

Insurance Agents & Brokers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Insurance Agents & Brokers **[NOC 2021: 63100 / NOC 2016: 6231]**

Insurance agents & brokers may also be called:

- *Insurance sales representative*
- *Life insurance agent*
- *Insurance sales agent*
- *Automobile insurance sales agent*
- *Autoplan broker (only in BC)*

1. What Would I Do?

Insurance agents & brokers sell life, automobile**, property, health and other types of insurance to individuals, businesses and public institutions.

Your duties include:

- sell automobile**, fire, health, life, property, marine, aircraft and other types of insurance
- establish client insurance coverage, calculate premiums and establish method of payment
- provide information concerning group and individual insurance packages, the range of risk coverage, benefits paid and other policy features
- make sure the right forms, medical examinations and other policy requirements are completed
- keep track of insurance claims and respond to client questions

- help clients update their insurance when their needs change
- find new clients

****In BC compulsory third party liability automobile insurance, 'Autoplan', is *only* available from the public insurer, Insurance Corporation of BC, ICBC.**

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Insurance Agents & Brokers**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/insurance-agents-and-brokers>
- **Career Cruising database (Profile for Insurance Agent/Broker).**
Available from the VPL Digital Library
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Insurance Agents & Brokers should have:

- *strong communication skills*
- *good math skills*
- *strong customer service skills*

You should be:

- *patient*
- *responsible*
- *self-motivated*

Insurance agents and brokers usually work in an office setting. You may also need to travel to meet with clients in their homes or businesses.

While much of the work can be done during regular office hours, evening or weekend work is sometimes necessary, depending on when clients are available.

Sources: WorkBC Career Profile & Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for insurance agents & brokers is \$53,475.

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

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	17.88	25.64	42.82
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	18.00	29.28	44.10
North Coast Region	17.88	25.64	42.82
Northeast Region	17.88	25.64	42.82
Thompson–Okanagan Region	18.46	23.39	33.78
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	20.19	26.67	32.97

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

Insurance agents and brokers may be paid in several different ways. If you work for insurance companies you might be paid an annual salary, or you may be paid a base salary plus commission (a percentage of the money you bring into the company) or a performance bonus.

Independent agents and brokers typically work only on commission.

If you work on a full-time basis for a single company, you usually receive benefits such as extended health insurance, retirement plans, paid vacation and sick days.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Employment prospects are expected to be moderate for Insurance Agents and Brokers for the 2022-2024 period. There are approximately 10,200 people currently working in this occupation in BC.

Approximately 3,540 job openings are expected between 2022 and 2032. Most jobs are in regions with large urban centres including Mainland/Southwest, Thompson-Okanagan and Vancouver Island.

