

Metal Fabricator

Cut, shape and fit steel into bridges, tanks and buildings. A Red Seal trade you earn while you work.

TYPICAL PAY

\$60,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$90k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Fabrication shops, shipyards, steel mills, construction sites

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Math, shop and drafting. Some provinces let you start through a youth apprenticeship program.
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
A fabrication shop, shipyard or union that takes you on. A pre-apprenticeship or welding certificate helps you get noticed.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With your provincial trades authority, such as Skilled Trades Ontario or Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training.
- 4 Work and study** 3 to 4 years
In Ontario, 5,400 hours: 4,680 on the job and 720 in school over three levels. Other provinces run similar three-level programs.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam. The Red Seal exam has 130 questions and is recognized in nine provinces and territories.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from day one, no student debt
- + Red Seal ticket in about four years
- + You build things that last decades
- Heavy, loud and hot, with cuts, burns and sparks
- Work slows when construction or oil slows
- Shop pay is modest until you specialise

Good to know

A Red Seal trade since 1991

Metal Fabricator (Fitter) is one of about 65 Red Seal trades. The interprovincial exam has 130 questions, and Alberta, BC, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces all recognize it.

The exam gives you the formulas

Red Seal fabricator exams provide the math formulas you need on the test itself. What they check is whether you know which one to use and can do the layout.

Optional boosts

Welder certification. Boilermaker or ironworker. CNC (computer numerical control) cutting and press brake. Blueprint and CAD (computer-aided design) skills.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Metal fabricators, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Red Seal Program: Metal Fabricator (Fitter)
Skilled Trades Ontario: Metal Fabricator (Fitter) (437A)
Government of Canada: Canada Apprentice Loan

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/metal-fabricator>



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