



Taking the Pathway

Understanding
career direction in
fish & seafood
processing





Food Processing Skills Canada

FPSC is your labour, skills and workforce development non-profit organization. Our job is to provide leadership in professionalizing the food and beverage manufacturing industry so that the most important resource - people - are the best in the world. We have developed a national skills strategy which is a proven long-term approach successfully utilized by other Canadian professional sectors. This strategy builds collaborations with industry, government, academia, unions, associations, community organizations and other stakeholders.

Canada

This project is funded by the
Government of Canada's Sector Initiative Program.

table of contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABOUT TAKING THE PATHWAY | 4 |
| HOW TO USE THE CAREER PATHWAY | 4 |
| DEVELOPING THE CAREER PATHWAY | 5 |
| UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER PATHWAY..... | 5 |
| OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS | 6 |
| FOUNDATIONAL SKILL LEVEL (F) | 6 |
| INTERMEDIATE SKILL LEVEL (I) | 6 |
| HIGH SKILL LEVEL (HS)..... | 7 |
| SUPERVISORY SKILL LEVEL (S) | 8 |
| MANAGEMENT SKILL LEVEL (M) | 8 |
| SENIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILL LEVEL (SE)..... | 9 |
| FISH + SEAFOOD PROCESSING POSITIONS CAREER PATHWAYS CHART | 10 |
| FISH + SEAFOOD PROCESSING CAREER PROGRESSION | 11 |
| KEY FINDINGS | 12 |
| IMPACT OF UNIONIZATION ON OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS | 12 |
| FOCUS OF THE CAREER PATHWAYS | 12 |
| FACILITY SIZE IMPACTS OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS AND TITLES | 12 |
| PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND MANUAL LABOUR REQUIREMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT..... | 12 |
| DIFFERING SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR FISH VS. SEAFOOD PROCESSING..... | 12 |
| FOUNDATIONAL & INTERMEDIATE SKILL LEVEL JOBS ARE IN DEMAND & HARD TO FILL | 12 |
| VARIETY OF SPECIES AND PROCESSES | 13 |
| APPENDIX A | A14 |
| FISH AND SEAFOOD PROCESSING | A14 |

About Taking the Pathway

Canada's Agri-Food sector, particularly meat and seafood processing, 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.

To address this shortage, Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC) has embarked upon a landmark Labour Market Information Study (LMI). In its finality, the LMI will provide

government and decision-makers with the research needed to make real regulatory change that will bring both prosperity and opportunity to the meat and seafood processing sectors.

Taking the Pathway: Understanding Career Paths in Fish + Seafood Processing lays crucial groundwork for the LMI by defining occupations and career paths in the fish and seafood processing sector. Utilizing this data, the LMI will take in-depth reviews of each career path, and their specific challenges and opportunities.

How to use the Career Pathway

This document provides practical information about the career paths available for workers in the fish and seafood processing industry. 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 pathways within the sector. The career pathway is a helpful tool for employers to attract, recruit and retain productive and skilled workers.



Developing the Career Pathway

To learn more about the career pathways in fish and seafood processing, we:

- ◆ Conducted extensive research to learn about the various job positions and skill levels within the fish and seafood processing industry, including:
 - ◆ Collecting and analyzing job descriptions, job advertisements, organizational charts and other occupational information from a variety of fish and seafood processing facilities,
 - ◆ Conducting telephone interviews with fish and seafood processors, and
 - ◆ Reviewing and validating the career pathway with an industry-led advisory group.

