

Laboratory Technician

Run the tests that keep water, food, fuel and medicine safe. Two years of college and you are working.

TYPICAL PAY

\$62,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$99k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Testing labs, food and drug plants,
water utilities, refineries, research...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Chemistry and math are the entry requirements at most colleges. Grade 12 English too.
- 2 College diploma** 2 years
Two years, four semesters, in a chemical laboratory technician or chemical sciences program. Half your hours are in a lab.
- 3 Co-op or field placement**
Most programs include one. It is the main way graduates get hired.
- 4 First job** Year 1
Analyst at a testing lab, water plant, food plant or research group. Your first year is learning the instruments and the documentation properly.
- 5 Certify or specialise** After 2 to 3 years
Apply for technician certification, or train on a specific instrument to become the person who owns it.

Pros and cons

- + Working and earning two years after high school
- + Low tuition compared with a science degree
- + Hands-on science without graduate school
- Repetitive work, the same tests over and over
- Pay ceiling is real without more school or a move to supervision
- Strict procedures leave little room to improvise

Good to know

Your tap water is tested every single day

Canadian municipal water systems run bacterial and chemical tests daily, all year. Laboratory technicians are the reason a boil water advisory gets issued within hours rather than weeks.

Two years is the shortest route into a lab

A chemical laboratory technician diploma is four semesters. Almost no other science job in Canada gets you paid work at a bench that quickly.

Optional boosts

Instrument ownership. Quality systems training. Good manufacturing practice training. Bridging to a degree.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Chemical Laboratory Technician in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)
Seneca Polytechnic: Chemical Laboratory Technician diploma
Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists
Chemical Institute of Canada

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/laboratory-technician>



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