

ALBERTA SUMMARY

2022



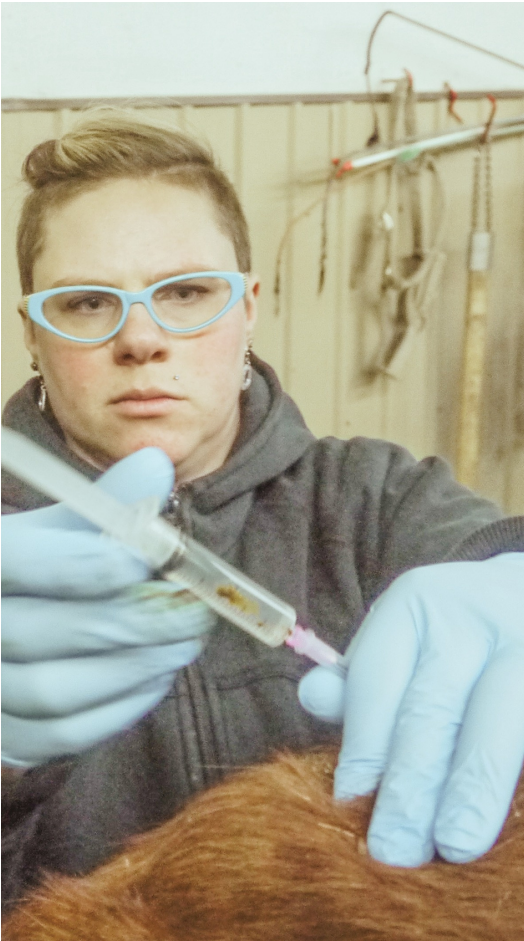
**BASED FROM THE 2022 RVT
COMPENSATION REVIEW REPORT**

INDUSTRY & MEMBER SUMMARY

The Alberta Veterinary Technologist Association (ABVTA), Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists (SAVT); and the Manitoba Veterinary Technologists Association (MVTA) commissioned this review.

The objective of the 2022 Registered Veterinary Technologist Compensation Review was to gain a comprehensive understanding of compensation and benefits provided to Prairie Registered Veterinary Technologist (RVT)s this includes determining aggregate provincial and cross-provincial compensation practices. The primary goal for the review was to identify gaps and opportunities in said practices and make recommendations to achieve consistency for RVT compensation and benefits. In addition, information gathered provides a baseline for future surveys and establishes common duties and responsibilities within the profession.

The 2022 Registered Veterinary Technologist Compensation Review was based on data provided through a survey sent to all members of the 3 provinces, 3,868 in total (Alberta, 2,783; Saskatchewan, 640; and Manitoba, 445).



AB INDUSTRY & MEMBER SUMMARY CONTINUED

Through data and comments provided by 1556 (40%) of the total membership of all three provinces, a number of trends and observations were made that could ultimately influence the industry of animal health. The following highlights concerns and opportunities identified:

- No correlation to the level of compensation to years of practice.
- No correlation to level of compensation to specialized responsibilities.
- Limited paid training.
- Inconsistent starting wages for new graduates, including rates below provincial Employment Standards.
- Lower average hourly rate paid in rural locations to urban locations.
- Inconsistent overtime and on call rates – at times non-existent and possibly not meeting provincial Employment Standards.
- Inconsistent performance review practices and not always associated with pay increases.
- Inconsistent, and at times, absent practices regarding pay increases.
- Inconsistent benefit schemes that do not meet the needs of RVTs.
- Limited flexibility to attend to personal needs.
- Nearly 30% of survey participants indicated they are intending to leave their employer in the next 2 years, citing issues with compensation and working conditions that include stress, burn out, high turn-over, limited ability for advancement, poor management and the work becoming too physically difficult for their age (aging out).





