

# Import/Export Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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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 and ensure that payments follow the financial rules of Canada and the other country

Both exporters and importers arrange to ship goods. For exporters, this means making sure that it all gets to the plane or ship on time. They also try to be sure that goods arrive in good condition. They make sure that legal matters are in order. The shipment must clear customs at the other end.

Importers may hire freight forwarders to take care of this in the shipping country. They may also hire customs brokers in Canada. People in these careers ensure goods clear customs without problems. The importer markets, sells, and distributes goods to retailers. Importers have to know the Canadian consumer market.

Source:

- **Career Cruising** – Profile for 'Importer / Exporter'  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

## ***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. In 2020, British Columbia **exported** C\$ 39.9B, (the 4th largest exporter in Canada) and **imported** C\$ 53.3B (the 3rd largest importer in Canada)

In 2020 the top **export** destinations of British Columbia were United States (C\$ 22.1B), China (C\$ 5.74B), Japan (C\$ 3.57B), South Korea (C\$ 2.13B), and India (C\$ 962M). In 2020 the top **import origins** of British Columbia were United States (C\$ 19B) and China (C\$ 13.5B)

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:

- **Career Cruising** – Profile for 'Importer / Exporter'  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

- OEC Observatory of Economic Complexity – British Columbia  
[https://oec.world/en/profile/subnational\\_can/british-columbia](https://oec.world/en/profile/subnational_can/british-columbia)

## **Job Outlook in BC**

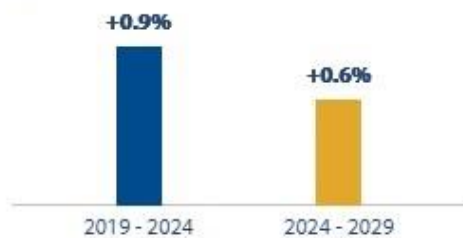
### **Sales Representative – Wholesale Trade (Non-Technical) (NOC 6411)**

Including import and export sales representatives

#### **B.C. Labour Market Outlook (2019-2029)**

Provincial outlook

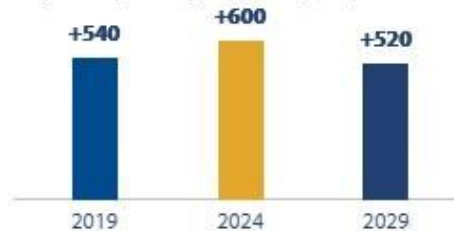
##### **Forecasted average employment growth rate**



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

##### **Job openings**

10 year expected job openings: 5,630



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

##### **Composition of job openings**

Replacement of retiring workers:  
76.2%  
4,280 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:  
23.8%  
1,340 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

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

<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/6411>

## Technical Sales Specialists – Wholesale Trade (NOC 6221)

Including import and export sales specialists

### B.C. Labour Market Outlook (2019-2029)

#### Provincial outlook

##### Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

##### Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 4,030



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

##### Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:  
75.4%  
3,040 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:  
24.6%  
990 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Technical Trade Specialists - Whole Sale Trade NOC 6221

<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/6221>

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

- **Career Cruising** – Profile for 'Importer / Exporter'

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

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

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Sales and account representatives - wholesale trade (non-technical) (NOC 6411)**

<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/6411>

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade (NOC 6221)**

<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/6221>

### ***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 **median** annual salary is:

- \$54,142 for sales representatives - wholesale trade - NOC 6411
- \$50,138 for technical sales specialists – wholesale trade – NOC 6221

Your salary depends on the type of product imported or exported, employer and experience. An importer who is bringing in novelty items to sell in their own small store may not make much. One who is working for a large chain retailer such as Wal-Mart is likely to make a high salary.

Source:

- **Career Cruising** – Profile for 'Importer / Exporter'  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for **Sales Representatives Wholesale Trade (non-technical)** NOC 6441 within BC regions:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	15.20	25.96	42.31
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	15.20	25.96	42.31
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	15.20	25.96	42.31
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	15.20	25.45	40.87
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.20	25.96	42.31
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	15.20	25.00	40.06
<a href="#">Canada</a>	14.63	25.00	40.00

JobBank Canada NOC 6411 Sales and account representatives - wholesale trade (non-technical)  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/22335/BC>

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

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

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	15.20	24.04	40.60
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	15.20	24.04	40.60
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	15.20	23.08	38.46
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.20	24.04	40.60
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	16.00	24.04	41.03
<a href="#">Canada</a>	15.00	25.00	41.75

Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade (NOC 6221)  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/6161/BC>

## **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
- strong negotiation skills



- knowledge of more than one language

### ***Education and Experience***

Completion of secondary school is required.

Some employers may also require:

- A university degree or college diploma in business administration or in a program related to the product or service may be required.
- 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.

Sources:

- **Career Cruising** – Profile for 'Importer / Exporter'  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Sales and account representatives - wholesale trade (non-technical) (NOC 6411)**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/6411>
- **WorkBC Career Profile for Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade (NOC 6221)**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/6221>

### 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 Freeway.com**

Available online at

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

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

**NOTE:** 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.

- **I | E Canada - Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters: Membership Directory** (*currently under construction*)  
<https://iecanada.com/our-members>
- **Canadian Importers Database**  
<https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cid-dic.nsf/eng/Home>  
Provides company name and postal code 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.

- **I | E Canada - Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters:**  
<https://iecanada.com/>
- **Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters**  
<https://cme-mec.ca/>
- **Trade and Invest British Columbia**  
<https://www.britishcolumbia.ca/>  
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:

- ***Inside Logistics (Canada's Supply Chain Magazine)***  
Available at the Central Library or online at <http://www.ctl.ca/>
- ***Export Wise***  
Available online at <https://canadaexports.ca/exportwise-ca-edcs-online-magazine-for-canadian-exporters-and-investors/>

**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/>.*