

# Household Goods Mover \*

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Furniture movers move furniture, office supplies and equipment to and from homes, apartments, offices and storage establishments.

**Minimum Education:** Education/training requirements vary

**Employment Outlook:** Employment turnover plus average occupational growth in Alberta

## Duties

Duties and responsibilities vary from one employer to another but, in general, furniture movers:

- greet customers and take an inventory of furniture and equipment being moved long distances, noting any existing defects or scratches
- cover floors and clear walkways as needed
- determine special packing and wrapping requirements for items such as artwork, electronics, antiques, beds and appliances
- wrap and pack items, making sure that everything is secure
- courteously but briefly answer customers' questions or refer questions to office staff
- determine the order in which to load furniture to ensure that bulky or heavy items are placed in the lower part of the truck box or moving van
- work with a partner or use dollies or straps to move very heavy items such as appliances and large pieces of furniture
- carry articles and boxes to the moving van
- arrange articles in tiers to form a compact load, using padding and straps to secure articles and prevent shifting when the truck is in motion
- check to ensure that all items have been loaded and pick up floor runners
- drive moving vans to local or long distance destinations
- lay out floor runners and determine where items should be placed at destination points
- accept payment from customers before unloading and provide receipts when required
- remove straps and padding from articles and unload vans
- reassemble furniture pieces that were disassembled for the move
- clean up and make sure everything has been delivered in the same condition as it was when picked up
- have customers sign the bill of lading and inventories.

If anything is found to be missing or damaged at the time of delivery, furniture movers must note the details so the company can trace the item or compensate the customer.

Furniture movers also may:

- drive long distances
- make minor repairs to furniture and equipment.

## Working Conditions

A part of their day is spent riding in a van but, most of the time, furniture movers are on their feet. They frequently move items weighing over 55 kilograms and must use proper equipment and lifting techniques to avoid injury. Some furniture movers wear uniforms.

Employment may be seasonal in this occupation. The peak season is from May to September. Volumes increase at the end of each month.

## **Personal Characteristics**

Furniture movers need the following characteristics:

- physical strength, stamina and co-ordination
- the ability to follow written and spoken instructions, and write clearly
- the ability to judge distances and space
- the ability to work independently
- the ability to organize their work and time effectively
- a customer service orientation and the ability to get along with customers who are often under stress, and work co-operatively with fellow employees
- a neat appearance.

They should enjoy:

- handling, sorting and packing materials
- using tools and equipment
- arranging articles to form compact, secure loads
- dealing with the public.

## **Educational Requirements**

There are no standard education requirements for this occupation but English communication skills (including reading and writing) and math skills are required. Related experience, a valid Alberta Class 1, 3 or 5 driver's license and an air brake endorsement are definite assets.

Furniture movers are trained on the job.

## **Employment and Advancement**

Most furniture movers start as helpers employed for the summer months by transportation, storage and moving companies. Employers offer full-time, year-round positions only to their most experienced and productive workers.

Experienced furniture movers may specialize in particular types of activities such as office moves or installations. If they have the required driver's licenses and endorsements, they may move into local or long distance driver positions. Van supervisory positions require good customer relations skills, the ability to handle the required paperwork and driving qualifications. Other positions in large moving companies (for example, dispatcher, estimator, advisor for international moves) may require a high school diploma. Some experienced furniture movers purchase their own trucks or tractor trailers and become independent operators who contract their services to long distance movers or to the public.

Furniture movers are part of the larger National Occupational Classification 7452: Material Handlers. In Alberta, over 75 per cent of people employed in this classification work in the following industries:

- Wholesale Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Retail Trade
- Food and Beverage Product Manufacturing
- Construction
- Administrative, Management and Other Support Services
- Wood Product Manufacturing.

The employment outlook in this occupation will be influenced by a wide variety of factors including:

- trends and events affecting overall employment (especially in the industries listed above)
- location in Alberta
- employment turnover (work opportunities generated by people leaving existing positions)
- occupational growth (work opportunities resulting from the creation of new positions that never existed before)
- size of the occupation.

Over 20,500 Albertans are employed in the Material Handlers occupational group which is expected to grow 1.3 to 2.3 per cent each year from 2005 to 2010 in Alberta. It is forecasted that 260 to 480 new positions will be created each year in addition to job openings created by employment turnover. (Note: Since furniture movers form only a part of the larger occupational group on which this forecast is based, only a portion of the new positions created will be for furniture movers.)

Employment turnover is expected to increase as members of the baby boom generation retire over the next five to ten years.

## **Salary**

According to the 2005 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, Albertans in the Material Handlers occupational group working part-time or full-time earned from \$12,000 to \$82,300 a year. The average salary was \$28,900 a year. Average salaries for full-time employees of large moving companies are generally higher.

## **Other Sources of Information**

Canadian Association of Movers (CAM) website: [www.mover.net](http://www.mover.net)

\* **Source:** Government of Alberta, Employment, Immigration and Industry, August 2006. This Alberta Occupational Profile of a Furniture Mover can be applied generally to the household goods mover occupation.