

Painter and Decorator

Paint, stain and coat the inside and outside of buildings. A 3-year paid apprenticeship, and no licence is needed to start.

TYPICAL PAY

\$54,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$35k to \$75k

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

Homes, condo towers, bridges, factories

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12. Art, math and shop classes help. Ontario students can start early through OYAP (the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program).
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
A painting contractor, a condo builder or a union hiring hall that will register you as an apprentice.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
With your provincial trades authority: Skilled Trades Ontario, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, or SkilledTradesBC.
- 4 Work and study** About 3 years
About 6,000 hours in Ontario: 5,280 on the job plus 720 hours in class, usually three blocks of about 8 weeks at a college.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
Pass the provincial exam. Add the interprovincial Red Seal endorsement to work in any province.

Pros and cons

- + Paid from day one, cheap tools
- + No licence needed to start earning
- + Indoor work through the winter
- Lower pay than electricians or crane operators
- Fumes, dust and repetitive shoulder strain
- Price competition from untrained painters on houses

Good to know

It is a Red Seal trade

Painter and Decorator is one of the Red Seal trades, so a certified painter can move from Halifax to Calgary without re-qualifying.

Paint is rust protection

On a steel bridge or a water tower, the coating is the only thing between the steel and the weather. That is why industrial painting is one of the most technical and best-paid corners of the trade.

Optional boosts

Industrial coatings and abrasive blasting. Working at heights and swing stage training. Wallcovering and specialty finishes. Lead and asbestos awareness.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Painters and decorators, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Red Seal Program: Painter and Decorator
Skilled Trades Ontario
Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry 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/painter-decorator>



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