ALBERTA HIGHLIGHTS

9.41 YEARS OF PRACTICE IS THE AVERAGE FOR RVTS

25-29 YEARS OF AGE IS THE AVERAGE AGE OF AN RVT IN ALBERTA

67.3% RESPONDENTS WORK IN INDEPENDANT PRACTICES

32.7% RESPONDENTS WORK IN CONSOLIDATED PRACTICES

ALBERTA BENEFITS

- 5% reported less than 2 weeks of vacation.
- 49% reported 2 weeks of vacation.
- 28% reported 3 weeks of vacation and was only reported from those with five years of experience or greater.
- Many with more than 5 years of experience reported 2 weeks of vacation.
- 5 weeks was reported only in urban populations. Those with similar years of experience in rural populations reported lower vacation entitlements.

Vacation leave should be offered commensurate with years of experience in the profession, not just with the current employer, and may exceed legislated minimums.

Many employers find it beneficial to provide a comprehensive benefits program inclusive of employer paid health benefits, wellness benefits/health spending account, disability and group life insurance. This promotes employee wellness and demonstrates an investment by the employer in the wellness of their employees. Benefits like this provide support to employees to combat elements of the job that are physically and psychologically demanding, increasing tenure in the profession and employee engagement.

Employers that offer profit sharing and bonus programs experience employees that are fully engaged and align their level of service to ownership and success of the practice and a strong retention and recruitment tool.

ALBERTA BENEFITS CONTINUED

Based on the predominantly female demographic of RVTs, paid time off for personal commitments could be a valuable recruitment and retention tool. This approach is easy to manage for employers and is easier for employees to understand and support. Flexibility in the form of schedule changes, shift swaps, etc. is an effective way to support employee work-life balance while meeting organizational needs.

Monetize benefits such as discounted pet food and services, etc. as part of a total compensation package and communicated to staff through a benefit statement.

COMPENSATION:

- Average Hourly Rate - \$26.67
- Urban Average Hourly Rate - \$27.07
- Rural Average Hourly Rate - \$24.95
- Lowest Hourly Rate - \$15.00
- Highest Hourly Rate - \$52.52

Breakdown by years of practice

Hourly Rate by Years of Practice	Alberta
less than 3 years of practice	\$23.77
3 to 5 years of practice	\$25.75
6 to 10 years of practice	\$27.05
11 to 15 years of practice	\$28.26
16 to 20 years of practice	\$28.06
21 to 25 years of practice	\$30.07
26 to 30 years of practice	\$31.59
31 to 35 years of practice	\$30.37
Over 36 years of practice	\$30.63

Good compensation practices would show a steady incline in the line showing the relationship between compensation and years of service. The diagram below shows significant compensation issues for those RVTs with 6 to 25 years of service. It is noted that these are valued and experienced RVTs and compensation is a key component to retaining these individuals.

Rates of pay/salary ranges should be reviewed on an annual basis by the employer to recognize Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) or general wage increase (GWI) should be provided to RVTs separate from any performance reviews and associated merit increments. If organizations have established salary scales or ranges the GWI would be applied to these pay structures. If there are no formal pay structures GWI can be provided in addition to merit increase.

In addition, RVTs should receive an additional 3.5% merit increase at minimum on an annual basis if performance is satisfactory. Employee performance should be based on job requirements and RVTs should be made aware of their performance both positive and in areas requiring improvement throughout the review period.

HOURLY RATE RELATED TO YEARS OF SERVICE - ACTUAL VS RECOMMENDED



ALBERTA INDUSTRY & EMPLOYERS RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Retention and recruitment of experienced RVTs as it relates to compensation & benefits are the most significant issues. The following provides some things that could be done to ensure experienced RVTs are happy and successful in their workplaces. By retaining and recruiting experienced RVTs workplaces can expect to improve client experiences, increase transfer of knowledge to less experienced RVTs, improve productivity, morale and quality of services.

02

Provide a compensation package and communication that clearly outlines rates of pay, how and when increases happen, overtime and on-call rates during the employment life cycle. See Appendix One.

03

Provide a comprehensive benefits statement that summarizes all benefits provided (employer and employee paid) during the employment life cycle. See Appendix One.

04

Provide benefits such employer paid benefits program for RVTs and their families that includes health, wellness benefits, paid personal days, flexibility in scheduling, profit sharing and bonus programs, discounted pet foods and services

05

Pay for training including training in specialty areas of practice and enter into Return of Service (ROS) Agreements with RVTs to both increase the accessibility and affordability of the training, as well as, realize the investment in the practice and create and enhance the capacity to deliver more specialized services.

