

Insulator

Wrap pipes, ducts, tanks and boilers so heat stays where it belongs. A 3 to 4 year paid apprenticeship with strong union pay in industrial plants.

TYPICAL PAY

\$78,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$48k to \$101k

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

Refineries and plants, hospitals, office towers, power stations

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12. Math and shop classes help. Ontario students can start early through OYAP (the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program).
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
An insulation contractor or a union local. The Heat and Frost Insulators union takes apprentice applications directly in most big cities.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With your provincial trades authority: Skilled Trades Ontario, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, or SkilledTradesBC.
- 4 Work and study** 3 to 4 years
About 6,400 hours in Ontario: 5,770 on the job plus 630 hours in class, at a college or the union training centre. Other provinces set their own hours.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam. Add the interprovincial Red Seal endorsement to work in any province.

Pros and cons

- + Cheap to enter, paid from day one
- + Strong union with a hiring hall and pension
- + Industrial work pays as well as any trade
- Itchy fibreglass, dust and respirators
- Industrial work often means camps, travel and weeks away
- Boom and bust with oil, gas and construction cycles

Good to know

It is a Red Seal trade

Insulator (Heat and Frost) is one of the Red Seal trades. A certified insulator can follow the work from Sarnia to Fort McMurray without re-testing.

Insulators fought asbestos first

For decades, pipe insulation was made with asbestos, and insulators had some of the highest rates of asbestos disease of any trade. Their unions were among the first to push for the bans. Today asbestos aw...

Optional boosts

Industrial and refinery experience. Firestopping. Asbestos abatement awareness and certification. Sheet metal cladding.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Insulators, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Red Seal Program: Insulator (Heat and Frost)
Skilled Trades Ontario
Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training

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/insulator>



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