

Drywall Installer

Hang the boards that make a building into rooms. Paid by the sheet, and fast hands earn the most.

TYPICAL PAY

\$58,930

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$38k to \$102k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**New houses, apartment blocks,
offices, renovations, commercial f...**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma or equivalent** Grade 12
Helpful but not always required. Shop class and a driver's license matter more.
- 2 Get hired as a helper** Days to weeks
Stocking board, cutting, cleaning up. Most contractors take people with no experience at all.
- 3 Learn to hang** 6 months to 2 years
Measuring, cutting, screw patterns, ceilings, steel framing and fire rated assemblies. On the job, watching people who are quick.
- 4 Or take a registered apprenticeship** 3 to 4 years
Three to four years through the carpenters union interior systems program or the painters and allied trades finisher program, paid from day one, classroom hours included.
- 5 Journeyworker, then lead** Year 3 onward
Running your own crew, reading drawings, estimating a job. Some go on to start a contracting business.

Pros and cons

- + You can start with no experience, no debt and almost no tools
- + Indoor work once the building is closed in
- + Piece rate rewards speed, so fast workers out-earn the hourly rate quickly
- Heavy, repetitive lifting that wears out shoulders, knees and backs
- Dust everywhere, and silica exposure is a genuine long term health risk
- Work dries up fast when housing construction slows

Optional boosts

Metal stud framing. Fire rated and acoustic assemblies. Level 5 finishing. Suspended ceiling grid.

Good to know

It replaced plaster after the war

Walls used to be built up in wet plaster coats over wooden lath, which took skilled workers and days to dry. Board went up in an afternoon, and the housing boom after the Second World War made it the stand...

A single sheet can weigh 100 pounds

A standard half inch sheet runs around 50 pounds, and a thicker fire rated sheet 12 feet long can push 100. You carry, lift and hold those overhead, dozens of times a day.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers (47-2081.00)

United Brotherhood of Carpenters: interior systems and apprenticeship training

International Union of Painters and Allied Trades: drywall finisher trade

Apprenticeship.gov: United States Department of Labor

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/drywall-installer>



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