



BC Mines Blaster Certifications – Frequently Asked Questions

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Note: the following information pertains to BC Mines Blaster Certifications— that is, blasting that's performed on a mine site. If you require certification for blasting performed elsewhere (on a construction site, for example), contact WorkSafeBC.

1. What are the BC Mines Blaster Certifications?

Blasting is a regular part of mining operations. As required by the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia (Code), in order to work in, conduct, or oversee blasting operations, you must obtain a BC Mines Blaster Certification for the type of blasting activity you'll be performing.

The Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation offers different levels of BC Mines Blaster Certifications. These certifications are enabled through the Code under section 8.2.1, and the examination process under section 8.2.4. The BC Mines Blaster Certification exams were previously offered manually in person, but the exam process has been modernized and updated and is now available online only. You will still be required to attend an interview in person with a certified BC Mines Inspector, but only after you have passed your online exams.

2. What happened to the previous BC Mines Blaster Certifications?

The previous BC Mines Blaster Certifications have been updated to a new classification system. If you hold one of the previous certifications, it is still valid until the noted expiry date. However, it is recommended that you register for the online program before your certificate expires. The table below shows each of the previous BC Mines Blaster Certification types and their new certification equivalent:

Previous Certification	New Certification Equivalent
Surface (Basic)	Surface Blaster, 3 rd Class
Surface	Surface Blaster, 2 nd Class
Urban	Surface Blaster, 1 st Class
Underground (Single shot)	Underground Blaster, 3 rd Class
Underground	Underground Blaster, 2 nd Class
Underground Coal	Underground Blaster, 1 st Class
Exploration	Seismic Endorsement

3. When do I have to have my certification by?

If you currently hold a valid BC Mines Blaster Certification, you do not need to retake the exam or interview. However, you should register for the online program before your current certification expires.

4. Where do I go to register for the online program?

The online program is available through the following website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/mineral-exploration-mining/health-safety/certifications>

Or through OpenSchool BC

<https://www.openschool.bc.ca/online/>

5. What do I do if I have technical issues with the online program?

Please contact OSBC Online support for assistance at OSBC.Online@gov.bc.ca

6. What do I do if I forget my UserID or password?

The OpenSchool BC login page will guide you through the UserID and password recovery process.

<https://mytraining.openschool.bc.ca/login/index.php>

7. If I have a blasting certificate issued by WorkSafeBC, can I blast on a mine site?

No, you must have a valid BC Mines Blaster Certification issued by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation in order to blast on a mine site.

However, if you are an avalanche control blaster, you must hold both a BC Mines Blaster Certification as well as a valid WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blaster Certification. This is the only blaster certification issued by WorkSafeBC that is eligible for recognition as a certification on B.C. mines.

8. I am an avalanche control blaster, what kind of certification do I need to blast on a B.C. mine site?

To perform Avalanche Control blasting on a B.C. mine you must hold a WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blasting Certificate, and you must complete the BC Mines Blaster Equivalent Certification to obtain a BC Mines Surface Blaster – 3rd Class. The equivalent certification includes a regulatory exam to test your knowledge of Part 8 of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in B.C. and federal blasting legislation. After you pass your exam, you must schedule an in-person interview with an examiner. You will be asked to bring a copy of your current and valid WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blasting Certificate to the interview. Both certifications must be maintained and kept current in order to perform avalanche control blasting on B.C. mines.

9. I successfully completed BC Mines Surface Blaster – 3rd Class. On my certificate and ID card, it does not say that I can perform single-shot blasts on the surface of a mine. Can I get this changed?

Yes, this can be changed. If you received your Surface Blaster – 3rd Class between July 1, 2022 and May 5, 2023 you can request a new certificate and ID card by sending an email to mine.certifications@gov.bc.ca.

10. If I have a valid blasting certificate issued by another province or territory, can I blast on a B.C. mine site?

No, you must first obtain a BC Mines Blaster Equivalent Certification. The equivalent certification is a result of an inter-provincial agreement (Agreement on Internal Trade) that requires provinces to recognize certified skills from other jurisdictions in Canada. To obtain credentials in B.C., you must complete a regulatory exam to ensure familiarity with the regulations for the jurisdiction for which you are trying to obtain certification.

