

# Lifeguard

Watch the water, prevent emergencies, and pull people out when prevention fails. Certified at 15, and one of the best-paid teen jobs in Canada.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$40,000**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$32k to \$64k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**up to 1 year**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Good**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**Yes**

regulated job

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Public pools, beaches, waterparks, camps**

## How you get there

- 1 Be a strong swimmer** Childhood  
Finish the swim lesson levels. You need to swim distance, tread water and dive to the bottom of a deep pool.
- 2 Bronze Medallion, then Bronze Cross** A few months  
The Lifesaving Society's lifesaving awards. Bronze Medallion starts in your early teens; Bronze Cross is the assistant lifeguard award and the prerequisite for National Lifeguard.
- 3 First aid** 2 days  
Standard or Intermediate First Aid with CPR level C and AED (automated external defibrillator) from the Lifesaving Society or an approved agency.
- 4 National Lifeguard** 1 to 2 weeks  
Minimum age 15. About 40 hours of scanning, rescues, spinal injuries and teamwork, with a final exam. Pool is the standard option; Waterpark, Waterfront and Surf are add-ons.
- 5 Get hired and recertify** Ongoing  
Apply to your city in winter for summer jobs. The certificate is current for 24 months, then you recertify.

## Pros and cons

- + Certified and earning at 15 or 16
- + Above minimum wage with flexible hours
- + Real responsibility and real emergency skills
- Hours of watching for a moment that may never come
- Mostly seasonal and part time; few full-time jobs
- Sun, chlorine, cold water and early mornings

## Good to know

### Summer is the danger

The Lifesaving Society reports that about 60% of Ontario drownings happen in May, June, July and August, and most are in open water, not at guarded pools. That is why waterfront guards matter and why cities...

### Scanning is the real skill

A guard is trained to sweep their whole zone every 10 seconds or so and to reach any swimmer in it within seconds after that. Drowning is quiet: most victims cannot wave or shout, so the guard has to spot it...

## Optional boosts

Swim instructor certification. Waterfront and waterpark options. Lifesaving instructor and examiner. Head guard and supervisor.

### Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Lifeguards and other recreation instructors, wages (updated Aug 2026)

Lifesaving Society Ontario: National Lifeguard

Lifesaving Society Canada: Lifeguarding programs

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/lifeguard>



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