

Sheet Metal Worker

Cut, bend and install the ducts, roofing and metal that make buildings breathe. A licensed trade in Ontario with a 5-year apprenticeship.

TYPICAL PAY

\$68,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$45k to \$95k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Construction sites, fabrication shops, rooftops, mechanical rooms

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Grade 12 with math. Geometry matters more here than in any other construction trade. OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program) lets Ontario students start in high school.
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
 A sheet metal or mechanical contractor, or apply to a union local such as SMART (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers) Local 30 in Toronto.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
 With Skilled Trades Ontario, or your provincial trades authority. In Ontario you must be registered to legally work in the trade.
- 4 Work and study** 5 years in Ontario
 9,000 hours in Ontario: 8,280 on the job plus 720 in school, taken as three college or training-centre blocks of about 8 weeks. Pattern layout, fabrication, welding, installation and reading mechanical drawings.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
 Pass the provincial exam. The Red Seal endorsement lets you work in any province.

Pros and cons

- + Licensed in Ontario, so the trade cannot be undercut by unlicensed workers
- + Mix of shop and field, indoor and outdoor
- + Strong union pensions in the big cities
- 5 years is one of the longest apprenticeships in Ontario
- Overhead work on lifts is hard on shoulders and neck
- Sharp edges and cuts are constant, and roofs mean heights

Optional boosts

Welding tickets from the CWB (Canadian Welding Bureau). Architectural sheet metal. Air balancing and testing. Foreman and estimator roles.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Sheet metal workers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Red Seal Program: Sheet Metal Worker

Skilled Trades Ontario: Sheet Metal Worker (308A)

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/sheet-metal-worker>

Good to know

The green roofs on Parliament Hill

The copper roofs on Canada's Parliament buildings are sheet metal work. Architectural sheet metal workers cut and fit every panel, and the copper turns green over decades.

Geometry made real

Pattern development, drawing a 3D fitting flat so it can be cut and folded, is the same geometry you learn in high school. Sheet metal workers use it daily, on paper and on the computer.



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