The BC Mines Blaster Equivalent Certification exam will test your knowledge of Part 8 of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in B.C. and federal blasting legislation. After you pass your exam, you must schedule an in-person interview with an examiner. During the interview, the

examiner will confirm your valid certification from another province or territory and then will determine which BC Mines Blaster Certification you're qualified for. Proof of a valid equivalent certification from another jurisdiction must be provided at the interview.

11. What types of mine blasting certifications are available and what are the prerequisites?

There are seven different BC Mines Blaster Certifications and one equivalent certification:

Surface Blaster 3 rd Class	
<p>The first step in a BC Mines Surface Blaster Certification, with a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to handle explosives and assist with mine blast preparation, act as a trainee to a certified BC Mines Blaster, and perform single-shot blasts on the surface of a mine.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 18 years of age
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75%

Surface Blaster 2 nd Class	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on surface blasting techniques.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to perform general surface mine blasting operations outside of defined urban zones.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least six months on pattern, with a minimum of 12 surface charges under the direct supervision of a certified BC Mines Blaster BC Mines Surface Blaster 3rd Class
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster

Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75%
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Surface Blaster 1 st Class (Urban or Close Proximity)	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on surface blasting techniques and urban or close proximity blasting.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to perform all general surface mine blasting operations in all zones.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least six months experience on urban blasting projects, with a minimum of 20 urban blasts under the direct supervision of a certified BC Mines 1st Class (Urban) Blaster BC Mines Surface Blaster 2nd Class
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80%

Underground Blaster 3 rd Class	
<p>The first step in a BC Mines Underground Blaster Certification. The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on underground single-shot blasting activities.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to handle explosives, assist with blast preparation, act as a trainee to a certified BC Mines Blaster, and perform single-shots in a non-coal underground mine.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance on a minimum of 12 single-shot charges under the direct supervision of a certified BC Mines Blaster
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75%

Underground Blaster 2 nd Class	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on underground blasting techniques.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to perform all general underground mine blasting operations, with the exception of underground coal.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 60 days working with a certified Underground Mines Blaster, with a minimum of 12 face rounds or two long-hole blasts • BC Mines Underground Blaster 3rd Class
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification • Proof of ID • Criminal record check • Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75%

Underground Blaster 1 st Class (Underground Coal)	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on underground coal mine blasting techniques and working in a coal environment.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to perform underground blasting operations in underground coal mines only.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with a certified “Shot Firer” (Underground Blaster 1st Class) for 12 underground coal blasting operations or equivalent from another jurisdiction • BC Mines Underground Blaster 2nd Class
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification • Proof of ID • Criminal record check • Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80%

Seismic Endorsement	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The technical exam focuses on seismic blasting activities.</p> <p>Successful completion allows you to set off charges in relation to exploration activities: handle explosives and assist with blast preparation, perform single-series electric blasts and seismic blasts.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance setting a minimum of six seismic blast operations under the direct supervision of a certified Blaster
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75%

Equivalent Certification	
<p>The regulatory exam has a focus on regulatory requirements, magazines, care and handling of explosives, guarding, and transportation safety. The equivalency certification is a result of an inter-provincial agreement (Agreement on Internal Trade) that allows provinces to recognize certified skills from other jurisdictions in Canada. To obtain credentials in B.C., you must complete a regulatory exam to ensure familiarity with the regulations for the jurisdiction for which you are trying to obtain certification.</p> <p>During the in-person interview, the interviewer will determine which blaster certification you're qualified for. Proof of equivalent certification from another jurisdiction must be provided at the interview.</p>	
<p>Avalanche Control Blasting</p> <p>To perform Avalanche Control Blasting at a B.C. mine you must hold a valid WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blasting Certificate, <u>and</u> you must complete the BC Mines Blaster Equivalent Certification. After completion of the Equivalent Certification, you will receive a Surface Blaster – 3rd Class Certificate. Both your WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blasting Certificate and the Surface Blaster – 3rd Class Certificate must be maintained and kept current.</p>	
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A current, valid blaster competency certificate from another Canadian provincial or territorial jurisdiction, outside of B.C., OR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For avalanche control blasting equivalent certification, a current, valid WorkSafeBC Avalanche Control Blasting Certificate
Candidate Must Provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification Valid existing blaster certificate Proof of ID Criminal record check Proof of experience (e.g., logbook) and/or letter of reference from your employer or a certified BC Mines Blaster or certified blaster
Passing Grade for Online Exam:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75%

12. What is the cost of the certification and will I have to take it again? Why is it not free like other certifications?

