



Taking the Pathway

Understanding
career direction in
production supervising





Food Processing Skills Canada

At Food Processing Skills Canada, our mission is to make certain that the Canadian food and beverage manufacturing sector is building an empowered and resilient workforce that is primed for growth.

We create industry-driven programs for Canada's 13,000+ food and beverage manufacturing establishments and the sector's 300,000+ people so that businesses and individuals can achieve their goals.

We are passionate about ensuring that Canadians, new immigrants, and temporary foreign workers have the training and confidence to successfully begin an exciting job or advance their career. We also want employers and educators to have the right resources so that they can nurture talent and create the perfect learning environment.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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table of contents

ABOUT TAKING THE PATHWAY	4
HOW TO USE THE CAREER PATHWAY	5
FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING – A VITAL INDUSTRY	5
A VARIETY OF FOODS; A VARIETY OF SUBSECTORS	6
EVERY SUBSECTOR NEEDS SUPERVISORS	6
CAREER PATHWAY FOR PRODUCTION SUPERVISORS	7
PROCESSING LABOURERS / WORKERS	7
PROCESS CONTROL AND MACHINE OPERATORS	7
FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCT TESTERS AND GRADERS	7
PRODUCTION LEAD HAND	8
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR	8
HACCP COORDINATOR	9
PRODUCTION MANAGER	9
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR CAREER PATHWAY	10
MANAGEMENT SKILL LEVEL (M)	10
SUPERVISORY SKILL LEVEL (S)	10
HIGH SKILL LEVEL (HS)	10
SEMI SKILL LEVEL (SS)	10
FOUNDATIONAL SKILL LEVEL (F)	10
APPENDIX A	A11
OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS WITHIN THE CAREER PATHWAY	A11

About Taking the Pathway

Canada's Agri-Food sector is a significant contributor to our nation's economy and was recently identified as one of Canada's top growth industries over the next 10 years. Despite this, the sector continues to face a critical labour shortage that, if left unresolved, will impede the industry's growth, employment opportunities, and overall sustainability.

How to Use the Career Pathway

This document provides practical information about the career paths available for workers involved in food and beverage processing. In a time when attraction and recruitment of workers is important to keep up with demand, the career pathway can be helpful to educate potential workers about the opportunities and career options in food and beverage processing. The career pathway is a helpful tool for employers to attract, recruit and retain productive and skilled workers.

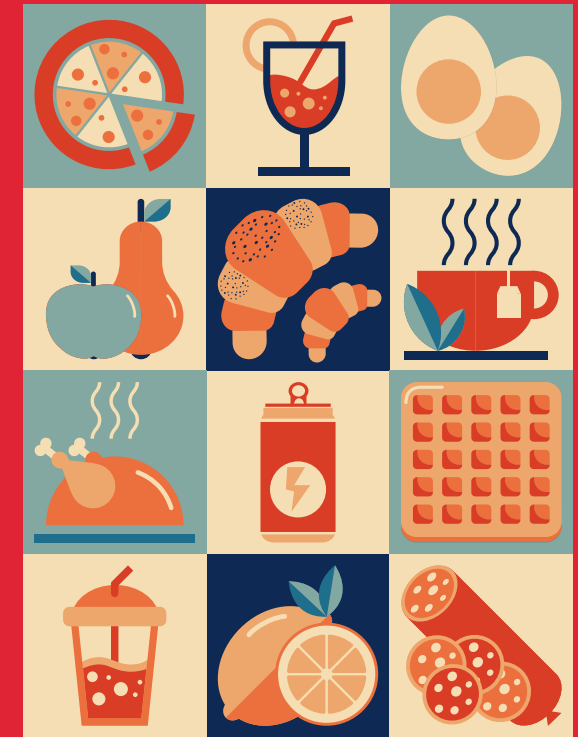
The career pathway for Production Supervisors illustrates the progression from foundational to management positions. Definitions for these occupational levels can be found in **Appendix A**.

Food and Beverage Processing – A Vital Industry

The food and beverage processing industry is the largest manufacturing industry in Canada in value of sales of goods and is the largest manufacturing employer; 300,000 Canadians work in the food and beverage processing industry! There are about 8,500 food and beverage processing establishments in Canada. 92% of these establishments are 'small' businesses – employing less than 100 employees. Establishments big and small keep the bellies of Canadians full.

