

HVAC (Heating and Cooling) Technician

Install and fix furnaces, air conditioners, heat pumps and refrigeration. Busy in every heat wave and cold snap.

TYPICAL PAY

\$72,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$45k to \$100k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Homes, commercial buildings, supermarkets, service vans

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12 with math and physics.
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
A mechanical contractor, a home service company or a union hall. A college pre-apprenticeship in HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) makes this much easier.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With Skilled Trades Ontario or your provincial trades authority. Get your ODP (ozone depletion prevention) card early so you can handle refrigerant.
- 4 Work and study** 4 to 5 years
9,000 hours in Ontario (8,280 on the job plus 720 in class over three blocks) on refrigeration, electrical controls, airflow and codes. Most other provinces run 4 periods.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification, Red Seal and gas licence** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam and the interprovincial Red Seal. Most residential techs also get a G2 gas licence from the TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) in Ontario.

Pros and cons

- + Every building has heating and cooling, so work is everywhere
- + Heat pump and electrification push means years of demand
- + Paid from the start, no student debt
- On-call in the worst weather: attics in July, rooftops in January
- Feast and famine: slammed in peak season, slow in spring and fall
- Sales pressure at some residential companies

Optional boosts

Gas licence (G2 then G1 in Ontario, Class B and A elsewhere). Commercial refrigeration. Heat pump and controls training. Building automation.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Red Seal Program: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic

Skilled Trades Ontario: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic (313A)

TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority): fuels industry professional certification

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/hvac-technician>

Good to know

One of the longest apprenticeships in the building trades

Ontario's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic apprenticeship is 9,000 hours, about 5 years, the same as electrician and plumber and longer than most other trades. The payoff is a licen...

Heat pumps are the growth story

Federal and provincial rebates have pushed cold-climate heat pump sales up sharply, and many new homes skip the furnace entirely. Every one of them needs a licensed refrigeration mechanic to install and se...



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