

The Path Forward

NAVIGATING UNEXPECTED JOB LOSS



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Supported by the Province of British Columbia



DISTRICT OF
100 Mile House

How to use this book

By nature, humans are hardwired to resist change (unless we know for sure it will be beneficial, like a lottery win). When change happens to us, especially when we're taken by surprise, most of us resist and react first, and problem-solve later. Keep this information handy for a time when you are ready to read it. That may be before a job loss, soon after, or many months down the road.

By taking time to become:

- ➔ Informed (What do I need to know?),
- ➔ Prepared (What can I do now?), and
- ➔ Proactive (How can I regain some control of my future?)

...it will be easier to find and take the right path forward.

The local and provincial resources shared throughout this guide were selected as “first points of contact” for people experiencing unexpected job loss. There are many more services that could be of great help to people in this situation. It is anticipated that the services included a) will be operating with the same contact information in the foreseeable future and b) are informed and able to direct people in crisis to any service needed throughout the community and province.

This guide is organized by sections:

Each section addresses a different issue that a person might face when dealing with job loss. The sections are colour-coded and labelled on the outside of each page.

- **SECTION 1**
How are we going to pay the bills?

- **SECTION 2**
What am I going to do about a job?

- **SECTION 3**
I didn't expect to retire so soon.

- **SECTION 4**
I'm worried about my kids.

- **SECTION 5**
Looking after myself

The sections also contain the following:



Checklists: These lists identify steps to take and different people to talk to.



Workbook features: These are areas you can use to write down your thoughts, useful information, and other things that you may do to help as you plan for your future.



Resources: Within the sections, for quick reference, useful resources are contained in coloured boxes.



Action scenarios: These are descriptions of what to do in specific situations, such as calling a resource provider. They include examples of what to say.

Temporary and new income streams

Families of forestry workers laid off during the 2019 curtailments and closures of local mills have shared a variety of ways they pivoted to cover expenses before longer-term solutions were found, as follows:

- Spouses returned to work or increased their hours.
- Laid-off forestry workers sought work out of town, with some families staying behind in the South Cariboo and some following along to new communities.
- Some workers retrained for complementary sectors or sought work in other industries.
- Others who qualified for the Bridging to Retirement program were faced with unique challenges as they left the workforce earlier than planned.

Ultimately, what a person decides to do will depend on their personal circumstances. Family size and ages, mental and physical health, financial commitments and resources, and transferable skills are some factors to consider.

Check in with your:

- ➔ Union
- ➔ Coworkers
- ➔ Employer
- ➔ Peers

Ask about possible:

- ➔ Training opportunities
- ➔ Financial supports
- ➔ Employment opportunities



If you are moving out of province there are a lot of things you need to know. Different tax systems, health systems that don't connect with other provinces, moving bank accounts, and remembering that automatic withdrawals stop when you change accounts. Sometimes there are multiple moves—all expensive and disrupting to a family.

– laid-off forestry worker



Hard and soft skills

Hard skills are something *you have*, and soft skills are something *you are*. When you've been working in the forestry sector for a long time, it may feel intimidating to try to transfer your hard skills to new employment in a new industry. This is where your soft skills can help you along the path forward.



YOUR HARD SKILLS:

(e.g. forklift licence, heavy equipment operation/maintenance, mathematics)



YOUR SOFT SKILLS:

(e.g. training others, attention to detail, problem-solving)


RESOURCES


Thompson Rivers University

Check with the local university to find out what training opportunities may be available. They can also let you know what programs they are offering and what prerequisites you need to enter. You do not need to have completed secondary school to enter post-secondary. There are entrance exams and upgrading courses offered instead.


100 Mile House location


 750 Exeter Station Rd,
100 Mile House, BC


 250-395-3115

 www.tru.ca/regionalcentres/100mh.html

Williams Lake location

 1250 Western Ave, Williams Lake, BC


 250-392-8000


 www.tru.ca/williamslake.html


Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy:

They provide free help to support people with computers/technology, filling out government forms, upgrading math or English courses for continuing education, and more.

Call/email to book an appointment:

 205, 475 Birch Ave,
100 Mile House, BC

 250-644-5869

 www.caribooliteracy.com

What if I need some help?

Local community organizations will have heard the news of curtailments and closures as well. They will have met to discuss how this is likely to result in a greater need for crisis counselling and accessing resources to help make ends meet. That means they are anticipating your call and are getting prepared to help you the best they can. Take this as reassurance that your needs are important enough to ask for help.