We need to eat and drink to live, and the Canadian food and beverage processing industry supplies almost 70% of all of the processed food and beverage products available on our store shelves.¹

¹ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: Overview of the food and beverage processing industry (2023): <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/food-processing-industry/overview-food-beverage>



Check out our video to learn more about the Canadian food and beverage processing industry: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQyzqqhNq3U&ab_



A variety of foods; a variety of subsectors

They say that variety is the spice of life. Lucky for us, we have a smorgasbord (i.e., multiple options) of food and beverage offerings for Canadians, made by Canadians. The industry is divided into the following subsectors:

- **Beverage Manufacturing**
- **Dairy Product Manufacturing**
- **Meat and Poultry Processing**
- **Fish and Seafood Processing**
- **Grain and Oilseed Milling**
- **Sugar and Confectionary Manufacturing**
- **Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing**
- **Cannabis Product Manufacturing**
- **Animal Food Manufacturing**
- **Bakeries and Tortilla Manufacturing**
- **Other Food Manufacturing**



Every Subsector Needs Supervisors

Whether making chicken nuggets or tortillas, every production facility needs supervisors to oversee and coordinate the activities of workers who directly process, package, test and grade food and beverage products. Supervisors (typically) have a unique blend of processing experience coupled with management skills.

If you like managing both processes and people – a career as a Production Supervisor might be the right fit for you.

career pathway for production supervisors

In many subsectors, supervisors work their way up from foundational positions to more advanced and skilled positions. The pathway doesn't end at Supervisory positions, either. Many production supervisors will continue to climb the ladders of their organizations, taking on managerial and senior executive roles.

Processing Labourers / Workers

Labourers in food and beverage processing perform material handling, clean-up, packaging, and other elemental activities related to food and beverage processing.

Skill Level: Foundational Skill (FS)

Educational Requirements: No prior experience or training in food and beverage processing; high school diploma or equivalent may be required/preferred; training is provided on-the-job.

Related NOC Code: **NOC 95106** – Labourers in food and beverage processing.

Process control and machine operators

Process control and machine operators operate multi-function process control machinery and single-function machines to process and package food and beverage products. Depending upon the foods and

beverages being produced in the facility, there are a full range of equipment that is used on the processing and packaging lines.

Skill Level: Semi Skill (SS)

Educational/Experience Requirements: Prior experience as a processing labourer/worker is typically required. (i.e., 6 months-12 months)

Related NOC Code: **NOC 94140** – Process control and machine operators, food and beverage processing.

Food and Beverage Product Testers and Graders

Testers and graders in food and beverage processing test or grade ingredients and finished food or beverage products to ensure conformance to company standards. Testing may occur in-process, on the production line, or following packaging. Testers and graders need to have a thorough understanding of the standards associated with the product, the production process, procedures for testing and approaches for dealing with issues and deviations. They play a critical role on the front-line in maintaining the quality of the products produced in the facility.

Skill Level: Semi Skill to High Skill (SS - H)

Educational/Experience Requirements: Prior experience as a process control and machine



operator may be required, experience as a labourer/worker is typically a minimum requirement (i.e., 6 months-12 months)

Related NOC Code: **NOC 94143** – Testers and graders, food and beverage processing.

Production Lead Hand

A Production Lead Hand is typically the most senior machine operator on the shift and can play a supportive role (to the Production Supervisor) in overseeing the work on the production line, while still being in a direct line position.

Skill Level: Semi Skill (H)

Educational/Experience Requirements: 2+ years in a Machine Operator position; positive work record and recognized supervisory skills.

Related NOC Code: **NOC 94140** – Process control and machine operators, food and beverage processing.

Production Supervisor

Production Supervisors are a level up from lead hand positions, as they wear multiple hats in addition to overseeing the work of processing, packaging, and grading personnel on the line. They play a role in developing work schedules and coordinating production activities with other departments. Production Supervisors use their extensive knowledge to resolve work problems and recommend approaches and solutions to improve productivity on the production line. They are responsible for creating production reports and other documentation and are often involved in training staff and recommending personnel actions (like hiring, promotions and terminations).

