



## Health Career Directory

### Pharmacy Technician

#### Overview

Pharmacy Technicians are recognized as health care professionals and are registered by the College of Pharmacists of BC (CPBC). Regulated technicians are responsible and accountable for the technical functions related to prescription preparation processing. Pharmacy

Technicians work at a higher level of responsibility than Pharmacy Assistants. Pharmacy Assistants also work with the technical functions of preparing and prescribing prescriptions, but do so under direct supervision of a Pharmacist, or Pharmacy Technician. Pharmacy Assistants cannot work as Pharmacy Technicians unless they have completed upgrading courses and are eligible for registration with the College of Pharmacists of BC.

A Pharmacy Technician's duties and responsibilities vary depending on where they work (in a hospital or community pharmacy). Some of the main duties of a Pharmacy Technician are to:

- gather and enter patient information and doctors' prescriptions in computer systems
- assess prescriptions for completeness
- receive and transcribe verbal prescriptions from prescribers
- prepare, package and dispense prescription medications after a pharmacist has decided on the appropriateness of therapy
- compound drugs and blood products
- maintain prescription and inventory record keeping systems
- maintain proper drug storage and security
- place and receive orders for stock to maintain inventory
- instruct patients about the use of health aids and devices.

Other responsibilities depend on the setting. For example, in community pharmacies Pharmacy Technicians may:

- help customers find non-prescription items
- provide patients with non-drug product information
- accept payment for prescriptions
- prepare and settle third party insurance claims and records
- participate in health promotion (for example, disease management screening and consultation clinics)
- price, stock and mark items for sale.

In hospital settings they may:

- prepare sterile products such as intravenous (IV) admixtures, chemotherapy admixtures and total parenteral nutrition (TPN)

- do final product checks
- restock drugs and solutions kept on nursing wards
- restock drug kits that are kept for specific types of emergencies (for example, anaphylactic or diabetic shock)
- fill dose carts and deliver them to nursing stations
- manage the use of automated compounding and dispensing devices
- work with clinical drug trials and investigational drugs
- collect and document information.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed above, Pharmacy Technicians may:

- participate in pharmacy practice research
- educate other healthcare providers about pharmacy related matters
- supervise other staff, including pharmacy assistants.

### **Who is suited to become a pharmacy technician?**

Pharmacy Technicians must be able to perform routine tasks while maintaining a high degree of concentration and attention. Pharmacy Technicians are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- good attention to detail with high degree of accuracy
- excellent oral and written communication skills
- good math skills
- good problem solving and decision making skills
- a caring attitude toward others
- good manual dexterity
- the ability to remain calm and handle emergencies
- the ability to pay close attention to detail
- a willingness to keep up to date with new products and practices.

They should enjoy having clear rules and organized methods for their work, putting together information and using computers.

### **Who employs pharmacy technicians?**

Pharmacy Technicians are employed by health authorities/employers in BC. Most of them are employed in community pharmacies, hospitals or medical centre pharmacies. Some are employed by health insurance companies, third party billing centres or related organizations: such as pharmaceutical companies, drug wholesalers and pharmacy supply companies.

Pharmacy Technicians may need to work shifts including evenings, weekends and holidays. Sometimes they work under stressful conditions. The work is demanding because it requires both accuracy and efficiency to ensure patient safety. In other words, there is no room for mistakes.

Pharmacy Technicians are on their feet for most of their shift. They may need to lift and move objects.

### **Salary**

\$25.88 per hour

### **Required Training and Education**

The minimum education requirement for Pharmacy Technicians is a certificate or diploma from a training program accredited by the [Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs \(CCAPP\)](#).

Information on the regulation of Pharmacy Technicians can be found here:  
[http://www.bcpharmacists.org/about\\_us/key\\_initiatives/index/articles27.php](http://www.bcpharmacists.org/about_us/key_initiatives/index/articles27.php)

Information on the bridging program to become a Pharmacy Technician at the University of British Columbia can be found here:  
[http://www.bcpharmacists.org/about\\_us/key\\_initiatives/index/articles27.php](http://www.bcpharmacists.org/about_us/key_initiatives/index/articles27.php)

## **Employment and Advancement**

Depending on the size and nature of the organization, experienced Pharmacy Technicians may advance to supervisory positions.

Pharmacy Technicians are part of the larger National Occupational Classification 3414: Other Assisting Occupations in Support of Health Services.

## **Resources**

### **Education Programs**

CDI College  
<http://www.cdicollege.ca/programs-and-courses/pharmacy-technician-bc/>

Insignia College  
<http://www.insigniacollege.com/pharmacy-technician.htm>

MTI Community College  
<http://www.mticc.com/English/Pgrams/HealthCare/Pharmacy-Technician-Diploma.aspx>

Okanagan College  
[okanagan.bc.ca/ok/calendar/calendar.aspx?page=PharmacyTechnicianCertificate](http://okanagan.bc.ca/ok/calendar/calendar.aspx?page=PharmacyTechnicianCertificate)

Selkirk College  
<http://selkirk.ca/programs/hhs/health/pharmtec/>

Thompson Career College  
<http://www.thompsoncc.ca/pt/index/html>

Vancouver Community College  
[http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/detail.cfm?div\\_id=6&prog\\_id=94](http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/detail.cfm?div_id=6&prog_id=94)

## **Financial Aid**

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada\\_student\\_loan/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml)

## **Association**

Pharmacy Technician Society of BC

<http://www.ptsbc.ca/>