How do I know if I can't do it alone?

- ➔ If people who know you well are telling you that you need help
- ➔ If you have increased alcohol and/or cannabis use
- ➔ If you haven't been able to enjoy things that you used to for some time
- ➔ If you have panic attacks or uncontrollable anger
- ➔ If you have (or have persistent thoughts to) hurt yourself or others



RESOURCES

This is the beginning of the path forward. Read about a different perspective on job loss as being an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-imagine the future:

-  <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-new-resilience/201012/why-the-loss-your-job-could-be-gain-your-life>



ACTION SCENARIO

Calling to ask for help

It is hard to ask for help, especially the first time. For people who have supported themselves and never needed to ask for anything, it can seem impossible. We do live in a small town, but mental health and community services are confidential. Let them know you're nervous about that right off the bat. The person on the other end of the phone should be able to explain to you their confidentiality policy and put your mind at ease.

Try starting your call by saying:

"Hi. I'd like to talk to someone. I was let go from my job and I'm not coping well. I'm hesitant to ask for help because I don't want everyone in town to know about it."




HERE'S SOME THINGS I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT...




RESOURCES

Getting winter ready

Taking care of things at home before the snow flies makes life easier, especially when working away. By planning ahead, losing heat during a cold snap is less likely, and everyone will feel more comfortable. Read about ways to prepare your home for winter at:


 <https://blog.renovationfind.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-for-canadian-homeowners>

Vehicles require a lot of care to carry your family safely to work, school, and sports in the winter. Taking steps to get ready is a way a person who finds themselves working out of town can care for their family and their assets. It also might mean there is less work to do around home on your days off. Plan ahead and prepare your vehicles for winter by looking at:

 <https://www.carhelpcanada.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-vehicle>

Working as a family unit





Learning to operate as a family unit in a new way while working away takes some “buy-in” from everyone in the family. The Metlakatla Development Corporation (near Prince Rupert, B.C.) published an excellent BC Work Camp Survival Guide for families in 2017. Check it out here for tips on how to thrive as a family and as an employee while working away:

 <https://workcampsurvivalguide.ca>

Taking care of things at home when working away.

For those who choose to keep their homes in the South Cariboo and go to work out of town, new considerations arise. Preparing for seasonal home and vehicle maintenance, making emergency plans, and finding child care are a few of the things that might be on your mind.

If you have a partner who works as well, you may be scrambling to cover the school run. If you live alone, you might be seeking out a service to care for pets. Each person who works away from home has their own unique ducks to get in a row before setting on a new path. To help prepare, think about the following:

-  Plan ahead: What is likely to come up while I'm away?
-  Close to home: Help neighbours and let them help you.
-  Barter and borrow: What do you need help with, and what can you offer?
-  Simplify: Are you taking on too much? Is there anything you can drop for a while?

It's unlikely life will carry on as usual when a person goes from working in town to away, especially unexpectedly. Here are some ways you can be ready:

- Expect that things will change and new challenges will arise.
- Drop what you can and find creative ways to take care of things at home.
- Offer after-school child care to another family in exchange for snow removal in the winter.
- Pick up groceries in town for the neighbours who are quick to help you when the sink springs a leak.

The path forward

When times are toughest, putting one foot in front of the other is sometimes all a person can do. Moving forward is just that; one step at a time. Finding the path itself isn't always easy, and moving forward takes courage, tenacity, and some blind faith that better times are on the horizon.

Job loss is not the end of the road. Even retirement is a new beginning.

To find your path forward, stay:

- ➔ **Informed:** Find out what is happening and how it will impact your life.
- ➔ **Prepared:** Take stock of what you can get done now to make life easier later.
- ➔ **Proactive:** Stay behind the driver's wheel of your life. Make things happen.

Life doesn't unfold in a straight line. When setbacks happen, reorient and keep on moving along the path forward.

Major industry changes are a community crisis. All along the path are neighbours, friends, and coworkers. Some chip in and clear the way of obstacles where they can. Others offer shortcuts or supplies to make the journey easier. If we do what we can and take what we need, everyone will make their way through to the other side.



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Thank you for all your efforts to improve all of this and make it a better process for the future. [It's a] huge project and many complexities in so many areas. Thank you for reaching out.

– forestry worker

Acknowledgements

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