

Printing Press Operator

Run the machines that print packaging, labels, books and flyers. Learn on the floor, no licence needed.

TYPICAL PAY

\$52,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$38k to \$73k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Commercial print shops, packaging plants, label makers, newspapers

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Shop, math and any graphic arts or media course.
- 2 Get hired as a press helper** Weeks to months
Print shops and packaging plants hire helpers with no experience. Show you are reliable and mechanically minded.
- 3 Learn the press** 1 to 3 years
Feeding, washing up, colour checks, then setting up and running jobs yourself. Each press type takes months to master.
- 4 Optional college** 1 to 4 years
A graphic or print production diploma at a college, or the 4-year Graphic Communications Management degree at Toronto Metropolitan University, opens the door to supervisor and management jobs.

Pros and cons

- + No tuition, paid from day one
- + Real craft: colour and precision on big machines
- + Packaging keeps growing even as paper print shrinks
- Job Bank rates the outlook as limited; commercial printing is shrinking
- Nights, weekends and 12-hour shifts
- Loud, solvent-heavy plant floors

Good to know

Print is bigger than you think

The Canadian Printing Industries Association counts more than 6,000 printing and related businesses in Canada employing over 50,000 people. Most of the growth is in packaging and labels, not flyers.

There is a degree for it

Toronto Metropolitan University's Graphic Communications Management program is a 4-year Bachelor of Technology with a paid internship and streams in packaging and publishing. It has trained pri...

Optional boosts

Flexographic printing. Multi-colour offset. Colour management. Press maintenance.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Printing press operator, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Toronto Metropolitan University: Graphic Communications Management
Canadian Printing Industries Association

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/printing-press-operator>



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