

Retail Store Manager

Run a store: staff, sales, stock and customers. Start on the floor and get promoted, no degree needed.

TYPICAL PAY

\$89,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$45k to \$168k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Stores, malls, big-box outlets, dealerships

How you get there

- 1 High school, with a part-time job** Grades 11 and 12
Get on the floor at 16 or 17. Show up, sell, and get noticed.
- 2 Sales associate to key holder** 1 to 2 years
Opening and closing the store, handling cash, covering for the manager.
- 3 Supervisor or assistant manager** 1 to 3 years
Scheduling, training new staff, handling complaints. Some chains run formal management training programs at this stage.
- 4 Store manager** Year 3 to 6
Full responsibility for sales, staff, stock and the profit line. Often starts at a smaller store.
- 5 Bigger store, district manager or head office** Ongoing
The ladder continues into multi-store and regional roles.

Pros and cons

- + No degree needed, promoted on results
- + Paid from your first day on the floor
- + Real leadership responsibility in your 20s
- Evenings, weekends and holidays are the job
- Staff turnover means you are always hiring and training
- Bonuses and job security rise and fall with sales

Good to know

Canadians spend billions a month in stores

Statistics Canada reported retail sales of about \$74 billion in June 2026 alone, with Ontario making up about \$28 billion of that. Every dollar passed through a store someone manages.

Retail is a huge first employer

Retail is one of Canada's largest employers, and for many teenagers it is their first job. Nearly every store manager and most retail executives started as a part-time associate.

Optional boosts

High-ticket retail. Grocery. Flagship or high-volume stores. District or regional manager.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Retail and wholesale trade managers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Retail and wholesale trade managers, requirements

Statistics Canada: Retail and wholesale statistics

Ontario: Your guide to the Employment Standards Act

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/retail-store-manager>



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