06

Think strategically when contemplating salaries for experienced staff by making the increases exponentially larger with each year of service. The rate of pay should be relative to experience.

07

There should be no distinction between urban and rural compensation rates and benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALBERTA RVTs

1 Members advocate for their employers to provide compensation packages that clearly outline rates of pay, how and when increases happen, overtime and on-call rates during the employment life cycle. It is anticipated this would increase recruitment and retention.

2 Members advocate for their employers to provide a comprehensive benefits statement that summarizes all benefits provided (employer and employee paid) during the employment life cycle. It is anticipated this would increase recruitment and retention.

3 A minimum salary of \$20.00 per starting salary for new graduates. Rates of pay should be reviewed and adjusted should the differential drop below \$5.00 of the minimum wage. Example if the minimum wage is adjusted to \$15.30 the minimum starting salary for a new graduate should be \$20.30.

4 It is recommended that RVTs receive a minimum of a 3.5% merit increase with every year of satisfactory service in addition to general wage increase (GWI) aligned with the cost of living published by Statistics Canada be provided to RVTs. Responsibilities requiring specialty training should be compensated as a percent of hourly rate of pay in addition to years of experience.

5 RVTs should be familiar with provincial Employment Standards as it relates to overtime. Overtime should be compensated in accordance with respective Employment Standards Codes and applies to both salary and hourly employees as it is unlikely that RVTs satisfy any overtime exemption requirements under the Codes.

6 Vacation leave needs to adhere to Employment Standards at the minimum. Vacation leave needs to be offered commensurate with years of experience in the profession, not just with the current employer, and may exceed legislated minimums. This should apply across rural and urban populations. Vacation entitlements should factor in any allowances for paid sick leave and paid personal leave. If providing for the latter, vacation can follow the statute and it is recommended that an additional week of vacation be provided at five-year intervals such as ten years, fifteen years, etc. If not providing paid personal time, it is recommended to provide an additional week of vacation to that provided by statute, following the same thresholds for increases as above. To combat burnout, paid time away from work is vital to industry tenure.

7 Paid sick leave is not regulated but should be provided as part of a comprehensive compensation package at a rate of five days of paid sick leave annually, aligning to what was established during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideally employees have sick leave as opposed to utilizing vacation leave when ill to ensure there is time set aside specifically for illness.

8 Paid personal leave is not regulated but should be provided as part of a comprehensive compensation package at a rate of five days of paid personal leave annually. This can be used to offset the reported flexibility provided for family commitments, resulting in more consistent utilization in employees, promoting work life balance, contributing to employee satisfaction and retention.

Comprehensive Compensation Statement Outline

Recommended information to be included in a comprehensive compensation statement:

1. Rate of Pay
2. Scheduled increases (COLA plus minimum 3.5% annual merit increase)
3. Increases based on changes to Provincial minimum wage
4. Overtime and on call rate per hour
5. Seasonal Bonuses / Profit Sharing
6. Vacation leave (ensure, at minimum, aligns with Provincial Employment Standards)
7. Sick leave - recommendation is 5 days annually
8. Personal leave - recommendation is 5 days annually
9. Paid Continuing Education/Volunteer hours
10. Date for next annual review of compensation

Comprehensive Benefits Statement Outline

List of sample employer benefits to include:

- Discounted pet food
- Discounted medications
- Discounted in practice services and procedures
- Pet insurance premiums
- Child care
- Fuel allowance or mileage reimbursement
- Reimbursement for continuing education
- Uniform allowance
- Association dues
- Disability insurance
- Life insurance
- Cell phone allowance
- Employer paid dental
- Employer paid optical
- Employer paid drug plan
- Employer paid ambulance
- Employer paid travel health
- Employer/Employee paid dental
- Employer/Employee paid optical
- Employer/Employee paid drug plan
- Employer/Employee paid ambulance
- Employer/Employee paid travel health
- Employee paid dental
- Employee paid optical
- Employee paid drug plan
- Employee paid ambulance
- Employee paid travel health