

Tow Truck Operator

Show up when someone's day has gone wrong. Several provinces now licence the whole industry.

TYPICAL PAY

\$55,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$77k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Highways, collision scenes,
impound yards, roadside at night**

How you get there

- 1 Get a full licence and a clean record** Before you start
 Employers check your driving abstract closely, and their insurer sets the bar.
- 2 Upgrade your licence class** 1 to 2 months
 A Class 3 or Class D licence covers straight-body tow trucks. A Class 1 or Class A licence is needed for the long combinations used in heavy recovery. Add an air brake endorsement if the truck has air brakes.
- 3 Get certified where it is required** Weeks
 Ontario requires a tow truck driver certificate, and companies need a tow operator certificate. The driver certificate needs approved training and a criminal record check. Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan also regulate towing.
- 4 Get hired and learn on the truck** 1 to 3 months
 Job Bank says on the job training is normal, sometimes with a vocational program of up to 3 months. You ride with an experienced operator first.
- 5 Specialize** 2 to 5 years
 Move up to flatbed work, then heavy recovery, or into running a yard.

Pros and cons

- + Earning within a few months of leaving school
- + Every call is a different problem to solve
- + Bad weather means more work, not less
- Working live highway lanes is genuinely dangerous
- Nights, weekends and on-call for most of your career
- Commission pay means your income swings

Good to know

Ontario licensed the whole industry

Under the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, an Ontario tow truck driver must carry both their own driver certificate and their company's operator certificate whenever they are operatin...

Rates have to be posted

Certified Ontario tow operators must submit and publicly display their maximum rates and accept more than one method of payment. That rule came out of years of complaints about surprise bills.

Optional boosts

Heavy recovery training. Air brake endorsement. Transportation of dangerous goods certificate. Traffic control and scene safety training.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Tow Truck Driver in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 Job Bank: Tow truck driver, job requirements
 Ontario: Towing and vehicle storage requirements
 Ontario: Official Ministry of Transportation Truck Handbook, licence classes

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/tow-truck-operator>



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