

Automotive Service Technician

Diagnose and fix cars and light trucks. Paid from day one, but you buy your own tools.

TYPICAL PAY

\$58,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$38k to \$80k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Dealerships, independent shops,
fleet garages, tire chains**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12 with math, physics and auto shop. In Ontario you can start early through OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program). Alberta has RAP (Registered Apprenticeship Program).
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
A shop or dealership willing to register you as an apprentice. Start as a lube tech or tire installer and ask. A pre-apprenticeship college program helps you get noticed.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With Skilled Trades Ontario (trade code 310S), Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, SkilledTradesBC or your province's authority.
- 4 Work and study** 4 years
Ontario requires 7,220 hours: 6,500 on the job plus 720 in school, taken as three 8-week blocks at a college.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam. In most provinces the same exam earns the Red Seal endorsement, valid across Canada.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from your first day, no student debt
- + Licensed in about 4 years
- + Every town in Canada needs mechanics
- You buy and replace your own tools for life
- Flat rate means slow weeks pay badly
- Hard on your back, knees and hands

Optional boosts

EV (electric vehicle) and hybrid certification. Manufacturer master technician. Truck and coach technician (a second trade). Ozone-depleting substances certificate.

Good to know

Your toolbox may be worth more than your car

A working technician's box and tools often add up to \$20,000 or more by mid-career. Tool trucks visit shops every week and sell on credit.

Quebec makes winter tires mandatory

Every passenger vehicle in Quebec must run winter tires from December 1 to March 15. Across Canada, tire changeover makes October and April the busiest months in any shop.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Automotive service technicians, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Skilled Trades Ontario: Automotive Service Technician
Red Seal Program
Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training

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/automotive-service-technician>



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