

Non-Destructive Tester

Use ultrasound and X-rays to find cracks in pipelines, bridges and aircraft without cutting them open.

TYPICAL PAY

\$75,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$109k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Pipelines, refineries, fabrication shops, aircraft hangars, bridges

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Math, physics and any shop class. You must pass a near-vision and colour-vision test to be certified.
- 2 Optional college program** 0 to 2 years
A one- or two-year NDT (non-destructive testing) diploma at colleges such as Mohawk, NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) or SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology). It bundles the method courses and gets you hired faster.
- 3 Trainee job** Months to a year
Inspection companies hire trainees to assist certified technicians. You log the supervised experience each method requires.
- 4 Certify in your first method** After your hours
Write the federal Level 1 or Level 2 exam: a general written test, a specific written test and a practical test. Magnetic particle and liquid penetrant are the usual first tickets.
- 5 Add methods** 1 to 3 years
Ultrasonic and radiographic testing take longer to qualify for and pay more. A technician with three or four Level 2 certificates is in high demand.

Pros and cons

- + Hired and paid as a trainee, low education cost
- + Federal certification recognized across Canada
- + Each new method is a raise
- Field work means travel, camps and long shutdown weeks
- Radiography involves radiation and night work
- Oil and gas cycles drive hiring and layoffs

Good to know

Ottawa signs your ticket

Natural Resources Canada runs the national NDT (non-destructive testing) certification body, and it moved to the updated 2022 standard in April 2024. A federal certificate is unusual; most trades a...

Five methods, three levels

The federal program certifies ultrasonic, radiographic, magnetic particle, liquid penetrant and eddy current testing at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Aerospace radiography is certified separately at Levels 2 and 3 only.

Optional boosts

Ultrasonic testing, Level 2. Radiographic testing. Welding inspector (CWB, the Canadian Welding Bureau). Level 3.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Non-destructive inspectors, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Natural Resources Canada: non-destructive testing certification

Natural Resources Canada: the initial NDT (non-destructive testing) certification process

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/non-destructive-tester>



Scan for the full clicker