Understanding the Career Pathway

The career pathway for fish and seafood processing illustrates the progression of occupational levels from foundational skills to executive management. The career pathway is comprised of six (6) levels. The typical entry-point into the fish and seafood processing industry is at the Foundational Skill Level. With work experience and training (often offered on-the-job), workers often progress upward on the career ladder.



occupational levels

Foundational Skill Level (F)

Foundational Skill Level positions are often the entry-level positions or those jobs that required no prior experience or training to work in a fish and seafood processing facility. 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 positions entry-level positions.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 9618 - Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing

Sample Titles for Foundational Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Fish/seafood processing labourer
- ◆ Fish/seafood packer
- ◆ Fish/seafood plant labourer
- ◆ Fish/seafood handler

Intermediate Skill Level (I)

Intermediate Skill Level workers typically have 6 months - 1 year of experience working in fish and seafood processing facilities. 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 training. Workers who start in Foundational Skill Level Positions often progress into Intermediate Skill Level positions as they gain additional experience and training.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 9463 – Fish and Seafood Plant Workers

Sample Titles for Intermediate Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Fish/seafood cutter
- ◆ Fish/seafood cleaner
- ◆ Fish/seafood plant worker
- ◆ Fish trimmer
- ◆ Fish/seafood processor
- ◆ Fish cutter

High Skill Level (HS)

High Skill Level Workers typically have at least 1 year of experience (typically 1-3 years) in fish and seafood processing and are able to perform the range of tasks that are completed on the production/processing line. A high school diploma is considered an asset. Additional training related to supervising workers may be provided in-house. Workers receive WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training. Workers in Intermediate Skill Level positions often advance to High Skill Level positions as they gain additional experience and training, particularly in fish processing which requires specialized cutting and filleting.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 9213 – Supervisors, Food and Beverage Processing

Sample Titles for High Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Fish/seafood processing lead hand
- ◆ Fish/seafood processing foreperson

Supervisory Skill Level (S)

Supervisory Skill Level workers typically have 2-3 years of experience on the line of a fish and seafood processing facility. Additional training in relation to production management, supervising and employee management may be required and provided by the company. A high school diploma or equivalent is often required; additional post-secondary education is an asset. It is typical for supervisors to begin at the Foundational Skill Level, and through experience and additional training, supervisory roles. Supervisors must complete WHMIS, food safety and food safety management training.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 9213 – Supervisors, Food and Beverage and Associated Products Processing

Sample Titles for Supervisory Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Fish/seafood processing supervisor
- ◆ Raw room supervisor
- ◆ Process room supervisor

Management Skill Level (M)

Management Skill Level workers typically have a minimum of 5 years of supervisory experience within the fish and seafood processing industry. 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. Managers require WHMIS, food safety and food safety management system training.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 0911 – Manufacturing Manager

Sample Titles for Management Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Fish/seafood processing manager
- ◆ Fish/seafood processing plant manager

Senior Executive Leadership Skill Level (SE)

Senior Executive Leadership Skill Level workers typically have significant experience (e.g. 10+) years within the fish and seafood processing industry, or within other food and beverage processing facilities. They are responsible for managing corporate affairs and lead the strategic direction and vision of the overall organization. Skills in organizational management and business administration are critical.

Applicable NOC Code(s)

NOC 0016 – Senior Manager – construction, transportation, production, and utilities

NOC 0911 – Manufacturing Manager

Sample Titles for Senior Executive Leadership Skill Level Jobs within the Fish and Seafood Processing Sector include:

