

# PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION: WORKFORCE FACTS

SERIES 1 | REPORT 4

## WELDING INSPECTION

Currently, welding inspectors have the most well-defined career path, which typically includes certification by the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB). Compared to other inspection specialties, welding inspector salaries are the most consistent between workers. Almost half of pipeline construction inspectors<sup>1</sup> started and/or developed their careers by welding.

### FAST FACT:

32% of surveyed inspectors earn over \$250,000 annually, placing them in the top 1% of Canadian income earners.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Jiva Consulting. (2019). *Pipeline construction inspection benchmarking survey*.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Reena Sahney  
President  
T: 403.607.7641  
E: [reena.sahney@jivaconsulting.com](mailto:reena.sahney@jivaconsulting.com)

Jeff Lecuyer  
Business Development  
Specialist  
T: 403.993.7084  
E: [jeff.lecuyer@jivaconsulting.com](mailto:jeff.lecuyer@jivaconsulting.com)

## How Much Do Pipeline Construction Inspectors Earn?

### INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

In Canada, pipeline construction inspectors are typically independent contractors hired by a company that provides inspection services. Inspectors are usually paid a day rate and are responsible for expenses associated with an independent business (e.g., travel, phone). As independent workers, they can claim various tax credits.

### WORK SCHEDULE

Inspection jobs are typically available 10–12 months of the year. Inspectors work on one project at a time, a project usually lasting from 3–6 months. The daily workload varies depending on the project, so inspectors tend to work a modified schedule. Early in an inspector's career, the workload can be inconsistent.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

Based on a 2019 survey<sup>1</sup>, construction inspectors typically earn \$75–100 per hour. This relatively high rate, combined with a potentially heavy workload, often provides inspectors with a high annual income (Figure 1). One third of inspectors earn over \$250,000 annually, and 85% of survey respondents earn more than \$100,000 each year.

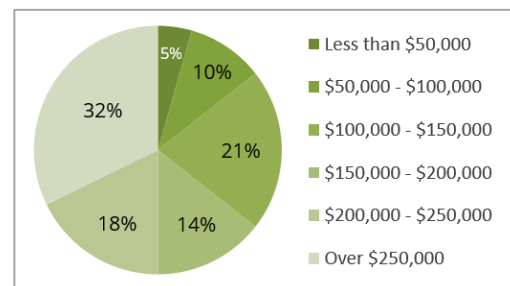


Figure 1. Average annual income for Canadian pipeline construction inspectors.

### EARNING POTENTIAL

Based on hourly wage, the typical annual compensation of an inspector with increasing responsibility is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Average gross annual compensation of three inspection positions. GPCI=General pipeline construction inspector.

### COMPENSATION VARIABILITY

The hourly wage earned by an inspector with less than 10 years of experience varies significantly (Figure 3). Wages are more consistent for inspectors with more than 10 years of experience.

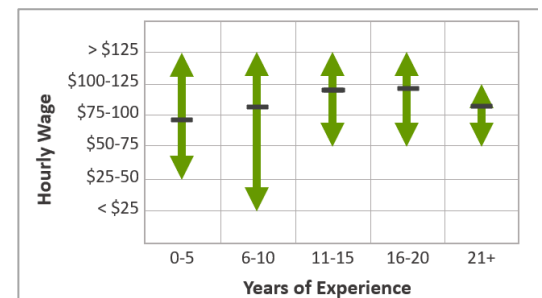


Figure 3. The range of hourly wage (green arrows) earned by inspectors with various years of experience. Dark grey lines show the average wage.

The most likely reason for this variability is that unlike other trades, pipeline construction inspection does not have significant standardization. For example, it does not require an apprenticeship, nor is there oversight by a regulatory body. Therefore, compensation is not necessarily tied to certification or work experience.