

Sound Engineer

Record, mix and repair sound for music, film, games and live shows. One year of training, then years of ears.

TYPICAL PAY

\$68,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$95k

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

**Recording studios,
post-production suites, concert v...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Music, physics and computer studies. Record your friends' bands. Run sound for the school play.
- 2 Audio program** 1 to 2 years
A one-year private audio school, a one-year film sound program, or a two-year college music technology diploma.
- 3 Assist and run live sound** 1 to 2 years
Bars, theatres, churches, conference centres. Hundreds of hours of fixing problems fast.
- 4 Specialize** Year 2 to 4
Music mixing, film post-production, game audio, live touring or broadcast. They stop overlapping quickly.
- 5 Lead the room** Year 4 and beyond
Mixing your own sessions, supervising a sound team, or running front of house for a touring act.

Pros and cons

- + Short, cheap training compared with most fields at this pay level
- + Several very different branches, so you can change without retraining
- + Steady demand from film, television, games and live events
- Nights, weekends and load-ins are normal, especially early on
- Hearing damage is a real occupational risk
- Music studio work is romanticized and pays the worst

Optional boosts

Film and television post-production. Game audio. Live and touring. Music recording.

Good to know

A year of audio school is 1,300 hours

The Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology packs more than 1,300 hours of practical and classroom instruction into 11 months, with one all-in fee of \$35,950.

Footsteps in films are recorded by hand

Nearly every footstep, door and clothing rustle you hear in a film was performed in a studio by a Foley artist and recorded separately, because the location audio is usually unusable.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Sound Engineer in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)
Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology: tuition and fees
Vancouver Film School: Sound Design for Visual Media
Harris Institute, Toronto

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/sound-engineer>



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