

# THE ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE

## FROM TUPPER TECH

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PHOTO: NORIKO TIDBALL

At just 18 and a few months before her high school graduation, Riley McBride is a first-year electrical apprentice in charge of crew of six men on a construction site at UBC. She spends her days installing hood fans, receptacles, cover plates and access panels floor by floor at Brock Commons, the world's tallest wooden structure and dreams about working as an electrician for the rest of her career.

Riley arrived at her apprenticeship via Tupper Tech, a Vancouver School Board program for Grade 12 students that introduces them to a wide variety of trades.

Riley first dreamed of becoming a plumber after going on several trades field trips with the VSB. But after her first work experience through Tupper Tech at a plumbing company, her dreams were crushed when she realized she didn't have the physical strength to carry piping.

Her teacher, Russ Evans, however, could see her personality fit the profile of an electrician, and that is what she tried out with ProTech, her second work experience. They hired her on immediately and she's never looked back.

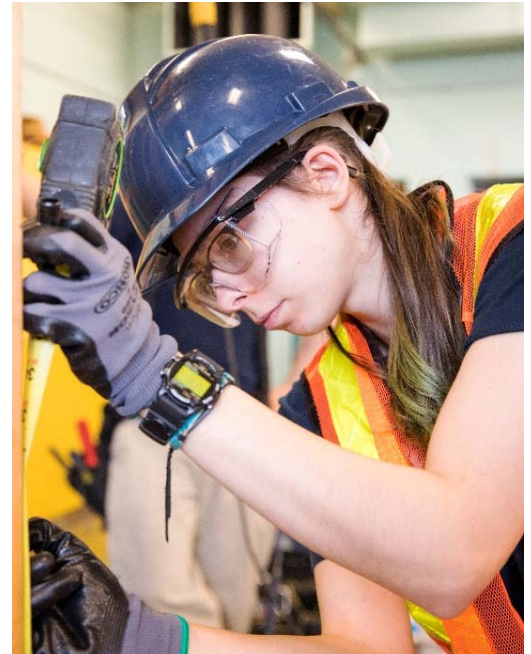
Riley is working full-time with good wages, especially considering it's her first job ever, and even though she's missing her senior year at high school – she only has to complete her English online to graduate with her peers in June – it feels like she is doing something much more meaningful.

"I'm missing out on very little for something so important as starting my career," Riley said. "It's so worth it – I have a career with no student debt."

The first day on the job, she was taught how to install receptacles, cover plates and access panels. She quickly moved on to installing dishwashers and lights.

"I love that what I do is useful and practical," Riley said. "I can go home and install a light fixture for a friend."

Things will get more complex as she moves through her apprenticeship and eventually attains her Red Seal, the



industry certification for trades.

Being one of the few females on the job site – and sometimes the only one – hasn't been a hindrance and her co-workers are respectful and kind towards her.

Riley recommends the trades to people who like working with their hands and being outdoors, but especially to those who work hard – "people who like to get the job done no matter what it takes." If you have the right attitude, a good work ethic and dedication, it will take you far in the trades, Riley added.

For more details on the Electrical Apprenticeship program go to:

<https://bit.ly/zPTseKU>

