

Welder

Join metal with heat. The fastest trade to start earning in, and the tickets matter more than the diploma.

TYPICAL PAY

\$58,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$110k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Fabrication shops, construction sites, pipelines, shipyards

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Grade 12 with math and shop. Many high schools teach welding, and OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program) lets Ontario students start apprentice hours in Grade 11 or 12.
- 2 Pick a route** Months
 Route A: a 1-year college welding certificate, mostly shop time. Route B: find an employer and register a 3-year apprenticeship with your provincial trades authority.
- 3 Get your first CWB (Canadian Welding Bureau) tickets** Weeks
 Practical tests in each position (flat, horizontal, vertical, overhead) and each process. Employers check these, not your diploma.
- 4 Work and study** 1 to 3 years
 In Ontario the apprenticeship is 6,000 hours: 5,280 on the job plus 720 in school, taken as three college blocks of about 8 weeks. Alberta runs a 3-year, 3-period program. College graduates go straight to work and build hours.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
 Optional in Ontario but worth it. The Red Seal endorsement lets you work in any province.

Pros and cons

- + Working and earning within a year
- + Tickets travel: welders are needed in every province and every industry
- + Clear ladder from shop welder to pressure or pipeline welder to inspector
- Fumes, burns, arc flash to the eyes and hearing loss are real, and respirators are not optional
- Production shop welding is repetitive and pays the least
- Boom and bust: pipeline and oil sands work rises and falls with oil prices

Optional boosts

Pressure welding certification. Pipeline tickets. Aluminum and stainless with TIG (tungsten inert gas) welding. CWB (Canadian Welding Bureau) welding inspector.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Welders, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 Red Seal Program: Welder
 CWB Group: Welder qualification testing
 Skilled Trades Ontario: Welder (456A)

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/welder>

Good to know

Your ticket has an expiry date

Most CWB (Canadian Welding Bureau) welder tickets are good for 2 years. Let them lapse and you test again, no matter how long you have welded.

Robots took the easy welds

Car plants weld bodies with robots. The human work left is the hard stuff: custom fabrication, repair, structural steel, pipe, and anything a robot cannot reach.



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