

Drywall Installer

Hang, tape and finish the walls inside almost every building. Fast to enter, often paid by the sheet.

TYPICAL PAY

\$69,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$48k to \$91k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

New houses, condo towers, office fit-outs, renovations

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12 helps but some employers will take you without it. Math and shop are useful.
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks
A drywall contractor, a general contractor or the union hall. Showing up as a helper is the usual way in.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With Skilled Trades Ontario, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, or your province's trades body. In Ontario the installer trade is Drywall, Acoustic and Lathing Applicator; the taper trade is Drywall Finisher and Plasterer.
- 4 Work and study** 3 years
About 5,400 hours in Ontario for either trade: roughly 4,800 to 4,900 on the job plus 480 to 600 hours in class, in two or three levels.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam. The Red Seal trades are Lather (Interior Systems Mechanic) for installers and Drywall Finisher and Plasterer for tapers.

Pros and cons

- + Cheap and quick to get into, paid from day one
- + Indoor and year-round, unlike most construction trades
- + Piecework means fast workers earn more
- Dust everywhere: lungs, eyes, clothes, truck
- Heavy sheets overhead all day; shoulders and wrists wear out
- Piecework cuts both ways: slow days pay badly

Optional boosts

Red Seal endorsement. Steel stud framing and acoustic ceilings. Level 5 and high-end finishing. Plastering and stucco.

Good to know

Nova Scotia digs the gypsum

Drywall is a sheet of gypsum plaster between two layers of paper. Nova Scotia has long been Canada's biggest gypsum producer, and much of it ships to drywall plants in the eastern US.

It replaced plaster after the war

Before the Second World War, walls were wet plaster over wooden lath, which took days to apply and dry. Drywall went up in hours, and by the 1950s it had taken over. The Lather trade name is a leftover fr...

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Drywall installers and finishers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Red Seal Program: Lather (Interior Systems Mechanic)

Red Seal Program: Drywall Finisher and Plasterer

Skilled Trades Ontario

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/drywall-installer>



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