

Emergency Physician

The doctor on shift when anything walks, rolls or is carried through the door. Two ways in, and shifts instead of a clinic.

TYPICAL PAY

\$350,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$250k to \$450k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

9 to 13 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital emergency departments, trauma centres, rural hospitals, ai...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. You need a very high average for a science undergrad.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
Any major works. Keep a GPA (grade point average) above 3.8, volunteer, do research. Write the MCAT (medical school admission test).
- 3 Medical school, the MD (doctor of medicine)** 3 to 4 years
Acceptance rates are 5% to 15%. Classes, then clinical rotations including emergency shifts.
- 4 Residency, route A: Royal College emergency medicine** 5 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Trauma, critical care, pediatrics, toxicology. Leads to FRCPC (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada) and most academic trauma centre jobs.
- 5 Residency, route B: family medicine plus CCFP-EM (the family medicine emergency year)** 3 years
2 years of family medicine, then 1 competitive extra year. Most community and rural emergency doctors in Canada took this route.

Pros and cons

- + No clinic, no overhead, no pager when you are off
- + Never boring, every shift is different
- + You save lives on the worst day of someone's life
- Nights and weekends for your whole career
- Overcrowded departments and long waits make patients angry at you
- Burnout rates are among the highest in medicine

Good to know

More than 15 million visits a year

CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information) counted more than 15.6 million unscheduled emergency department visits in the year to March 2026, in a country of about 41 million people. Not every provin...

Most emergency doctors are family doctors

Outside the big city trauma centres, the majority of emergency care in Canada is delivered by family physicians, many with the extra CCFP-EM (family medicine emergency) year. CIHI (Canadian Institute...

Optional boosts

Trauma or critical care. Pediatric emergency medicine. Transport medicine. Point-of-care ultrasound.

Where these numbers come from

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
College of Family Physicians of Canada (the CCFP-EM route)
CIHI: A profile of physicians in Canada, 2024 (payments)
CIHI: emergency department visits (NACRS)

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/emergency-physician>



Scan for the full clicker