



The printing industry offers fulfilling career opportunities with room to grow.

## KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

By becoming a Lithographic Sheetfed Offset Press Operator, you gain in-depth knowledge about the press and the printing process and learn how to handle, maintain, troubleshoot and manipulate printing factors such as ink and paper. Printing is a trade that can be learned through on-the-job training and formal education. Press operators acquire the skills and knowledge they need in a number of ways—through high school and post-secondary programs (often associated with graphic design), apprenticeships and on-the-job learning. To find a list of schools and training providers, go to the CPISC website at [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca)

## STEPPING STONES

The printing industry offers fulfilling career opportunities with room to grow. With experience, training and a good performance record, workers can move up to senior positions including senior press operator, lead hand, shop foreman/supervisor and production manager. As well, press operators can move into other departments such as estimating and sales. Mastering the operation of a variety of presses can open many doors: you can also become an entrepreneur and start your own business.

Many of the skills you learn as a Lithographic Sheetfed Offset Press Operator are transferable and can lead to success in other industries.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE:



## LITHOGRAPHIC SHEETFED OFFSET PRESS OPERATOR

Sheetfed offset is used more often than any other printing technology in Canada—producing everything from flyers, brochures and books to posters, magazines, annual reports and other printed media. In other words, it's always in demand. Being a Lithographic **SHEETFED OFFSET PRESS OPERATOR** is a hands-on job that requires strong technical skills, a sharp eye for quality, and a commitment to teamwork—all of which lead to career prospects throughout the printing industry.

*"Working in the print shop, you're part of a team. You learn how all the different areas work together to get the job done. You really feel like your contribution counts."*

— JEFF POLLEY, LITHOGRAPHIC SHEETFED OFFSET  
PRESS OPERATOR

  


Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council

## DID YOU KNOW?

Printing plays a strong role in Canada's economy. In 2006, the industry produced \$11.5 billion in shipments. The economic spin-offs of printing that year—other business generated by the printing sector—totaled \$7.4 billion.

# PRINTING: A FIELD OF OPPORTUNITIES

Canada's fourth-largest source of manufacturing jobs, the printing and graphic communications industry extends from coast to coast, supporting 8,500 establishments nationwide and employing more than 90,000 men and women.

The industry has changed a lot over the last ten years. Technology and computers now play a major role in putting ink on paper.

Right now is a great time to consider entering the printing profession. Like many industries, printing is going to see a large number of employees retire in the coming years, creating demand for talented new workers.

### Why a career in printing?

- *Investment in the future:* the majority of printing firms have either recently invested or plan to invest in training, recruiting and upgrading skills to keep pace with the changes in technology
- *Opportunity:* nearly half of all printing jobs (47%) are in press operation and finishing departments
- *Compensation:* wages paid in printing have gone up consistently—more than 25% between 1997 and 2004
- *Innovation:* the printing industry has been a leader in adapting to new technologies

Look for forecasts for printing employment in the Labour Market Information section of the Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council (CPISC) website at [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca)

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# ON THE JOB

Lithographic Sheetfed Offset Press operators are responsible for the production of all printed material in their pressrooms. They ensure the quality of each job from the moment the paper enters the feeder to the moment that it leaves the delivery. After a job is set up and underway, the operator periodically removes samples from the most recently printed press sheets from the press delivery and compares them to the OK sheet (the client-approved sheet) and inspects them for various print defects such as hickeys and sheet-to-sheet register. In addition, the press operator may have to make adjustments to the press during the pressrun.

### How lithographic sheetfed offset printing works

In a lithographic sheetfed offset press, sheets travel through a feeder that makes sure they are properly aligned for printing. Ink and a dampening solution travel from the plate cylinder

to a blanket cylinder and to what's called the impression cylinder, which actually prints the image onto the sheets. Each printed sheet then travels through the press to the delivery end for inspection.

### Being a press operator

Whether running a lithographic sheetfed offset press or some other type of press, the operator is in charge of the whole process as well as ensuring safety. Operators also maintain the cleanliness and organization of the pressroom, and of the press itself. In addition to printing quality media, the press operator must also communicate with other departments to ensure that the job overall is carried out according to client specifications.



# UP FOR THE TASK

All press operators must possess basic, core and operating skills to perform their duties. Each set of skills contributes to the position in different ways. The following are just a few examples taken from the skill standards developed and validated by industry professionals through the Canadian Printing Industries Sector Council (CPISC).

**BASIC SKILLS:** are essential in every occupation. They are also called enabling skills because they make it possible for workers to use and develop other skills.

**Reading:** Reading simple and brief work-related materials, e.g., labels

**Writing:** Writing short notes, e.g., log entries

**Mathematics:** Calculating fractions, e.g., ink ratios

**Interactive communication:** Listening to and understanding information, e.g., following verbal instructions

**Planning and organization:** Plan and organize activities, e.g., work area

**Decision making:** Making decisions in a timely manner

**Problem solving:** Identifying problems and their solutions

**Computer literacy:** Using computer software and equipment

**CORE SKILLS:** cover those elements that comprise a broad-based knowledge of the industry. For the most part, some will cut across process areas, although some may be more relevant to a particular process area.

**Teamwork:** Working collaboratively with others to achieve organizational goals

**Health and safety:** Adhering to health and safety and environmental standards, regulations and policies

**Printing process:** Understanding the steps involved in printing processes

**Workflow processes and control:** Adhering to production schedules and requirements

**Quality assurance:** Verifying accuracy and quality of work to ensure that products meet expectations

**Client service:** Providing service excellence to internal or external clients

**OPERATING SKILLS:** From preparing to print through press operation and maintenance, press operators must possess specific technical skills in order to:

Follow makeready checklists to prepare work for printing

Set up the dampening system, ink, inking system and printing plates

Monitor colour quality

Perform troubleshooting to solve problems as they arise

Control press department conditions

Maintain equipment and workspace to prevent downtime, maximize output and ensure health and safety

To access the complete list of press skill standards visit [www.cpisc-csic.ca](http://www.cpisc-csic.ca)