Each BC Mines Blaster Certification is \$100 and is valid for five years. You will need to retake the certification every five years if you wish to continue blasting on B.C. mine sites.

Funds recovered from the certification program will support subscription costs for use of the online software and further development and updating of the certification programs.

13. Who put together the BC Mines Blaster Certifications?

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, along with Open School BC developed the BC Mines Blaster Certifications.

14. How long is the online program? What happens if I fail an exam?

After registering and paying for certification, you'll take two online, closed-book exams: first, a regulatory exam, then once you've successfully completed that, a technical exam that's specific to the certification you've selected. You'll have three attempts to pass each of these exams.

The certification program is active for each registrant for six months from the date of registration – meaning you can take as long or as little time as you like to complete the two exams within the 6 month period. If you fail an exam attempt, you must wait at least one week before trying again (your second and third attempts at each exam are included in the \$100 fee). It is important to note that once you start an exam, you must complete it in the allotted timeframe; exam time allotments range from one hour to four hours depending on the amount of questions in the exam.

If you have a learning disability or require special assistance, contact your nearest mining regional office to speak with a Mines Inspector who can accommodate you.

Once you've successfully completed both exams, you're eligible to schedule an in-person interview with a Mines Inspector at a regional office. If an in-person interview is not possible, a virtual

interview may be scheduled, via Skype or Microsoft Teams, for example, or a Mines Inspector may be able to attend an interview on-site.

15. What are the passing grades for each BC Mines Blaster Certification exam?

The passing grade for the Surface Blaster 1st Class and Underground Blaster 1st Class is 80%. For all other BC Mines Blaster Certification exams, the passing grade is 75%.

16. After I pass my BC Mines Blaster Certification exam, how do I schedule an interview? What do I need to bring to the interview?

After you pass your online exam, you need to contact the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation at Mine.Certifications@gov.bc.ca or (833) 978-9798 to schedule an interview at a regional mining office.

You must bring the following documentation to the interview:

- **Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification and proof of your blasting experience** (this can be provided in the Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification, a letter of recommendation or in a blaster's logbook). It is encouraged to bring your blaster's logbook to the interview. The Application for BC Mines Blaster Certification document is available once you've completed the online exams—please print it and have your manager or blasting supervisor complete and sign it. If you're not currently employed at a mining site, you can have your previous manager or blasting supervisor complete and sign it, or you can provide a letter of recommendation from an active BC Mines Blaster Certification holder. If you do not have access to a printer, you can request to pick up an application form at the nearest regional office.
- **Appropriate government-issued photo identification** (such as a BC Driver's Licence or Passport)
- **Criminal record check** (now called a Police Information Check (PIC)) – available through your local RCMP office). Your PIC must have been completed by the RCMP or police agency with jurisdiction in the area where you live (not work). Your PIC must have been completed within 3 months of your blasting application (initial application and renewal).
- **Digital photo** (to be printed on your secure ID card after you pass the interview). An examiner will send you the photo specifications prior to your interview. Your photo must meet these specifications or the examiner will ask you to re-submit a new photo. You can also submit your photo to Mine.Certifications@gov.bc.ca after the interview.

If the interview is not successful (or if you need to provide further documentation), the examiner (Statutory Decision Maker) may choose to:

- schedule another interview; or
- require you to re-do the online exams and schedule another interview; or
- decline to issue the blaster certification.

17. Where do I get a criminal record check (Police Information Check) completed?

Police Information Checks (PIC) are available through your local RCMP office or police agency and you must bring a copy to your interview. You must obtain a PIC from the RCMP or police with

jurisdiction in the area where you live (not where you work). For example, if you work in Smithers but live in Halifax, then you need to obtain a PIC from the Halifax Regional Police, not the Smithers RCMP. Your PIC must have been completed within 3 months of applying for a BC Mines Blaster Certification. Information on PIC can be found here: [Obtain a Criminal Record Check \(Police Information Check\)](#).

18. When do I need to have a criminal record check (Police Information Check) done?

You must have a Police Information Check (PIC) done prior to your interview. Please note that it takes approximately two weeks to receive the results of your PIC. Your PIC must have been completed within 3 months of applying for a BC Mines Blaster Certification.

19. What happens if a blaster receives a criminal conviction while they have an active BC Mines Blaster Certification?

If a blaster with a valid BC Mines Blaster Certificate receives a criminal conviction, they must disclose that information to an Inspector of Mines. The Inspector may decide to suspend or cancel the blaster’s certificate, depending on the seriousness of the conviction.