- ◆ Director of Operations
- ◆ VP of Operations





fish & seafood

PROCESSING POSITIONS
CAREER PATHWAY

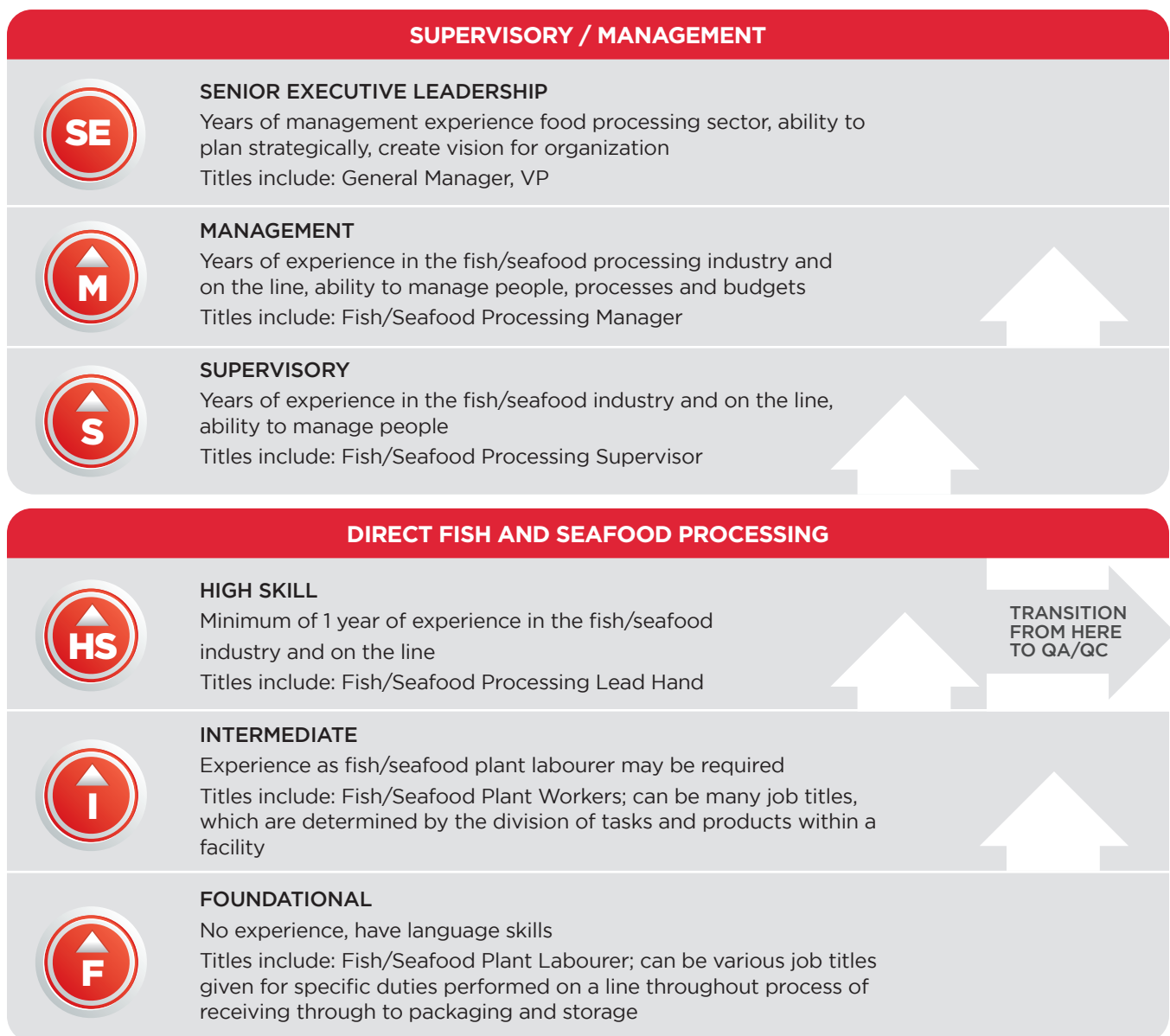
- SE SENIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**
- M MANAGEMENT**
- S SUPERVISORY**
- HS HIGH SKILL**
- I INTERMEDIATE**
- F FOUNDATIONAL**

