

Canada's oil and gas workforce has grown older, more educated and more culturally diverse, says PetroLMI report

NEWS RELEASE

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CALGARY — The period from 2006 to 2016 was a remarkable decade for Canada's oil and gas industry. Periods of rapid growth followed by sharp contractions transformed not only the industry, but also its workforce, according to the latest report released today by PetroLMI, a division of Energy Safety Canada.

During the 10-year period, the workforce employed directly by Canada's oil and gas industry expanded by 15 per cent, or 25,000 workers, to almost 190,000. A demographic analysis by PetroLMI has found the industry made some strides in becoming more diverse. Representation among immigrants and non-permanent residents, visible minorities and Indigenous Peoples increased over the period. The oil and gas industry's workforce grew older and became more educated. Meanwhile, the proportional representation of young workers declined by more than half and the share of women and persons with disabilities working in the industry remained relatively unchanged.

"Canada's oil and gas industry has made some strides in diversifying its workforce but there is both an opportunity and a need for further improvement overall," said Carol Howes, Vice President of Communications and PetroLMI for Energy Safety Canada.

According to the report [*Diversifying Canada's Oil and Gas Workforce: A Decade in Review*](#), by 2016, 17 per cent of oil and gas workers were 55 or older, up considerably from 10 per cent in 2006. The share of young workers, those under 25, declined from 15 per cent to 7 per cent of the workforce. Not unlike Canada's total workforce, oil and gas workers were also more educated. The proportion of workers without a high school diploma was cut in half to 8 per cent, while workers with a university degree increased from 19 to 26 per cent. Meanwhile, immigrants and non-permanent residents made up 16 per cent of the workforce and visible minorities 13 per cent, up from 12 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

By 2016 the oil and gas industry's share of women was little changed at 22 per cent, representing one-fifth of the workforce.

"More than half of the women working in Canada's oil and gas industry are employed in occupations related to business, finance and administration. These roles tended to be impacted by merger and acquisition activities, particularly in the exploration and production sector," said Howes. "The percentage of women in the pipeline and oil and gas services sectors increased slightly during the same period."

While the growth of workforce representation of Indigenous Peoples grew relatively slowly during the 10-year period, from 5.6 to 6.3 per cent, it remained proportionately higher than other trade-intensive industries and the total Canadian workforce.

The report reviews the changing demographics of the oil and gas industry's three sub-sectors — exploration and production, oil and gas services and pipeline — and compares them to the total Canadian workforce and other trade-intensive workforces. It also examines oil and gas company diversity and inclusion efforts in recent years.

With the "last in, first out" youth workforce declining and the "grey wave" of baby boomers heading towards retirement, Canada's oil and gas industry will be challenged to replace its workforce should a significant rebound in hiring occur.

"During the most recent downturn, many younger, less experienced workers were let go. Several employers interviewed for this report expressed concern about reversing these losses over the longer term," said Howes. "There have already been skill shortages in oil and gas services — a sector that lost many young

workers in the last three years. Going forward the industry will need to refocus on improving the overall work environment and culture to continue to attract and retain the best talent.”

Supporting information:

- In 2016, immigrants and non-permanent residents made up 16 per cent of the workforce, up from 12 per cent in 2006. Across Canada workforce representation was 25 per cent in 2016.
- The proportion of visible minorities in the oil and gas workforce nearly doubled, from 7 per cent in 2006 to 13 per cent in 2016. Across Canada, workforce representation was 21 per cent.
- Indigenous Peoples accounted for 6.3 per cent of the oil and gas workforce in 2016, up from 5.6 per cent in 2006. Across Canada, Indigenous Peoples accounted for 3.9 per cent of the workforce.
- In 2016, 17 per cent of industry’s workforce was over 55, up from 10 per cent in 2006. Over the same period, workers 24 and under decreased from 15 per cent to 7 per cent.
- Women made up one-fifth of the oil and gas workforce in 2016, or 22 per cent, relatively unchanged from 2006 at 21 per cent.
- Women’s representation was in line with other trade-intensive industries such as construction and agriculture.
- Women made up 34 per cent of the pipeline workforce, 25 per cent of the exploration and production workforce and 17 per cent of the oil and gas services workforce.
- Nine per cent of women and 10 per cent of men were in management occupations across the industry in 2016.
- In 2016, persons with disabilities accounted for 10.6 per cent of the oil and gas workforce, relatively unchanged from 10.4 per cent in 2006.

PetroLMI’s reports are available at CareersinOilandGas.com.

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The Petroleum Labour Market Information (PetroLMI) Division of Energy Safety Canada is a leading resource for labour market information and trends in the Canadian oil and gas industry. PetroLMI specializes in providing labour market data, analysis and insights, as well as occupation profiles and other resources for workforce and career planning.

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