

# Purchasing Agents

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## Purchasing Agents [NOC 2021: 12102/ NOC 2016: 1225]

***May also be called:***

- *contract management officer*
- *contracts officer*
- *material management officer*
- *procurement officer*
- *purchaser*
- *purchasing officer*
- *supply officer, government*
- *buyer*

### 1. What Would I Do?

***You buy the supplies and business services that your company needs to create its own goods and services.***

Your duties can include:

- assess the materials, equipment and service your organization needs
- invite tenders, consult with suppliers and review quotations
- purchase general and specialized equipment, materials or business services
- apply and sometimes determine policies for purchasing

- establish delivery schedules, monitor progress and contact clients and suppliers to resolve problems

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Purchasing Agents & Officers**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/purchasing-agents-and-officers>
- **Career Cruising database (Profile for Purchaser)**  
Available from the VPL Digital Library  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>
- **Careers in Construction (Buyer/Purchasing Agent)**  
<https://www.careersinconstruction.ca/en/career/buyerpurchasing-agent>

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

***You should have:***

- *good math and computer skills*
- *good reasoning and judgment, and an ability to see the broad needs of the organization*
- *excellent organization, customer service and communication skills and attention to detail*
- *working knowledge of shipping, transportation, customs and tax regulations*

Purchasing agents and officers usually work in offices of large organizations. Occasionally you may work from site offices for large projects to ensure equipment and materials are correct.

While some purchasing agents may work on a contract basis, very few are self employed.

Sources:

- WorkBC & Careers in Construction

### 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary is \$60,962. Hourly wages average between \$23 and \$45.

In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	23.08	30.77	45.33
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	19.23	30.00	41.83
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	22.10	29.42	38.46
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	23.08	30.77	45.33
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	25.00	31.15	36.92

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Your salary depends on your level of experience, education, and employer. Those who work for large companies generally earn more than those who work for smaller companies. Purchasing managers and directors earn the highest salaries.

In addition to your salary, full-time purchasers usually receive benefits, such as dental plans, pensions, and sick days.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

## 4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

In BC, the number of workers employed in supply chain management in the *service* sector is growing. Employers seek purchasing agents and officers with well developed strategic business planning skills and knowledge of office and supply management software.

Across all sectors, there appear to be more individuals looking for employment in the Lower Mainland than there are jobs available. The majority of future openings will arise from retirements.

### Employment Outlook



### Composition of job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

Source: WorkBC

## 5. How do I become a Purchasing Agent

The minimum requirement for a purchasing agent is a high school diploma. However, a bachelor's degree or college diploma (in business administration, commerce or economics) is usually required.

Although certification is not necessary in BC, it can provide better employment opportunities.

### **Certification**

- **Supply Chain Management Professional SCMP**
- **Certified Supply Chain Professional CSCP**

In Canada, you may seek certification as a 'Supply Chain Management Professional SCMP', which is provided through Supply Chain Canada (<https://www.supplychaincanada.com>). You may also still see job postings requesting certification as 'Certified Professional Purchaser CPP'. 'CPP' was the previous designation offered by the Purchasing Management Association of Canada, now known as Supply Chain Canada.

You may also see job postings asking for certification as **either** the 'Supply Chain Management Professional SCMP' designation **OR** the American designation, 'Certified Supply Chain Professional CSCP', offered through the Association for Supply Chain Management (<https://www.ascm.org/>).

### **Prerequisites to enter the 'Supply Chain Management Professional SCMP' program:**

- successful completion of a degree or diploma program in a business-related function at a Canadian university, college or technical institute

OR

- if you don't have a post secondary degree or diploma, you may qualify for admission if you have completed relevant postsecondary courses in business, accounting, finance, economics, etc

OR

- if you have at least ten years strategic supply chain management work experience you **may** be eligible to apply for exemption from the post-secondary education requirements for entry into the program

For further information, see:

- **Supply Chain Canada - Accreditation**  
<https://www.supplychaincanada.com/en/education-accreditation>
- **Association for Supply Chain Professionals/APICS [U.S.A.] – Certifications**  
<https://www.ascm.org/learning-development/certifications-credentials/>

## 6. How Do I Find A Job?

### ***Where would I work?***

#### ***You may work in:***

- *large organizations including: manufacturers, school boards, colleges and universities, hospitals, and government departments*
- *the wholesale trade or retail sector, purchasing goods such as clothing and electronics for resale to consumers*
- *construction or engineering companies, or for general contractors*

### **Finding Advertised Jobs**

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

### **Local Newspapers**

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

### **Online Job Postings**

- **Supply Chain Canada**  
<https://www.supplychaincanada.com/careers>
- **Indeed.com**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)
- **Jobs in Logistics.com**  
<https://www.jobsinlogistics.com/>
- **Supply Chain Canada Workforce Marketplace**  
<https://www.supplychaincanada.com/workforce-marketplace>  
As a job seeker, your particular skills are matched to those that prospective employers and recruiters are looking for. Registration required.

### **Finding “Hidden Jobs”**

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you with finding jobs in this “hidden” job market.

### **Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers**

You can use company directories to produce lists of employers who are in the business of purchasing equipment or services. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Company Directories – Industry Canada**  
[https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ic-ic.nsf/eng/h\\_dh00027.html](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ic-ic.nsf/eng/h_dh00027.html)
- **British Columbia Construction Association Membership Directories**  
<https://www.bccassn.com/membership/>



## Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

### ***Networking and the Hidden Job Market:***

*When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.*

### **Volunteer opportunities**

- **Volunteer BC**  
<https://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**  
<https://govolunteer.ca/>

*For additional tips see:*

- **Networking for Employment**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

## 7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

*For more information see:*

### **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

## 8. Where Can This Job Lead?

You may start in an entry level position such as junior buyer, purchasing assistant, warehouse or logistics clerk or material handler. With experience, you can take on the responsibilities of placing larger orders and negotiating contracts. With more experience and further education, you may progress to occupations with stronger planning roles, e.g. purchasing manager / director.

### **Supply Chain Managers**

If you develop a broad skill set you may progress into supply chain management. Supply chain managers require skills in logistics, distribution systems, purchasing, manufacturing, inventory management, marketing and product development. You must understand distribution centre operations, transportation operations, cost-benefit analysis, process improvement, and logistics strategy (the most cost-effective ways of moving materials, people, energy, and information for large businesses).

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile & Career Cruising (profiles for Purchase & Logistics Specialist)

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Supply Chain Canada**  
[https://www.supplychaincanada.com/en/rr\\_general\\_profiles](https://www.supplychaincanada.com/en/rr_general_profiles)
- **Supply Professional**  
<https://www.supplypro.ca/>
- **Immigrant Employment Council of BC – Mentor Connect Program**  
<https://iecbc.ca/our-work/programs/mentorconnect/>  
Brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>
- **Fastest Growing Industries: Supply Chain**  
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/industry-profiles/fastest-growing-industries-supply-chain>

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central 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 <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.