

Correctional Officer

Guarding jails and prisons. High school, a few weeks to a few months of training, shift work, a strong pension, and real stress.

TYPICAL PAY

\$75,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$60k to \$97k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Provincial jails, federal penitentiaries, remand and deten...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 The minimum for both provincial and federal jobs.
- 2 Meet the requirements** Before applying
 18 or older (19 in some provinces), Canadian citizen or permanent resident, driver's licence, clean record, first aid and CPR, and a medical that checks you are physically able to do the job. Some provinces run a timed fitness test.
- 3 Apply and screen** 3 to 12 months
 Written test, interview, security clearance, medical and psychological screening. Provincial processes are often faster than federal.
- 4 Training** 2 to 18 weeks
 Provincial: 2 to 8 weeks at a provincial corrections college, paid. Federal: the CSC (Correctional Service Canada) Correctional Training Program, about 18 weeks in total: roughly 7 weeks online from home, then 14 weeks in class at a regional training centre on a \$400 a week...
- 5 Probation** 6 to 12 months
 Working a unit alongside experienced officers. Most people find out in the first year whether they can do this job.

Pros and cons

- + Hired within months of high school, with training covered
- + A pension you can collect at 50 in the federal system
- + Overtime pays well if you want it
- Violence, threats and self-harm are part of the job
- PTSD (post-traumatic stress) and burnout rates are among the highest of any Canadian occupation
- 12-hour shifts, nights and holidays for years

Optional boosts

Emergency response team. Parole and case management. Correctional manager. Trainer.

Good to know

Most people in provincial jails have not been convicted

In Ontario, well over half of the people in provincial custody are on remand, waiting for a bail decision or a trial. Officers manage people who may be innocent alongside people serving sentences.

Two years is the line

A sentence of 2 years or more sends someone to a federal penitentiary. Two years less a day keeps them in a provincial jail. Judges use that exact phrase on purpose.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Correctional service officers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

CSC: Correctional officer careers

Correctional Service Canada

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/correctional-officer>



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