| TITLE | EXPERIENCE / EDUCATION |
|--|--|
| <p>SE</p> <p>SENIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Director of operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Experience in the seafood processing industry is the most significant requirement |
| <p>M</p> <p>MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/Seafood Processing Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minimum of 5 years of experience in seafood processing industry ◆ Degree or Diploma in Food Science may be considered an asset ◆ Leadership experience |
| <p>S</p> <p>SUPERVISORY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/Seafood Processing Supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 3-5 years of experience in seafood processing industry ◆ High school diploma |
| <p>HS</p> <p>HIGH-SKILLED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/Seafood Processing Lead Hand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minimum 1 year of experience as fish/seafood processing worker ◆ High school diploma may be required |
| <p>I</p> <p>INTERMEDIATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/Seafood Plant Workers <p><i>Various titles given for specific duties performed on the line or throughout the process of handling and packaging</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Experience as a labourer may be required ◆ Some high school education may be considered an asset |
| <p>F</p> <p>FOUNDATIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/Seafood Plant Labourers <p><i>Various titles given for specific duties performed on the line or throughout the process of handling and packaging</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No experience required ◆ Some high school education may be considered an asset |

fish & seafood processing career pathway

The following graphic illustrates a typical career progression within the fish and seafood processing sector.

As the graphic illustrates, workers within High Skill Level occupations (such as Lead Hand) may move to the Quality Control/Quality Assurance Department and assume a role of Quality Control Inspector. This position is still a production/processing line position, but the Quality Control Inspector performs quality control tests and inspections on the processing line.



Key Findings

Our research helped to identify key issues and challenges that are unique to the fish and seafood processing sector:

Impact of Unionization on Occupational Levels

Unionization of workers (and collective agreements) have a significant impact on the division of labour (tasks often classified by rate groups) as well as the degree of worker mobility across functions and departments within a facility. Collective agreements tend to stipulate the duties that workers in specific rate groups can perform. Non-unionized job positions and non-unionized facilities appear to have more flexibility in regard to cross-training workers and moving workers based on aptitudes, skills and personal competencies.

Focus of the Career Pathways

The Foundational, Intermediate and High Skill Level occupations are related to the handling and processing of the fish and seafood once it is landed. This analysis does not include occupations related to aquaculture (the farming aspect of the industry); harvesting; or further processing (such as canning, smoking, breaching, etc.).

Facility Size Impacts

Occupational Levels and Titles

Job titles are dependent upon the size of the organization. In larger organizations, job titles reflect more sub-divided and specific processes/tasks. In small operations, the titles tend to be more generic/broad and individuals perform numerous functions on an as-needed basis.

Physical Environment and Manual Labour Requirements are Significant

Fish and seafood processing requires a high degree of manual labour (in addition to automation). In addition to the physicality of the jobs, the environment is also a critical factor for these areas. Working with live product and the physical environment (e.g. cold, hot, wet, odorous, etc.) adds another layer of complexity to these jobs.

Differing Skill Requirements for Fish vs. Seafood Processing

Through the research it became apparent that there is more skill differentiation and development in fish processing facilities as compared to seafood processing facilities when it comes to cutting/filleting fish. There is more of a differential between Foundational, Intermediate and High Skill Level workers on the processing line within a fish processing facility than a seafood processing facility, mostly due to the knife skills required in fish processing.

For the purpose of the analysis, fish and seafood have been separated. While some facilities process seafood and ground-fish, a number of facilities only process one or the other. The separation of fish and seafood allows for an analysis of the specific titles and duties associated with both types of product.

Foundational & Intermediate Skill Level Jobs are In Demand & Hard to Fill

Foundational and Intermediate Skill Level employees make up a significant majority of plant workforces and are particularly hard to staff (based on research findings). Fish and seafood processing facilities are cold and wet environments which some workers find difficult.



The fish and seafood industry is seasonal, impacting the supply and demand of workers as well as worker retention. Processors have little control over seasonality or catches during these seasons and the duties and work hours required fluctuate as a result.

Variety of Species and Processes

Within the fish and seafood sector, there are a variety of species that are processed in different ways. This makes assigning specific job descriptions difficult and facility/product specific.

