



CANADIAN TOURISM  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
COUNCIL

# MATURE WORKERS EMPLOYED IN TOURISM

According to recent population estimates from Statistics Canada, most baby boomers are now part of the 45 to 64 age cohort and comprise about 40% of the working-age population. This is a significant increase compared to 30% in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding current economic conditions, labour shortages in the tourism sector will continue to be a challenge in the medium- to long-term. As Canada's population ages and the birth rate continues to fall, the potential labour shortage for the tourism sector is projected to balloon to a quarter-million jobs by 2025.

## Canada's Tourism Sector: a quick overview

Canada's tourism sector consists of five component industry groups: food and beverage services, transportation, accommodation, recreation and entertainment, and travel services. A large and dynamic contributor to the nation's economy, tourism spending in Canada reached \$75 billion in 2008 and the sector's contribution to Canada's GDP was 2.2%.

According to the 2008 Labour Force Survey, 1.75 million people were employed in Canada's tourism sector, which represents 10.2% of all employment in the country. Among the five tourism industry groups, food and beverage services was the largest employer, employing 827,900 people (47% of the tourism labour force).

While there are over 400 occupations in the tourism sector, over three-quarters of all employees work in one of 38 occupations. One-third of all tourism workers are employed as food counter attendants and kitchen helpers, food and beverage servers, and cooks.

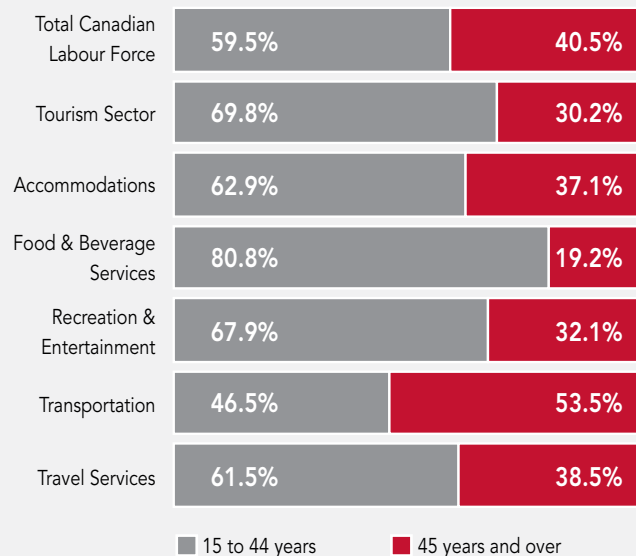
## One-third of tourism workers were 45 or older

According to the most recent census, three in ten workers (30%) in the tourism sector were 45 years and older in 2006. This was less than the proportion of mature workers in the Canadian workforce overall (40%). While the majority of this labour pool will soon reach retirement age, many do not plan on leaving the workforce completely. If businesses are flexible and make an effort to adapt to the preferences of this loyal and experienced age group, mature workers will help meet the tourism sector's demand for labour.

## Transportation industries had the largest proportion of mature workers

Of the tourism industry groups, transportation had the most employees in the 45-64 age group. In 2006, more than half (54%) of all employees in the transportation labour force were aged 45 and over. Furthermore, almost six in ten (57%) of these employees held full-time, full-year jobs. This trend occurs due to the long-term career path in many transportation industries and highlights the pressing need for succession planning.

## Age Groups of the Tourism Sector's Employed Labour Force, 2006



SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006, Customized tabulation.

Adding to the urgent need for proactive and creative succession planning is the high proportion of mature workers in transportation and management-level positions. Workers aged 45 years or older accounted for more than half of the people employed as bus drivers, subway and other transit operators (66%), taxi, limousine drivers and chauffeurs (58%), transportation managers (57%), and accommodation service managers (56%).

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, Canada's population estimates: Age and sex, *The Daily*, Friday, November 27, 2009.

