the following graphic provides context on the typical distribution of fees within a consulting engineering company.



Classification Guide

Hourly rates are based on the classification of professional engineering and technical service personnel. The guide considers the degree of practice independence and associated expertise required to perform at that level. Most technical personnel within a consulting engineering company will align with these classifications.

Professional Engineering Services

Classification	Description
E1 Engineer-in-Training	Practitioner is a university graduate from an accredited engineering program with little or no prior professional practice.
E2 Assistant Project Engineer	Practitioner performs engineering assignments of limited scope and complexity. Work is supervised in detail. Practitioner may give some guidance to technicians, technologists, contractors and/or other employees within a limited scope.
E3 Project Engineer	Practitioner is independently responsible for a variety of engineering assignments. Work is not generally supervised in detail; may provide guidance to other engineers, but supervision is not usually a core responsibility.
E4 Supervisory Engineer	The practitioner directly supervises other engineers over a sustained period.
E4 Specialist Engineer	The practitioner has achieved a full specialization in complex engineering applications such as research, design, product application or sales.
E5 Management Engineer	The practitioner directs and supervises a broad group of professional technical practitioners, Supervisory Engineers (E4) and other personnel.
E5 Advanced Specialist Engineer	In addition to the skills of a Specialist Engineer (E4), the Advanced Specialist Engineers generally exercises authority over a group of highly qualified professionals engaged in complex engineering applications.
E6 Senior Management Engineer	Practitioner has authority over several related professional groups in different fields each under the direct supervision of a Management Engineer (E5).
E7 Senior Specialist Engineer	Practitioner is a recognized authority in a field of significant importance and generally exercises ultimate design authority over a group of other, highly qualified professionals engaged in complex engineering applications.

Classification Guide – Continued

Technical Services

Classification	Description
T1 Technician	Practitioner has little or no prior experience and carries out straight-forward duties under close supervision. Duties may include the preparation of repetitive drawings, maintenance of drawing files and assisting with field surveys. Little independent judgment is expected, and performance is according to standard procedures.
T2 Technician/Technologist	Practitioner supports engineering personnel in field, design, drawing production and/or construction specifications and quality control all under close supervision. All tasks are clearly defined, straight-forward and according to standard procedures. Practitioner may also perform common computational work using standard accepted formulae and manuals.
T3 Technician/Technologist	Practitioner supports engineering personnel in field, design, drawing production and/or construction specifications and quality control all under direct supervision. A variety of defined assignments are performed with some independent judgment. Practitioner may provide technical guidance to T1 and T2 practitioners within the same area of specialty.
T4 Technician/Technologist	Practitioner may complete design tasks, complex CAD assignments and perform field quality control functions all with minimal supervision. Performs analysis and provides recommendations about technical problems encountered. Practitioner may guide or supervise the activities of T1, T2 and T3 technical personnel including processes and procedures and verification of the adequacy of work.
T5 Supervising Technician/Technologist	Practitioner likely to supervise directly or indirectly the work of T1 to T4 Technician / Technologists including review and verification of adequacy. Practitioner is also likely to undertake project related functions on a continued basis. Supporting the Project Manager, then practitioner may act as “CAD Lead” and may prepare production and progress reports as needed. Practitioner assists the Project Manager in determining personnel and person-hour requirements.
T6 Management Technician/Technologist	Practitioner independently manages design functions on a variety of projects, supervises the activities of other personnel and may be responsible for administrative management of personnel. Practitioner may assume the role of Project Manager on projects and may regularly engage in marketing and other client services.
T7 Group Manager or Discipline Lead Technician/Technologist	Practitioner may independently represent the firm with clients, manage and supervise personnel on a continued basis and manage major projects. The T7 Technician/Technologist may assume all manner of administrative responsibilities including recruitment, training and budget accountability.