

Survey Technologist

Run the instruments that put buildings, roads and property lines in the right place. Two years of college and you are working.

TYPICAL PAY

\$62,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$46k to \$96k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Survey firms, construction sites, cities, mines and pipelines

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12 math, especially trigonometry. Physics helps. Grade 12
- 2 College diploma in survey or geomatics technology** Two years, part classroom and part field. Programs exist in most provinces and fill quickly. 2 years
- 3 Summer field work** Take a crew job between first and second year. Employers hire the students they already know. 4 months
- 4 First job on a crew** Instrument operator on a survey or construction crew, running the total station and satellite gear. Start
- 5 Crew chief** Run the crew, plan the job and own the numbers. Usually three to five years in. 3 to 5 years

Pros and cons

- + Working and earning two years after high school
- + Outdoors, on a small crew, different site every week
- + Cheap training with a clear ladder to crew chief
- Weather, bugs, traffic and mud are the working conditions
- Work can slow down or stop in winter in some regions
- Pay flattens out unless you become a crew chief or get licensed

Good to know

The job title comes from a chain

Survey crews used to measure with Gunter's chain, a 66 foot steel chain made of 100 links. The person who dragged it was the chainman, a title still heard on crews today. Ten square chains equals one acre,...

The machines drive themselves now

Bulldozers and excavators on modern sites cut to grade automatically using satellite positioning. Survey technologists build and check the digital models those machines follow, which moved a lot of this job fr...

Optional boosts

Technologist certification. Machine control and grade systems. Drone mapping. Mine surveying.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Land survey technologist, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists
Nova Scotia Community College: Centre of Geographic Sciences
Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors

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/survey-technologist>



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