

Conservation Officer

A peace officer for fish, wildlife and the backcountry. Very few jobs, and people wait years for them.

TYPICAL PAY

\$75,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$46k to \$107k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Backcountry, lakes and rivers, rural highways, provincial field offices

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Biology, English and physical education. You also want real outdoor experience: hunting, fishing, boating, camping.
- 2 Get the credential** 2 to 4 years
 BC asks for an applied degree or technical diploma in a recognised natural resource law enforcement program. Alberta asks for at least three years of post-secondary study, such as a conservation law enforcement degree or a natural resource diploma plus experience.
- 3 Pass the fitness test and selection** 6 to 18 months
 BC requires the physical abilities test known as PARE (Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation) at the recruit standard of 4 minutes 45 seconds, plus written testing, interviews, security screening, a medical and a psychological evaluation.
- 4 The academy** About 18 weeks
 About 18 weeks at the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy: firearms, investigations, legal studies, emergency vehicle operations, water safety and wildlife conflict management.
- 5 Field training** 2 years
 BC runs a 24 month new officer field training program with an experienced mentor before you work on your own.

Pros and cons

- + Law enforcement work outdoors, not in a cruiser downtown
- + Government pension and benefits
- + Genuine variety: investigations, wildlife, water, court
- Very few positions and years of waiting to get one
- Rural and remote postings you do not choose
- Armed confrontations far from any backup

Good to know

One academy trains most of western Canada

New conservation officers from several western provinces train together for about 18 weeks at the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy before they go to their postings.

Field training lasts two years

In BC a new officer spends 24 months in a field training program with an experienced mentor after graduating the academy, before working independently.

Optional boosts

Predator response. Major investigations. Marine and commercial fisheries enforcement. Canine handler.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Conservation Officer in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)

BC Conservation Officer Service: careers, recruitment and selection

BC Conservation Officer Service

alis Alberta: Fish and Wildlife Officer occupation profile

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/conservation-officer>



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