

Intelligence Officer

You collect and make sense of information about threats. Long hiring process, deep background check, quiet career.

TYPICAL PAY

\$91,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$56k to \$139k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Federal security agencies, police services, military units, secure offi...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Strong writing, history and languages. Keep your record and your online life clean starting now, because both get examined later.
- 2 University degree** 4 years
 Political science, criminology, international relations, computer science, economics or languages all work. What matters is analysis and writing.
- 3 Apply and interview** Months
 Online application, pre-screening questionnaire, then a competency-based interview where you answer with specific examples from your own life.
- 4 Assessment and clearance** 6 to 12 months
 A psychological assessment, a second language evaluation if the role needs it, then an enhanced top secret security clearance: background documents, fingerprints, a security interview and a polygraph.
- 5 In-house training** Months to years
 Agencies train their own officers. The specifics are not public, and you learn the job on the inside.

Pros and cons

- + Interesting analytical work with real consequences
- + Federal pay grid, pension and benefits
- + Paid language and specialist training
- A hiring process that can take a year with no guarantee
- You cannot talk about your work, ever, to anyone
- Disturbing material and constant secrecy wear on people

Good to know

The interview asks about your actual life

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service uses competency-based interviews: you are asked to describe real situations you handled, not what you would hypothetically do. Vague answers fail.

Ten years of your life, verified

An enhanced top secret clearance requires ten years of verifiable information about where you lived, worked and travelled. People who moved around a lot take longer to clear.

Optional boosts

A hard language. Data and programming skills. Intelligence analysis training. Military or policing experience.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Intelligence Officer, Security, in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Canadian Security Intelligence Service: recruitment process

Canadian Security Intelligence Service: jobs

Justice Institute of British Columbia, intelligence analysis 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/intelligence-officer>



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