

Import/Export Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Financé par :



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1. Working as an Importer or Exporter [NOC 6411 & 6221]

Job Description

Importers buy goods from other countries and bring them into Canada. *Exporters* sell Canadian goods to customers in other countries.

As an importer and exporter you perform the following duties:

- Arrange for the shipment of products into and out of the country
- Research Canadian and foreign suppliers, markets, and trends
- Ensure distribution of goods to retailers and other clients
- Estimate or quote prices and delivery dates
- Complete bookkeeping and related clerical duties
- Understand and obey international trade laws

Source: **Career Cruising** (Profile for Importer/Exporter)

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Industry Overview

International trade is an important part of British Columbia's economy. The province is ideally positioned to do business with many large global markets within the Asia-Pacific region and the United States.

Canada and the United States are the largest trading partners in the world, with nearly two billion dollars in goods and services crossing the border each day. China is British Columbia's second largest trading partner.

The import/export sector includes a wide range of industries and careers. You can find career opportunities in marketing, sales, brokerage, and management.

Import/export professionals are employed by a variety of firms such as trading houses, importers and exporters, manufacturers, customs brokers, freight forwarders and transportation providers.

Knowledge of more than one language can help you find employment.

Sources:

- Employment and Social Development Canada
<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/lmi/publications/bulletins/bc/jan2014.shtml>
- Career Cruising

Job Outlook in BC

Sales Representative – Wholesale Trade (Non-Technical) (NOC 6411)

Including import and export sales representatives



Chart from WorkBC

Technical Sales Specialists – Wholesale Trade (NOC 6221)

Including import and export sales specialists



Chart from WorkBC

The Regional Employment Projections for 2010-2015 provides job opening projections for *Sales representatives, wholesale trade* (including import/export) within these BC regions:

Region	2010 Estimated Employment	2015 Estimated Employment	Avg Annual % Change, 5 Years, 2010 to 2015
Vancouver Island	2,170	2,350	1.6%
Lower Mainland / Southwest	13,830	14,780	1.4%
Thompson-Okanagan	1,600	1,710	1.4%
Kootenay	380	450	3.9%
Cariboo	460	500	1.7%
North Coast & Nechako	210	270	6.2%
Northeast	240	250	0.4%

Source: Regional Employment Projections, BC Stats. Projections for development regions.

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/LabourIncome/EmploymentUnemployment/RegionalEmploymentProjections.aspx> [accessed October 2014]

You can learn more about working in the import/export industry in BC from:

- **WorkBC, Career Profiles** <http://workbc.ca/Careers>
Search: 6411 (Sales Representatives- Wholesale Trade) or 6221 (Technical Sales Specialists – Wholesale Trade)
- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Importer/Exporter)
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Types of Employers

Import/export professionals work for many types of businesses including:

- Wholesalers
- Manufacturers
- Transportation companies
- Import or export firms

You may also be self-employed.

Salary

In BC the average annual salary is:

- \$53,000 to \$66,000 for sales representatives - wholesale trade
- \$66,000 to \$95,000 for technical sales specialists

Your salary depends on the type of product imported or exported, employer and experience.

If you are self-employed you can bring in gross revenues of \$30,000 to \$200,000 a year. However, you have to deduct the costs of doing business from this money.

Sources: *Career Cruising* & WorkBC

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for **Sales Representatives Wholesale Trade** within BC regions:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	11.54	22.04	37.50
Cariboo Region	11.54	22.04	37.50
Kootenay Region	10.25	19.24	47.30
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	11.54	22.12	38.46
Thompson--Okanagan Region	13.00	20.51	36.06
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	12.00	20.67	37.50

Source: Job Bank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> NOC 6411

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for **Technical Sales Specialists** within BC regions:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	13.80	23.20	41.35
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	13.00	24.00	45.67
Thompson--Okanagan Region	13.80	23.20	41.35
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	13.80	23.20	41.35

Source: Job Bank Canada <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> NOC 6221

Working Hours

You generally work a standard Monday to Friday work week. However, when dealing with people in different time zones you may have to work evenings or in some cases very early in the morning in order to speak to these people during their business hours.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong written and oral communication skills
- good at problem solving and creative thinking
- decision making ability
- good math skills
- entrepreneurial skills
- ability to work under pressure
- basic accounting and/or bookkeeping
- good interpersonal skills
- strong organizational abilities
- negotiation abilities
- knowledge of more than one language

Sources: *Career Cruising* & WorkBC

Education and Experience

Completion of secondary school is required.

Some employers may also require:

- A university degree or college diploma in business administration
- Experience in sales or in an occupation related to the product being imported/exported
- Fluency in a foreign language and/or foreign country work or travel experience

Qualifications

This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia.

There are no mandatory requirements for licensing or professional certification in order to work as an importer or exporter in BC.

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at <http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
Access at VPL locations only

Online Job Postings

- **BCJobs.ca**
<http://www.bcjobs.ca/>
- **Indeed.com**
<http://www.indeed.ca/>
- **Neuvoo.ca**
<http://neuvoo.ca/en>

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Careers**
<http://www.icme.ca/>

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For import and export professionals, look for these related job titles

- Sales and marketing representative – import/export
- Export/import coordinator
- International trading representative
- International sales manager
- Export/import customer service rep
- Exporter/importer

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of potential employers. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters : Membership Directory**
Available at the Central Library
382.5025 C21m
- **Canadian Importers Database**
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cid-dic.nsf/eng/home?Open&src=mm2>
Provides company name only

- **Reference Canada**

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "import" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter. These should identify the position you are applying for and summarize your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]
- **Networking for Employment**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Networking for Employment]
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for import and export professionals in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees may be required for membership.

- **Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters (IE Canada)**
<http://www.iecanada.com/>
- **Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters**
<http://www.cme-mec.ca/>
- **Trade and Invest British Columbia**
<http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/export/index.aspx>
BC's official international trade and investment website.

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library:

- ***Canadian Transportation & Logistics***
Available at the Central Library or online at <http://www.ctl.ca/>
- ***Export Wise***
Available at the Central Library or online at <http://exportwise.ca/>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.