

Scaffolder

Build the temporary steel structures every other trade stands on. Start as a labourer, learn on the job, no licence needed.

TYPICAL PAY

\$52,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$38k to \$83k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Refineries and plants, high-rise sites, bridges, heritage restorations

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Grade 12 is enough. Fitness and a clean drug test matter more than marks on industrial sites.
- 2 Safety tickets** Days
Fall protection or working at heights, plus WHMIS (workplace hazardous materials training). One or two days.
- 3 Get hired as a helper** Weeks to months
Scaffold companies and union hiring halls take on labourers. You carry and sort parts, then start building under a lead hand.
- 4 Log hours and pass levels** About 3 years
In the Alberta Carpenters program you need 750 documented scaffold hours before Level One school and about 1,500 hours a year after that, over a three-year program.
- 5 Journeyperson scaffolder** After your hours
A union or employer journeyperson card. It is recognized on union sites across Canada, though it is not a provincial licence.

Pros and cons

- + No tuition, paid from the first day
- + Fast entry: working within weeks, not years
- + Big money on industrial shutdowns and remote camps
- One of the hardest physical jobs in construction, lifting steel overhead all day
- Work comes in bursts, so layoffs between projects are normal
- Heights, weather and real fall risk every shift

Optional boosts

Suspended access (swing stage). Rigging certificate. Scaffold inspector or lead hand. Construction Craft Worker Red Seal.

Good to know

First on, last off

Scaffolders build the access before any other trade can start, and take it down after everyone else has finished. On a big industrial shutdown they are among the largest single groups of workers on site.

Falls are the number one killer in construction

Falls from heights are the leading cause of deaths and critical injuries on Canadian construction sites. That is why a scaffolder's job is as much about guardrails, tie-ins and inspection tags as it is about speed...

Where these numbers come from

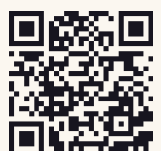
Job Bank: Scaffolder, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Job Bank: Scaffolder, job requirements

College of the BC Building Trades: Scaffolder

Alberta Carpenters Training Centre: Scaffolding Level One

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/scaffolder>



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