



## Highlights

- Payroll counts decline in B.C. in December
- International arrivals through B.C. rise again

### B.C. payroll count falls in December

*Eloho Ennah, Economic Analyst*

The Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours (SEPH) showed declining payroll counts (including unclassified businesses) in B.C. in December following no change in the prior month. B.C. payroll counts decreased by 0.2 per cent. Overall, B.C. payroll figures were flat for the majority of 2025. This trend has been observed since 2023 as firms contend with sustained economic weakness, and more recently in 2025, escalating trade tensions, which have subdued investments in hiring.

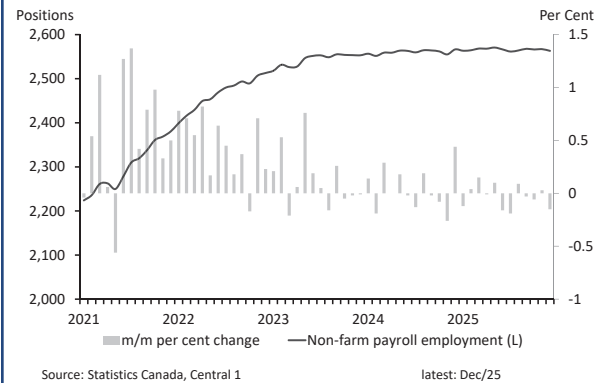
Considering only classified businesses, payroll counts in the goods-producing sector were relatively unchanged in December with only a loss of 33 positions. Within the sector, manufacturing noted a decline of 890 positions (-0.6 per cent) while utilities also saw 281 fewer positions (-2.2 per cent). Balancing these losses were gains in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (+2.1 per cent or 612 positions) and construction (+0.2 per cent or 332 positions), and forestry, logging and support (+1.5 per cent or 194 positions).

Payroll counts in the services sector declined by 0.1 per cent, mostly as a result of lower positions in accommodation and food services (-1.4 per cent or -3.2k positions) and educational services (-0.7 per cent or -1.3k positions). On the contrary payroll counts increased in health care and social assistance (+0.7 per cent or +2.6k positions) and management of companies and enterprises (+9.0 per cent or +1.4k positions).

Average weekly earnings decreased by 0.7 per cent month-over-month and year-over-year; average hourly earnings increased by 1.6 per cent but was below the national gain of 1.9 per cent. B.C.'s job vacancy rate increased from 3.0 per cent to 3.4 per cent in December.

SEPH estimates should be considered together with the Labour Force Survey (LFS) figures, which is more widely watched and timely, but based on a household survey rather than administrative data like SEPH. That said, the two surveys differ in coverage, including multiple job

### B.C. payrolls down in December

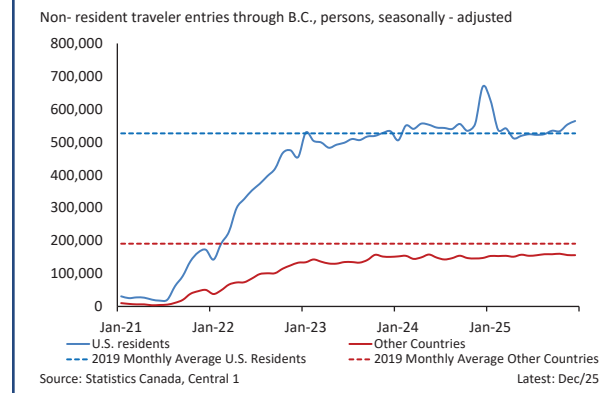


holders, self-employed individuals and farm workers. But employment trends from both have generally aligned historically and have recently shown ongoing softness in B.C. labour market.

### Fewer Canadians return via B.C., but international arrivals increase

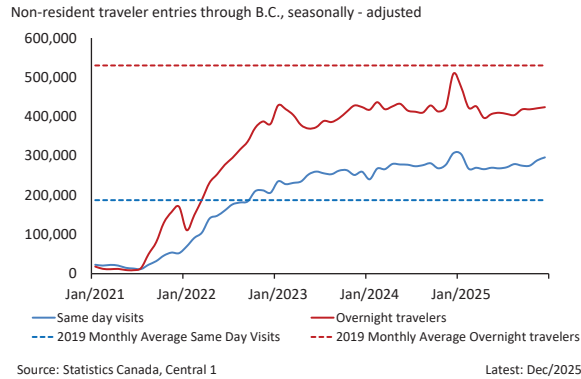
*Alan Chow, Business Economist*

### Slight rise in U.S. resident visitors



The number of non-resident visitors entering Canada through British Columbia on a seasonally-adjusted basis was up again in December by 1.4 per cent to 720,000, marking a fifth consecutive monthly increase. Same-day excursions led the growth with a 2.6 per cent increase to 296,000, its second increase in a row. Overnight tourist numbers also rose but by only 0.7 per cent to 424,000, although it was its fourth consecutive increase. Compared to the 12-month trailing average, overall visitor numbers for December are up 2.1 per cent with same-day excursions up 6.3 per cent and overnight tourist levels down 0.5 per cent.

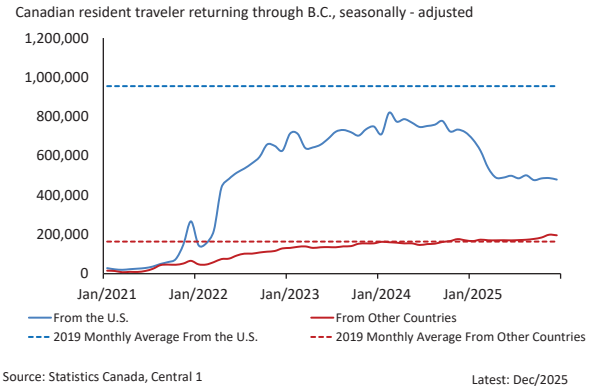
### More overnight travelers offset by fewer same day travelers



The number of U.S. residents entering Canada via B.C. was up in December, increasing by 1.9 per cent to 564,000, its second increase in a row. Residents from other countries, though, dipped 0.2 per cent marking a second consecutive monthly decline. Compared to the 12-month trailing average, U.S. residents entering in December are up 2.6 per cent while residents of other countries are marginally up 0.6 per cent.

Canadian resident travel returning via B.C. declined by 1.6 per cent to 674,000 in December, although its still the second highest number since March 2025. The number of Canadian residents returning from the U.S. declined by 1.6 per cent to 479,000, the second lowest level seen this year. The number of Canadians residents returning from countries other than the U.S. also dipped by 1.5 per cent to 195,000. Compared to their 12-month trailing average, Canadians residents returning to Canada via B.C. are down 5.5 per cent. Returns from the U.S. returns are also down (-11.3 per cent) contrasted by an increase in returns from other countries (12 per cent).

### Fall in Canadians returning via U.S. resumes



Unadjusted, the number of U.S. residents entering Canada via B.C. was 554,206 in December, down 11.7 percent from a year ago. The number of residents of other countries was 132,491, up 4.4 per cent from a year ago. The number of Canadian residents returning to Canada via B.C. from the U.S. was 465,612, down 30.5 per cent from a year ago. Conversely, the number of Canadian residents returning from other countries via B.C. was 195,756, up 16.8 per cent from a year ago.

The numbers suggest that Canadians are still firm on their desire to avoid U.S. travel and are instead either remaining within the border or heading to other international destinations.

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