

Retail Store Manager

Run a shop: the staff, the stock, the takings and the targets. No degree needed, and you can be doing it two years out of high school.

TYPICAL PAY

\$48,520

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$33k to \$77k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Chain stores, grocery stores, malls, independent shops

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 10 to 12
 Get a part-time retail job now. Weekends and holidays on a till teach you the trade and put two years of experience on your resume before you graduate.
- 2 Sales associate** 6 months to 2 years
 Serving customers, stocking, counting, opening and closing. Turn up on time, learn the stock system, and volunteer for the jobs nobody wants.
- 3 Key holder or shift supervisor** 1 to 2 years
 You hold the keys, open the store, run a shift and handle problems without calling anyone. This is the real test.
- 4 Assistant manager** 1 to 3 years
 Scheduling, hiring, stock ordering, loss prevention and the parts of the accounts you are allowed to see.
- 5 Store manager** 3 to 6 years in
 You own the whole location: its sales, its payroll budget, its staff and its inspections.

Pros and cons

- + No debt and no exams to get in
- + A real management job in your early twenties
- + Jobs in literally every town
- The pay ceiling is low compared to other management work
- Evenings, weekends and the whole holiday season
- Short staffing means you cover the gaps yourself

Good to know

The industry trains people for free

The National Retail Federation Foundation runs RISE Up (a free retail training program) built with Walmart, Macy's and The Home Depot. It certifies customer service, sales, inventory and conflict de-escalatio...

The job title hides a wide range

The federal wage survey counts department supervisors, assistant managers and whole-store managers on one line. That is why the published middle of \$48,520 sits well below what a large grocery or h...

Optional boosts

Move to a bigger format. Loss prevention. District or area manager. Buying and merchandising.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, wages and tasks
 National Retail Federation
 NRF Foundation: RISE Up training and credentials
 Sinclair Community College

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/retail-store-manager>



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