20. What are the secure photo ID photo specifications?

Please keep the following in mind when selecting or taking your secure ID photo:

Photographer Instructions

Photographers taking photographs of the client must meet the photograph standards. Once you’ve taken the photo and ensured that it meets the standards below, please send the photo file to the Ministry for processing and uploading to the Registry. Email to: mine.certifications@gov.bc.ca

PHOTOGRAPH STANDARDS
No selfies. Digital cameras or cell phone cameras are acceptable.
Camera Settings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Flash: off Format: JPG, JPEG File Size: maximum 1,800 KB / 1.8 MB Picture Size / Shape: rectangular portrait, not square
Photo Composition
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take the photo against a neutral background such as a blank wall, or a solid door. Hold the camera in a portrait orientation (not landscape). Include head and shoulders within the frame, with some extra room at the top and sides.

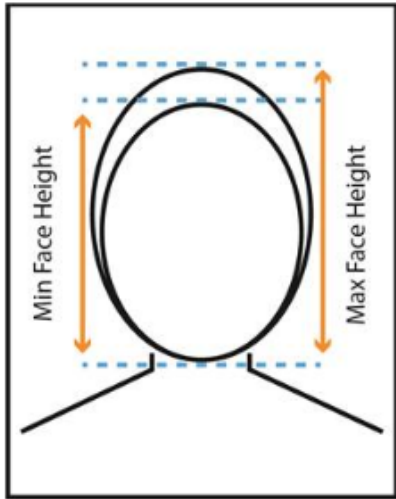


Photo Quality

1. Ensure that the photo is not blurry.
2. Ensure that the photo is neither too dark nor too bright.
3. Ensure that the lighting does not cause reflections in eye glasses.
4. Do not crop.
5. Do not use photo filters or effects.

21. What about other certifications that the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation offers?

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation is currently working to modernize and update other certifications such as Shiftboss and Fireboss. A small fee will be charged once they have been updated to cover the cost to administer and continue to update those certifications.

The Ministry also offers the BC Mines Supervisor Certification program, which is available online.

22. How long does it take to receive my certificate and secure ID card?

Crown Publications prints and mails out certificates and secure ID cards once per week. After a certificate/secure ID card is printed, it typically takes a couple of days to one week for you to receive it in the mail.

While you're waiting to receive your certificate and secure ID card, the examiner will send you a PDF temporary certificate.

If you need assistance obtaining a copy of your temporary certificate, please contact

Mine.Certifications@gov.bc.ca.

23. What do I do if I lose or misplace my certificate or secure ID card?

Crown Publications can re-print and mail you a new certificate and secure ID card. A \$20 fee is charged to cover printing, shipping and handling to replace all BC Mines Blaster Certificates and secure IDs.

Prior to contacting Crown Publications to submit your order, please ensure that your mailing address is up-to-date in your student record by contacting the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation at Mine.Certifications@gov.bc.ca or (833) 978-9798.

When you are ready to order your certificate please contact Crown Publications (note: email requests are preferred).

Crown Publications, Queen's Printer

Hours of operation: Monday to Friday 7:30 to 4:30

Email: mines.certificate.reprint@gov.bc.ca

Toll-Free: 1 (800) 663-6105

Victoria: (250) 387-6409

24. What can I do if my BC Mines Blaster Certification is suspended or cancelled?

Under section 8.2.7 of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in BC (Code), Mines Inspectors have the authority to suspend or cancel a BC Mines Blaster Certification. Your certificate may be suspended or cancelled if you do not comply with the Mines Act, regulations, or the Code, or if you are (by reason of incompetence or negligence) unfit to carry out your duties.

If your certificate has been suspended or cancelled, you may appeal the decision within 30 days of being informed of the decision. All appeals will be heard by the Chief Inspector.

To initiate an appeal, you must notify the Chief Inspector in writing, including the reason(s) for the appeal. Include any supporting evidence with the appeal request. After receiving the request, the Chief Inspector will review the file. If deemed necessary, the Chief Inspector will schedule a meeting to hear your case.

A final, written decision will be made by the Chief Inspector.

25. I have a question that is not included in this FAQ. Who do I contact?

If you have any questions that have not been covered in this FAQ, please contact the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation at Mine.Certifications@gov.bc.ca or (833) 978-9798.