## Men 45 and over were more likely to work in tourism than women in the same age group

While women comprised a somewhat larger share of the total tourism labour force, the sector employed a higher proportion of men aged 45 and over (34%) than women in the same age group (27%). This trend was seen in all of the industry groups, but it was most pronounced in transportation and travel services.

## One in three mature workers employed in tourism were born outside of Canada

Tourism workers aged 45 years and older were more likely to be born outside of Canada than their counterparts in the overall Canadian labour force.

Approximately one-third (30%) of mature workers were born outside of Canada, compared to one-quarter of mature workers in the overall Canadian workforce.

## Four in ten mature workers employed in tourism self-identify as members of equity groups

In the Canadian labour force, 34% of older workers were members of equity groups (visible minorities, Aboriginal Peoples, or disabled persons). In the tourism sector, 42% of mature workers self-identified as members of these groups.

## Mature Workers in Canada's Tourism Sector by Equity Group, 2006

	Total Canadian Labour Force	Total Tourism Sector Labour Force
Visible Minorities	13%	18%
Aboriginal Peoples	2%	3%
Disabled Persons	19%	21%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>42%</b>

SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006, Customized tabulation.

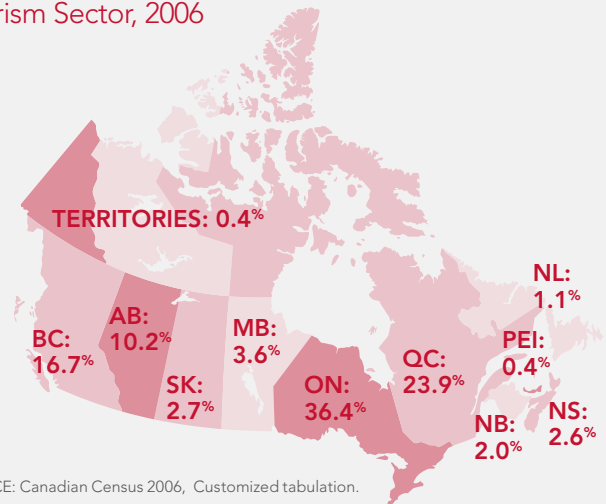
## Three-quarters of mature workers employed in tourism work in Canada's most populous provinces

Overall, the highest percentages of people aged 45 and older working in tourism were employed in Ontario (36%), Quebec (24%) and British Columbia (17%). This is reflective of the overall size of the labour force in these provinces.

On a provincial basis, the accommodations industry group in PEI employed the largest proportion of older workers. In New Brunswick,

food and beverage services industries had the highest share of workers over the age of 45. In Manitoba, it was the transportation industry group that relied most heavily on mature workers.

## Geographic Distribution of Mature Workers in Canada's Tourism Sector, 2006



SOURCE: Canadian Census 2006, Customized tabulation.

When comparing the number of older workers in tourism with each province's overall share of workers age 45 and older, a different trend appears. The participation rates of mature workers in tourism were found to be the lowest in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island.

## One in three tourism workers in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver were 45 years of age and older

At the city level, Montreal (32%), Toronto (30%) and Vancouver (30%) had the greatest number of mature workers employed in tourism. In Montreal, mature workers were primarily employed in transportation services. In Toronto and Vancouver, older employees in tourism were more likely to work in food and beverage services.

*Mature workers are critical to the tourism labour force, regardless of industry or geography. Older Canadians offer a wealth of knowledge and experience, whether they are at the end of a career in tourism or retired and seeking part-time opportunities to stay active. With Canada facing an impending skills shortage and an aging population, businesses must recognize the positive contributions this age group can offer, and make a strategic effort to retain their existing mature employees and to hire retirees.*

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

The "Demographic Profile of Tourism Sector Employees" report is produced every five years as new Census data is made available. This summary was developed using specialized tabulations from the 2006 Census and offers employment statistics for demographic groups within the tourism labour force.

The detailed "Demographic Profile of Tourism Sector Employees" report is available on the CTHRC website: [www.cthrc.ca](http://www.cthrc.ca)

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