

PATCHWORKS

▶ HOW THE OIL PATCH WORKS

▶ Landmen

Landman sounds interesting, but what is it? First, it's important to note that although the title says "man", both men and women are "landmen". Second, there are two types of landmen: surface and mineral. We need to back up a little to explain.

In Canada, unlike in the United States, most individual landowners own just the surface of their land, not the resources deep underground. So when an exploration and production (E&P) company determines that there are likely recoverable resources below someone's land, the E&P company has to negotiate for both the surface (above ground) rights and the mineral (underground) rights to access those resources. This is where landmen come in.

Surface landmen work with landowners, government agencies, other companies and their fellow employees from other departments to secure above-ground access to drill sites. They are often the landowner's first point of contact with the E&P company hoping to gain access to the site. But their work doesn't stop there. After negotiating an access agreement, the surface landman also ensures all corporate obligations are met and regulatory guidelines are followed as the project progresses. Because of the nature of their jobs, surface landmen are often on the road, working varied hours in rural areas and in the field.

The landman is often the "face" of the exploration and production company and the landowner's first point of contact.

Mineral landmen secure agreements to access the below-ground resources. Most often in Canada, it is "the Crown" or the government that owns the sub-surface mineral rights and therefore has the power to grant leases. Sometimes though, mineral landmen negotiate directly with other companies (who have previously negotiated their own leases with the Crown) and even occasionally with individual landowners (whose ancestors were granted the mineral rights below their land.) Mineral landmen typically work in an office environment.



As you might imagine, to be a landman you have to be a "people person" because landmen spend a lot of their time communicating with others. At the same time, you need an "in-depth knowledge of the business, as well as regulations, land tenure/survey systems, contracts, and other aspects of land management."

Source: careersinoilandgas.com

Labour market projections tell us that landman is a career with potential. Today's landowners are informed and involved, and the business and regulatory environments are increasingly complex. Industry needs – and will continue to need – people with a strong ability to develop and maintain positive stakeholder relationships and conduct in-depth negotiations that result in win-win access agreements for drilling, pipelines and facilities.



The [Canadian Association of Professional Landmen](#) (CAPL) has a voluntary [professional certification program](#), which includes Certified and Professional designations for both surface and mineral landmen. The focus is on proficiency and ethical conduct.

PatchWorks explains how the oilpatch works in a series of short, monthly articles.

PatchWorks is part of PSAC's public outreach program, designed to strengthen the partnership between the oil and gas industry and the communities where we operate.

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