Skill Level: Supervisory Skill (S)

Educational/Experience Requirements: Prior experience as a production lead hand is typically required (minimum 1-2 years, 5-7 years in the food and beverage

processing industry is typical); experience in personnel management and supervisory skills is an asset and may be provided by the company; HACCP knowledge and/or certification may be required.

Related NOC Code: **NOC 92012** – Supervisors, food and beverage processing.

HACCP Coordinator

Hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) Coordinator is a specialized Production Supervisor role. HACCP coordinators identify, evaluate, control, and prevent hazards at all stages of the food production process. The HACCP Coordinator is responsible for the development and implementation of a HACCP system as well as prerequisite programs for shipping and receiving, equipment and maintenance, training, sanitation and pest control, recalls, and other operational control programs.

Skill Level: Supervisory Skill (S)

Educational/Experience Requirements: HACCP certification, 5-7 years of experience in quality assurance in food processing; extensive experience in the food production process within their facility is also required.

Related NOC Code: **NOC 92012** – Supervisors, food and beverage processing.

Production Manager

Production Managers plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the operations of their facilities and typically report to key members of the executive management team – which can include the general manager or other senior manager.

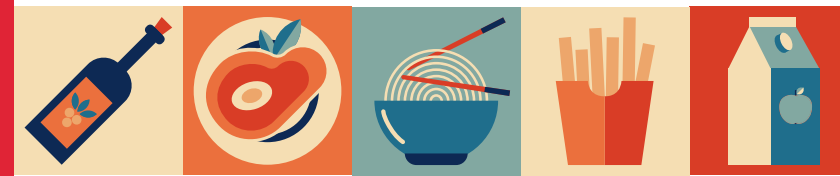
Skill Level: Management Skill (S)

Educational/Experience Requirements: Prior experience as a production supervisor required (minimum 3-5 years, 10+ years in the food and beverage processing industry is typical).

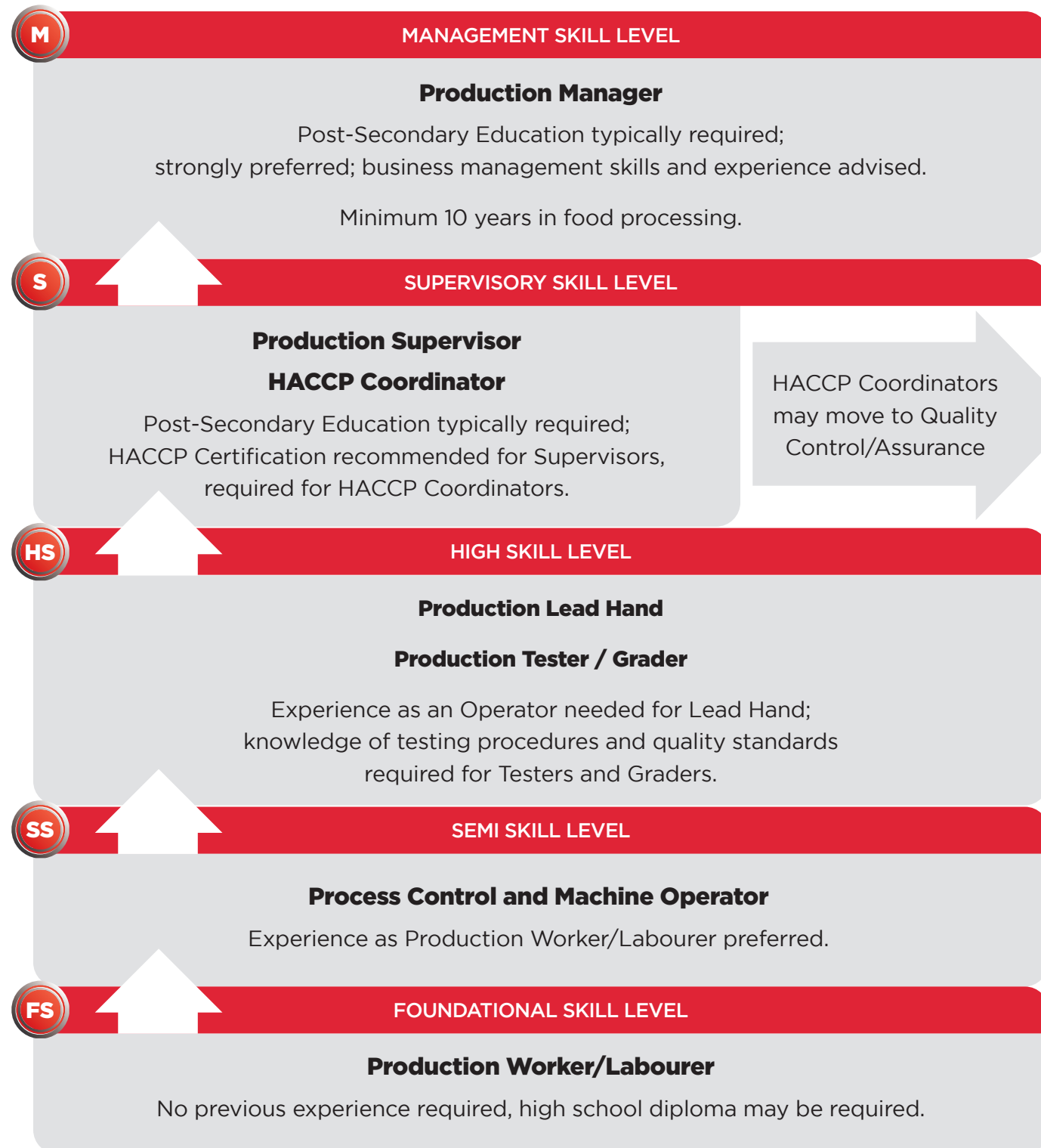
Related NOC Code: **NOC 90010** – Manufacturing managers.



