

Border Services Officer

Armed federal officers at airports and land crossings. High school or college, about 18 weeks of training on an allowance, and a federal pension.

TYPICAL PAY

\$85,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$80k to \$101k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Airports, land border crossings, seaports, mail centres

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 The minimum. A college diploma in police foundations, border services or criminology is common and helps.
- 2 Meet the requirements** Before applying
 Canadian citizen or permanent resident, 18 or older, valid driver's licence, clean record. Pass a medical with vision and hearing standards. A physical abilities test has been used in past intakes but was not required in the most recent one.
- 3 Apply and test** 6 to 18 months
 Online application, an entrance exam, an interview, psychological screening and a secret-level security clearance. The whole process can take up to 18 months. Complete the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course on your own b...
- 4 Training** About 4 to 5 months
 About 3 to 4 weeks of online training from home, then 14 to 15 weeks living at the CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) college in Rigaud, Quebec: law, interviewing, searches, defensive tactics, firearms. You get a weekly allowance, a room and meals.
- 5 Posting** First 1 to 2 years
 You rank your preferred ports, but the agency decides. Then 12 to 18 months of paid on-the-job training as an officer trainee. Land crossings in Ontario, BC and the Prairies, and the big airports, take most new officers.

Pros and cons

- + No degree required, paid training, federal pension
- + About \$100,000 at the top of the officer grid, with overtime on top
- + A uniformed job with less danger than policing
- Shift work, including nights, weekends and Christmas
- Repetitive: the same questions thousands of times
- You may be posted far from home for your first years

Optional boosts

Inland enforcement. Intelligence and targeting. Detector dog handler. Marine and commercial.

Good to know

Every officer trains in one small Quebec town

Rigaud, about an hour west of Montreal, hosts the CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) college. Every new officer in Canada lives there for 14 to 15 weeks.

Officers have carried guns only since 2007

Customs officers were unarmed for most of Canadian history. Arming was announced in 2006, began in 2007 and was finished in 2016.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Border services officers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

CBSA: Border services officer selection steps and training

CBSA: Canada Border Services College

Canada Border Services Agency

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/border-services-officer>



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