Therefore, Foundational Skill Level occupations have been assigned the Fish/Seafood Plant Labourer title (under which multiple titles can fall depending upon the plant/species) and the

Intermediate Skill Level occupations have been assigned the Fish/Seafood Plant Worker title (under which multiple titles fall). Sample titles can be found in the detailed table in Appendix A.

appendix a

FISH & SEAFOOD PROCESSING

| LEVEL/NOC | SAMPLE TITLES | DESCRIPTION/DUTIES | EXPERIENCE/EDUCATION |
|--|--|--|--|
| Senior Executive Leadership NOC 0911 – Manufacturing Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP of operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic planning/contributing to strategic planning for the organization Identify opportunities to eliminate waste, add value, maximize yield and develop solutions by initiating team-based studies and trials related to process improvement Develop and implement continuous improvement strategies in the organization Set and monitor budgets Oversee quality control, inventory management, and finished product warehousing and transfers Lead, motivate and coach all employees to drive performance Identify and implement capital projects, physical facility improvements such as technology upgrades Track and ensure that regulation changes are implemented throughout the organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7-10 years of experience in the fish and seafood processing industry Leadership experience |
| Management Skill Level NOC 0911 – Manufacturing Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish/seafood processing manager Plant manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee processing operations Oversee receiving, grading, storing and shipping of fish/seafood Ensure quality guidelines are being met Prepare & adhere to a yearly budget for the entire operation Recruit & train production workers Assist in inventory management Oversee Health & Safety of all employees Work with Chief Engineer/Maintenance Manager to maintain all equipment in good working order | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5+ years of experience in fish + seafood processing Leadership experience Post-secondary degree diploma is asset |

appendix a

FISH & SEAFOOD PROCESSING

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Supervisory Skill Level</p> <p>NOC 9213 – Supervisors, food, beverage and associated products processing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/seafood processing supervisor ◆ Raw room supervisor ◆ Process room supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Supervise, co-ordinate and schedule the activities of workers who process, package, test and grade fish/seafood products ◆ Establish methods to meet work schedules and co-ordinate work activities with other departments ◆ Resolve work problems and recommend measures to improve productivity and product quality ◆ Requisition materials and supplies ◆ Train staff in job duties, safety procedures and company policy ◆ Recommend personnel actions such as hiring and promotion ◆ Prepare production and other reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 3-5 years of experience in the fish/seafood processing industry ◆ High School Diploma is an asset |
| <p>High Skill Level</p> <p>NOC 9213 – Supervisors, food, beverage and associated products processing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish/seafood processing lead hand ◆ Processing foreperson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide direct supervision on the line to fish + seafood processing workers and labourers ◆ Provide guidance and direction to fish/seafood processing workers and labourers ◆ Ensure safety and efficiency of fish/seafood processing workers and labourers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Minimum of 1 year of experience in fish/seafood processing ◆ High School Diploma is an asset |

appendix a

FISH & SEAFOOD PROCESSING

Intermediate Skill Level

NOC 9463 –
Fish and Seafood
Plant
Workers

Seafood Plant Worker

Sample Titles:

- ◆ Clam shucker; clam chucking machine tender; crab butcher
- ◆ Hand shellfish processor
- ◆ Lobster processor
- ◆ Oyster packer; oyster shucker; oyster washer
- ◆ Scallop shucker
- ◆ Shellfish processor
- ◆ Shellfish separator tender
- ◆ Shellfish shucker
- ◆ Shellfish processing machine tender
- ◆ Shrimp peeler; shrimp processor
- ◆ Washing table worker
- ◆ Shellfish butcher
- ◆ Hot claw remover; live claw remover; claw cracker; claw meat remover; knuckle/thumb meat remover; claw cleaner
- ◆ Meat cleaner
- ◆ Meat sealer
- ◆ Raw tail remover; raw tail cleaner and purger

Seafood plant machine operators perform some or all of the following duties:

