



POST LIVING ALLOWANCE Post Index Survey

ESSENTIAL ADVICE FOR PRICE COLLECTION



You have been asked to assist in the collection of retail price information for a certain number of goods and/or services related to the full scale Post Index survey which is currently being conducted at your location.

Following is a set of procedures which should assist you in carrying out this task:

1. It is essential that all available items on each schedule be priced whether or not they are purchased by you or your family. **A separate price schedule should be used for each outlet priced.**
2. The items or services specified in the pricing schedules are intended to be good quality merchandise, matching as closely as possible the quality of items that would be purchased in Canada by persons of middle income.

Since completed survey material is intended to reflect the price conditions being encountered by the average Canadian family living in this foreign area, it is imperative that collected price quotes also reflect types of goods and services generally used by this average family.

3. Survey items have been selected on the basis that they are representative of the goods and services purchased by Canadians abroad, and their general availability at all posts. It will not, however, always be possible to find the exact item as specified on the schedules. Items priced should be as close as possible to the size/quantity indicated. When the item is not available price collectors should insert a brief explanation where significantly different substitutions are necessary.
4. All prices are to be reported in the currency which is marked on the goods or services in each outlet. If payment is in a different currency from the one marked, please indicate the currency and rate of exchange used for purchases made at the outlet. (Statistics Canada will convert these to Canadian dollar equivalents).
5. The weight, size or unit of sale should be indicated for every price quotation reported, where applicable. Use local weights and measures. Statistics Canada will convert these to Canadian equivalents.
6. Use the space provided to describe brand, quality, origin or other pertinent details about the item.
7. In the event that a dual pricing policy exists for a particular outlet (i.e., one price level for cash purchases, a separate price level for credit purchases), submit **only cash prices**.
8. Where additional taxes or surcharges apply that are not included in the shelf price, full particulars are to be entered in the "remarks" space of the pricing schedule. This is particularly important where prices are reported from embassy or military commissaries/special outlets where surcharges frequently apply, and for goods and/or services in countries with "value added" tax structures. **Report on each page of the Price Schedules any retail sales taxes not included in the price listed.** (Specify the amount of tax applicable on each item priced).
9. All price schedules submitted to Statistics Canada are to be signed by the individual who collected the prices.

Selection of Prices

For most survey items the price schedules ask for prices representing **typical and alternate price levels**. The definitions presented below relate to the average Canadian family's choice of the particular item. The two choices should represent the price levels at which the families could normally be expected to make a choice within normal budget constraints

a) The Typical Price Level

The "typical" price represents the item most frequently purchased by Canadians at the foreign location. If this choice is not apparent, report the medium priced item as typical.

b) The Alternate Price Level

The "alternate" price represents the item most often purchased as the consumer's second choice. This item may be more or less expensive than the typically priced item. In some cases, it may be an identical price, but represent a different brand or item variation.

The reporting of two price levels is important. If an item is temporarily out of stock, the price last charged should be listed in the report. Anticipated price changes should be given separately. Every effort should be made to provide the full price range requested for a particular outlet.

In addition to those items for which a typical and alternate price level is required, there are some cases where the price schedule lists the name of a specific item and requests the price of that item (e.g. sirloin steak, canned tomatoes, apples, etc.). If these survey items are available at more than one price level, the two price levels for the largest quantities available should be reported. If the requested item is not available in the retail outlet, a comparable item may be substituted, with proper identification.

General Reminders:

- All prices in the report should be those normally paid by Canadians or their representatives after normal bargaining.
- If the reported prices do not include local retail sales taxes, the amount of tax added to each item by the merchant (at the time of purchase) should be clearly explained. This should also be done when surcharges apply.
- All prices should be "cash" prices.
- If a survey item is on sale, indicate this with 'SP' and provide the special sale price and the regular price, if possible.

For further information as to how to conduct this price collection and/or background on the Post Index Survey, see your Survey Coordinator or consult the Guide to the Post Index.

Thank you for your assistance in carrying out this task.

Head, Foreign Service Unit
Government Allowance Indexes Section
Consumer Prices Division

