



Information for International Law Client Wanting to Practice as a Paralegal in BC

OVERVIEW

One of the most important roles of a paralegal is to assist their attorney in preparing for trials, hearings, and closings a large part of which consists of conducting legal research, investigative work and gathering relevant information to the case. Paralegals also are involved in preparing presentations for the client and are appropriately trained to practice in the legal profession. Paralegals may not practice law, and as such may not represent people in court nor assist them with traffic violations or name changes. Whether working with clients face-to-face or presenting legal precedents to partners behind closed doors, paralegals must be good communicators, strong writers, and adept at conflict resolution and negotiation.

The day-to-day work of a paralegal can vary tremendously depending on the place of employment and the paralegal's specialty. Litigation paralegals will have considerable work related to trials, while in-house legal staff for corporations can spend much of their time drafting board resolutions and filing documentation related to business needs.

Paralegals may also perform clerical and administrative duties as needed, especially in a small office. What a paralegal *cannot* do is established by law, what they *can* do is highly dependent on their employers. In BC, paralegals may not work independently and must work under the supervision of a lawyer.

Paralegals are not a regulated profession in BC.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Paralegals develop a similar degree of expertise, and offer a similar set of services, as fully-fledged lawyers, but at a fraction of the cost:

- Document preparation, including drafting legal documents such as agreements, contracts, and briefs.
- Representing parties in administrative law hearings.
- Providing legal information to a general audience.
- Explaining procedural issues of law
- Conducting research to assist lawyers or other professionals
- prepare wills, real estate transactions and other legal documents, court reports and affidavits
- research records, court files and other legal documents
- draft legal correspondence and perform general office and clerical duties



- Assist lawyers by
 - interviewing clients, witnesses and other related parties
 - assembling documentary evidence
 - preparing trial briefs
 - arranging for trials

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Paralegals require a college diploma in a paralegal program; a Bachelor degree or in-house training from a law firm or other legal establishment; and office experience.

Paralegal certificates are designed for working professionals who wish to increase their legal knowledge and skills. Certificate classes may be offered part-time, in the evenings and on weekends. They may also be available in person or online.

Paralegal diplomas can be earned in two years. Generally, applicants to a diploma program must have previously completed some post-secondary coursework or have relevant work experience. Paralegal diploma coursework focuses almost exclusively on legal classes without general education coursework. Students in a paralegal diploma program may take the same classes as students in a degree program. However, because they are not completing general education coursework, they will not receive a degree.

Paralegal degrees can be completed in four years. They blend coursework in legal studies with general education coursework like English, mathematics, history and the like. Graduates earn bachelor's degrees.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS OF PARALEGALS

Private law firms are top employers of paralegals. They can also be good resources when making inquiries about educational and training expectations in your region. Large law firms typically hire large numbers of paralegals. British Columbia's largest law firms include (but not limited to):

- Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
- Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP
- Lawson Lundell LLP
- David LLP
- Bull, Housser & Tupper LLP
- McCarthy Tetrault LLP
- Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP



- McMillan LLP
- Alexander Holburn Beaudin & Lang LLP
- Farris, Vaughan, Wills & Murphy LLP

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATED LAWYER WORKING AS A PARALEGAL

An International educated lawyer might find work as a paralegal if the employer is willing to train them in BC procedure. Employment prospects would also depend on the area of law in which the IEL is seeking employment.

The BC Paralegal Association (BCPA) does not evaluate credentials for the purposes of employment – only for the purposes of membership. The IEL is encouraged to consider becoming a member of BCPA if seeking employment as a paralegal

REGISTERED PARALEGAL and DESIGNATED PARALEGAL DESIGNATIONS

BC Paralegal Association (BCPA) has created the title 'Registered Paralegal' for voting members of the BC Paralegal Association. The title is intended to indicate the person had the training and/or experience to qualify to use this title. As long as the person is a qualified registered voting member of the association, they can use this title. A registered paralegal must still be supervised by a lawyer and has no extraordinary powers.

