

Barber

Fades, beards and straight-razor shaves. Licensed under the hairstylist trade in some provinces, then it is all about your chair and your regulars.

TYPICAL PAY

\$41,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$31k to \$62k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Barbershops, salons, your own chair, mobile cuts

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Grade 12. Some high schools have cosmetology classes with a real salon floor.
- 2 Check your province** Before you enrol
 In Ontario, barbering falls under the compulsory hairstylist trade, so you must register as an apprentice. Nova Scotia licenses through its Cosmetology Association. New Brunswick has a Registered Barbers' Association. Other provinces are voluntary.
- 3 Barber school or apprenticeship** 7 months to 2 years
 A private academy takes a few months full time. An apprenticeship means working under a licensed barber or stylist while doing school blocks.
- 4 Exam, where required** After your hours
 Ontario's hairstylist Certificate of Qualification. Hairstylist is a Red Seal trade in 12 provinces and territories, and its scope includes barbering techniques.
- 5 Build a book** 1 to 3 years
 Regulars are everything. Instagram, word of mouth and consistent fades. Expect 1 to 3 years to fill your chair.

Pros and cons

- + Working within a year, little or no debt
- + Social, creative, hands-on
- + Cash tips and your own schedule once established
- First years on commission pay poorly
- Feet, back and wrists take a beating
- Saturdays and evenings

Good to know

In Ontario, a barber is a hairstylist

Ontario has no separate barber licence. Barbering sits inside the hairstylist trade, which is compulsory, on the same list as electrician and plumber. Ontario's hairstylist apprenticeship is about 3,500 hour...

The Red Seal covers barbering

The national Red Seal hairstylist standard lists barbering techniques as part of the trade. Twelve provinces and territories offer the Red Seal endorsement; Ontario issues its own certificate instead.

Optional boosts

Straight-razor shaves and beard sculpting. Colour and grey blending. Hair systems and scalp treatments. Education and brand work.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Barber, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Barber, employment requirements by province

Red Seal: Hairstylist (includes barbering techniques)

Skilled Trades Ontario: Hairstylist

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/barber>



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