

Steamfitter and Pipefitter

High-pressure pipe in power plants, refineries and hospitals. Union rates around \$50 an hour.

TYPICAL PAY

\$91,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$56k to \$116k

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

Power plants, refineries, hospitals, industrial sites

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12 math, physics and shop. A welding class is a real advantage. Grade 12
- 2 Find a sponsor** A mechanical contractor or a union hall. Pre-apprenticeship college programs and union intake exams are the usual way in. Weeks to months
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** With Skilled Trades Ontario, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, or SkilledTradesBC. Days
- 4 Work and study** 9,000 hours in Ontario (8,280 on the job plus 720 in class over three blocks). Alberta runs 4 years of about 1,560 hours plus 8 weeks of school each. 4 to 5 years
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** Pass the provincial exam. The Red Seal endorsement lets you work in any province. After your hours

Pros and cons

- + Among the best-paid Red Seal trades, especially union
- + Paid from the first day of training
- + Nuclear, hospital and industrial work is not tied to housing
- Heavy: steel pipe, ladders, scaffolds, hot and cold plants
- Boom and bust: layoffs between big projects are normal
- Long stretches away from home on remote jobs

Optional boosts

Welding tickets. Plumber licence (a second trade). Medical gas certification. Nuclear security clearance.

Good to know

Steam and pipe are different words for the same trade

Steamfitters build systems that carry steam and hot water under pressure. Pipefitters build everything else that flows: fuel, chemicals, medical gas, refrigerant. In Canada it is one Red Seal ticket.

Nuclear is the big employer in Ontario

Refurbishing the Darlington and Bruce nuclear stations is a decade-long job that has put thousands of pipefitters to work. Nuclear sites need a security clearance, and they pay for it.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Red Seal Program: Steamfitter/Pipefitter

Skilled Trades Ontario: Steamfitter (307A)

alis Alberta: Steamfitter-Pipefitter occupation profile

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/steamfitter-pipefitter>



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