In comparison, 'Designated Paralegals' are 'designated' by their supervising lawyer(s) and have enhanced abilities under the Designated program as permitted by the Law Society of British Columbia. A "designated paralegal" can perform additional duties under a lawyer's supervision such as:

- give legal advice to clients;
- appear before tribunals, as permitted, or at family law mediations.

Once a Designated Paralegal leaves the employment of their supervising lawyer, they must be designated by another supervising lawyer in order to use the title.

The two titles - BCPA Registered Paralegal and Designated Paralegal - can be used together provided that the paralegal using them is qualified for each and registered and designated as such by each respective program / association and at the discretion of their employer.



RESOURCES

BC Law Society (Paralegals) - <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/support-and-resources-for-lawyers/law-office-administration/paralegals/>

BC Legal Directory - <https://www.cbabc.org/Directory/Home>

BC Paralegal Association (BCPA)
<https://www.bcparalegalassociation.com/cpages/home>

Canadian Law List - <https://www.canadianlawlist.com/>

Canadian Legal Expert (Lexpert) Directory - <https://www.lexpert.ca/directory/>

Courthouse Library BC - <https://www.courthouselibrary.ca/how-we-can-help/our-legal-knowledge-base/what-does-paralegal-do>

Government of BC (Paralegals) - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/all-employees/pay-benefits/salaries/salarylookuptool/legal-judiciary/paralegal-excluded>

Intellectual Property Institute of Canada (IPIC) – www.ipic.ca

Legal Aid BC - <https://lss.bc.ca/general/careers>

Notaries Act – www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96334_01

The Notary Foundation of BC –
www.notaryfoundationofbc.ca/resources/showContent.rails?page=AboutUs

The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia – www.notaries.ca

WorkBC - <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/4211>

- **Law Firm Directories**

Canadian Law List - <https://www.canadianlawlist.com/>

Canadian Legal Expert Directory- <https://www.lexpert.ca/directory/>



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

BC Law Institute (BCLI) - <https://www.bcli.org/careers>

BC Law Society (Volunteers) - <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/about-us/volunteers-and-appointments/>

Canadian University (information about Justice and Legal Organizations in Vancouver offering volunteer opportunities) - http://www.canadian-universities.net/Volunteer/Justice_and_Legal-British_Columbia-Vancouver.html

Go Volunteer (search on law, legal) - <https://www.govolunteer.ca/>

People's Law School - <https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/volunteer>

Volunteer BC - <https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

West Coast Environmental Law (Volunteer opportunities) - <https://www.wcel.org/about/work-with-us/volunteer-opportunities>

West Coast Leaf- <http://www.westcoastleaf.org/take-action/volunteer/>

JOB BOARDS

British Columbia Legal Management Association (BCLMA) – Career Opportunities – www.bclma.org/job-bank

BC Paralegal Association (must be a member to access) - <https://www.bcparalegalassociation.com/cpages/employment-opportunities>

Clear Legal Jobs (Vancouver) - https://clearlegaljobs.com/jobs/?listing_type%5Bequal%5D=Job&searchId=1594581839.6922&action=search&keywords%5Ball_words%5D=paralegal&GooglePlace%5Blocation%5D%5Bvalue%5D=Vancouver&GooglePlace%5Blocation%5D%5Bradius%5D=50

Hunter West - https://www.hunterwest.ca/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIIno_b5MvJ6gIVAx6tBh2pFQIDEAMYAiAAEqJxevD_BwE

Indeed.ca - <https://ca.indeed.com/Paralegal-jobs-in-British-Columbia>



Simply Hired -

<https://www.simplyhired.ca/search?q=paralegal&l=vancouver%2C+bc&job=M6A7DrZMuafO9wcYHOUvTH9FWY-KRfoFCjAFEQ9lySV2wbx75wI0Rw>

LEGAL RECRUITING AGENCIES

Arlyn Recruiting - <https://arlynrecruiting.com/job-postings/>

Eva Lee & Associates - <https://www.evalee.ca/>

R Johnson Legal Recruiting - <https://rjohnsoncorp.com/legal-jobs/>

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