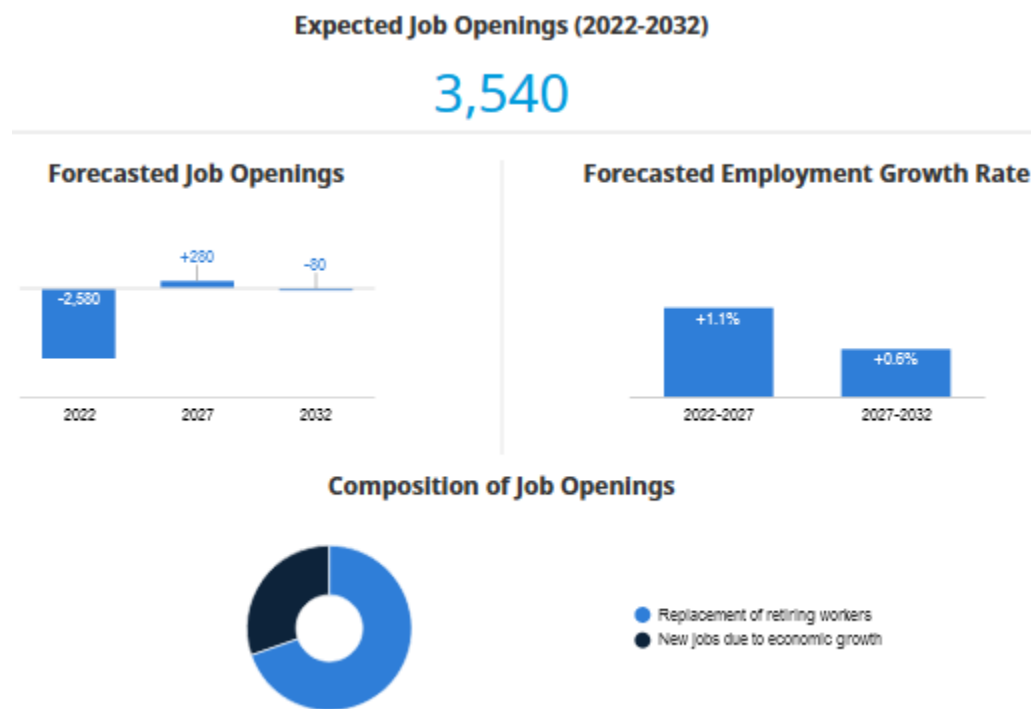


Chart from WorkBC

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles
- JobBank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-job-outlooks>

5. How do I become an Insurance Agent / Broker?

The minimum education requirement for an insurance agent is a high school diploma. However, a bachelor's degree or college courses/diploma in finance/accounting, economics, mathematics, statistics or business law is usually required.

On-the-job training and insurance industry courses are also mandatory.

Licensing as an Insurance Agent / Broker

In BC, you must obtain a license through the Insurance Council of British Columbia to act as an insurance agent or insurance salesperson.

Licenses are available in these five classes:

1. general insurance
2. life insurance
3. insurance adjusting
4. accident & sickness
5. travel insurance

Within each of the five classes there are licenses covering specific roles, e.g. in 'general insurance' class, **some** of the available licenses are:

- general insurance salesperson, level 1 (entry level license)
- general insurance agent, levels 2 & 3
- general insurance sole proprietor

In order to obtain any license in any class, you must complete:

- criminal record check
- ***the required education/courses for each class and level of license***

For more information on qualifications and requirements for licensing, see:

- **Getting a Licence, Insurance Council of BC**
<https://www.insurancecouncilofbc.com/getting-a-licence/>

Additional information about becoming an Insurance Agent or Broker:

- **Insurance Council of BC**
<https://www.insurancecouncilofbc.com/>
- **Insurance Brokers Association of BC**
<https://ibabc.org/>
- **Insurance Institute of BC**
<https://www.insuranceinstitute.ca/en/institutes-and-chapters/british-columbia.aspx>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Insurance agents & brokers may work in:

- *insurance companies*
- *brokerage firms*

You may also work independently from your own home or office

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

- **InsuranceWorks**
<https://www.insuranceworks.ca/>
- **I-Hire.ca**
<https://www.i-hire.ca/>
- **Insurance Institute of Canada Career Connections**
<https://www.career-connections.info/en/Job-Site>
- **IBABC Job Board (Insurance Brokers Association of BC)**
<https://ibabc.org/job-postings>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

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 insurance business. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Insurance Brokers Association of BC “Find a Broker”**
<https://ibabc.org/FindBroker>
- **British Columbia Insurance Directory**
Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resource, 368.058 B86
- **Reference Canada**
<https://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 “Insurance agents” 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

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://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **Volunteer Connector**
<https://www.volunteerconnector.org/>
- **ICBC (Insurance Corporation of BC) Local Community Volunteer Programs**
<https://www.icbc.com/road-safety/community/Pages/Support-volunteers.aspx>

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?

With experience you can progress to insurance management positions.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Insurance Institute of Canada, Career Connections**

<https://www.career-connections.info/>

- **Insurance Bureau of Canada**

<http://www.abc.ca>

- **Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association**

<https://www.clhia.ca>

- **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>

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>.