- ◆ Set up and operate machines to clean
- ◆ Set up and operate machines to can, bag, box or otherwise package seafood products
- ◆ Check products and packaging for defects and to ensure conformance to company standards and perform corrective machine adjustments as required
- ◆ Record production information such as quantity, weight, date and type of products packaged
- ◆ Seafood plant cutters and cleaners perform some or all of the following duties:
- ◆ Disjoint and remove meat from lobsters or other crustaceans preparatory to canning or further processing

- ◆ Experience as a *Seafood Plant Labourer* may be required
- ◆ Some High School may be required

Intermediate Skill Level

NOC 9463 –
Fish and Seafood
Plant
Workers

Fish Plant Worker

Sample Titles:

- ◆ Fish cutter; fish cutting machine operator setter; frozen fish cutter
- ◆ Fillet chopper; filleting machine operator; filleter
- ◆ Fish header
- ◆ Fish splitter
- ◆ Fish boner
- ◆ Fish cleaner and cutter; fish cleaning machine tender
- ◆ Fish plant machine operator
- ◆ Fish skinner operator; fish skinning machine operator
- ◆ Fish trimmer
- ◆ Fish processing machine operator

Fish machine operators perform some or all of the following duties:

- ◆ Set up and operate machines to clean, cut, cook, smoke, brine, dehydrate or otherwise process fish products
- ◆ Set up and operate machines to can, bag, box or otherwise package fish products
- ◆ Check products and packaging for defects and to ensure conformance to company standards and perform corrective machine adjustments as required
- ◆ Record production information such as quantity, weight, date and type of products packaged

Fish plant cutters and cleaners perform some or all of the following duties:

- ◆ Cut, clean and trim fish prior to marketing or further processing
- ◆ Scrape away scales, cut fish, separate fillets and remove scrap parts using knife
- ◆ Check fish fillets to determine optimal number and size of fillet sections, cut sections according to specifications and place in container for weighing

- ◆ No experience required
- ◆ Some High School may be required

appendix a

FISH & SEAFOOD PROCESSING

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Foundational Skill Level</p> <p>NOC 9618 – Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing</p> | <p>Seafood Processing Labourer</p> <p><i>Sample Titles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shellfish labourer ◆ Shellfish packer ◆ Shellfish bagger ◆ Raw meat packer; shellfish packer ◆ Meat weigher; full box weigher; pan weigher ◆ Freezer loader ◆ Box date coder ◆ Carton strapper ◆ Shellfish dumper ◆ Pan flipper; pan remover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unload shellfish from fishing vessels and transport them by hand or forklift truck to work area in fish processing plant ◆ Weigh shellfish, record weight ◆ Clean work areas and equipment ◆ Transport supplies and packaging materials throughout plant and storage area manually or with powered equipment ◆ Measure and dump ingredients into hoppers of mixing and grinding machines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No experience required ◆ Some High School may be considered an asset |
| | <p>Fish Processing Labourer</p> <p><i>Sample Titles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fish bin worker ◆ Fish culler ◆ Fish dipper ◆ Fish flaker ◆ Fish freezing worker ◆ Fish hopping filling worker ◆ Fish icer ◆ Fish packer ◆ Fish plant labourer ◆ Fish sorter ◆ Fish weigher ◆ Fish handler | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unload fish from fishing vessels and transport them by hand or forklift truck to work area in fish processing plant ◆ Immerse fresh fish fillets in brine solution to condition them for wrapping or freezing ◆ Weigh fish, record weight and pack fish in ice ◆ Sort fish according to species, weight and destination ◆ Clean work areas and equipment ◆ Transport supplies and packaging materials throughout plant and storage area manually or with powered equipment ◆ Measure and dump ingredients into hoppers of mixing and grinding machines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No experience required ◆ Some High School may be considered an asset |

notes





Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC)

3030 Conroy Road, Suite 201, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 6C2 Phone: 613.237.7988 Toll Free: 1.877.963.7472
www.fpsc-ctac.com