production supervisor career pathway



appendix a OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS WITHIN THE CAREER PATHWAY



Foundational Skill Level 	<p>Foundational Skill Level positions are often the entry-level positions or those jobs that required no prior experience or training to work in the specific industry or subsector. A high school diploma or equivalent may be preferred but is not required by most businesses. Training for foundational skill level jobs most often occurs on the job; job shadowing is important for these entry-level positions.</p>
Semi Skill Level 	<p>Semi Skill Level workers typically have 6 months – 1 year of experience working in foundational skill level positions within their facility. A high school diploma is often preferred but may not be a requirement. Workers in this job class typically receive training on the job and also receive WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training, like HACCP. Workers who start in Foundational Skill Level Positions often progress into Semi Skill Level positions as they gain additional experience and training.</p>
High Skill Level 	<p>High Skill Level Workers typically have at least 1 year of experience (typically 1-3 years) in their respective subsector and have often performed a range of tasks that are completed on the production/processing line. Depending upon the subsector, formal education may be required to transition from semi skill to high skill level positions. In general, a high school diploma is the minimum educational requirement for advancement into high skill level positions. Additional training related to supervising workers may be provided in-house. Workers receive WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training. Workers in Semi Skill Level positions often advance to High Skill Level positions as they gain additional experience and training.</p>
Supervisory Skill Level 	<p>Supervisory Skill Level workers typically have 2-3 years of experience in high skill level positions within their respective subsector. Additional training in production management, supervising and employee management may be required and provided by the company. A high school diploma or equivalent is often a minimum requirement; additional post-secondary education is often required or considered a strong asset (subsector dependent). In some subsectors (e.g., industrial baking, fish and seafood processing), it is typical for supervisors to begin at the Foundational Skill Level, and through experience and additional training, move up into supervisory roles. Supervisors must complete WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training. In other subsectors, like winemaking (within the beverage processing subsector), supervisors often begin their careers as winemakers – a high skill level position.</p>
Management Skill Level 	<p>Management Skill Level workers typically have a minimum of 5 years of supervisory experience within their respective subsectors. Leadership experience is considered an asset. A post-secondary education may be required or considered a strong asset. Additional training in management is often required of job incumbents. In general, Managers require WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training.</p>



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