

# Canadian Armed Forces Member

Hired out of high school, paid from your first day of basic training, and taught a trade for free.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$71,000**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$54k to \$93k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**up to 2 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Good**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**No**

anyone can do it

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Bases across Canada, ships, aircraft, deployments overseas**

## How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12  
Grade 10 is the floor for a few trades, but most want Grade 12. Technical trades want math and science.
- 2 Apply and get screened** 6 to 12 months  
Aptitude test, interview, medical, fitness check and a background and security screening. The whole process commonly takes 6 to 12 months.
- 3 Basic training** About 3 months  
About 10 to 12 weeks at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec. Drill, weapons handling, fitness, field exercises.
- 4 Trade training** 2 months to 2 years  
Anywhere from a few weeks to two years depending on the trade. A cook is trained fast. An aviation systems technician is not.
- 5 First posting** Ongoing  
You join a unit and keep training. Promotion to corporal comes with time served and courses passed.

## Pros and cons

- + Paid from day one with no tuition at all
- + A trade, a pension and full medical coverage
- + Travel and experience you cannot buy
- You do not choose where you live or when you move
- Long separations from family and partners
- Military law applies to you, and you cannot just quit

## Good to know

### There are more than a hundred trades

The Canadian Armed Forces needs cooks, dentists, musicians, firefighters, welders, police and image technicians as well as infantry. Most of them are the same job you would do outside, in uniform.

### Everyone starts in the same place

Nearly every recruit in the Regular Force passes through the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, whatever trade they are headed for.

## Optional boosts

Aviation and avionics systems technician. Marine and vehicle technician. Medical technician. Combat engineer.

### Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Combat Engineer, Canadian Armed Forces, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Government of Canada: Canadian Armed Forces, jobs, pay and benefits

Government of Canada: National Defence

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/armed-forces-member>



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