

A Guide for Foreign-Trained
**Automotive
Service Technicians**

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ACCESS TO TRADES IN ONTARIO

A Guide for Foreign-Trained Automotive Service Technicians

In Ontario, mechanics that service and repair cars, motor homes, trailers, buses, and small trucks are called *automotive service technicians*. Automotive service technicians are generalists who work on all aspects of the mechanical, electrical, and electronic systems and components of these vehicles. Other specialized mechanical trades in Ontario are described in more detail in the “Related Trades and Occupations” section of this fact sheet.

For information on how to get your licence in other automotive trades, contact a Workplace Support Services office. There is a list of these offices at the end of this fact sheet.

Certification Requirements in Ontario

Automotive service technicians must be certified to work in Ontario. The legislation that regulates this trade is the Apprenticeship and Certification Act (1998). This law states that all automotive service technicians must have a valid Certificate of Qualification or be registered as an apprentice before they can work in Ontario. It is illegal to work as an automotive service technician in Ontario without a licence. Having a Certificate of Qualification is the equivalent to having a licence.

Trade certification is available through Workplace Support Services offices of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). To become a certified automotive service technician in Ontario, you must do *one* of the following:

- complete an apprenticeship, which includes approximately five years of on-the-job training (about 90 per cent of the apprenticeship) and some in-school training (about 10 per cent of the apprenticeship). Apprenticeship is a training agreement between a person who wants to learn a skilled trade and an employer who needs a skilled worker. An apprentice earns at least minimum wage while working and learning the skills necessary to become a qualified tradesperson or journeyman. Apprentices receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship when they complete their training. Employers often request this certificate as proof of training and experience.
- or*
- have the training and experience from another Canadian province or territory or another country that meet the requirements of an apprenticeship in Ontario

When you have done this, you must also:

- apply for the Certificate of Qualification (often called the “C of Q”);
- pay the required fees; and
- write and pass the Certificate of Qualification exam.

Competencies Required to Practise Your Trade in Ontario

Before you can receive government certification, you must complete training that covers the competencies listed in *Apprenticeship Training Standards – Automotive Service Technician*. This document lists in detail all the skills and work tasks that automotive service technicians must be able to demonstrate to be eligible to write the Certification of Qualification exam. In Ontario, an employer who sponsors an apprenticeship signs off on each of the following competencies during an apprenticeship:

- demonstrate safe working practice and techniques
- apply general work practices and procedures
- perform basic vehicle-servicing functions
- inspect and repair engine cooling and exhaust systems
- diagnose and repair braking systems
- diagnose and repair steering and suspension systems
- inspect and service electrical charging and starting systems
- diagnose and repair engines
- diagnose and repair differentials, drive shafts, and drive axles
- diagnose and repair manual transmissions, transaxles, and transfer cases
- diagnose and repair ignition systems
- diagnose and repair auxiliary electrical/electronic safety, convenience, and comfort systems
- diagnose and repair fuel systems
- diagnose and repair engine management and emission-control systems
- diagnose and repair heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems
- diagnose and repair occupant restraint systems

As a foreign-trained automotive service technician, you must be able to prove that you have these skills before you can write the Certificate of Qualification exam.

Language Requirements

When you apply for certification as an automotive service technician, you are not required to pass an English language test, but the job requires excellent language skills. As an automotive service technician, you must read and interpret technical and manufacturers' manuals, health and safety guidelines, order forms, and other documents. You must also be able to give and receive instructions clearly and effectively.

To become certified, you must write a technical multiple-choice exam, which requires a knowledge and understanding of the English terms used in this trade.

Application Process

There is no automatic certification for foreign-trained tradespeople in any trade in Ontario, but there is an assessment process used to evaluate the training and experience of foreign-trained tradespeople. The length of time that it will take you to become certified will depend on how closely your training and experience match the training standards for automotive service technicians in Ontario. It can take as little as three months if you are immediately eligible to write the certification exam or as long as five years if you have to complete a full apprenticeship.

Before You Immigrate to Canada

Apprenticeship Training Standards – Automotive Service Technician is a useful reference if you are unfamiliar with the terminology used and the skills required in Ontario. You can get a copy of this booklet from a Workplace Support Services office in Ontario. (There is a list of these offices at the end of this fact sheet.)

You will need proof of your training and experience. Collect documentation that proves your skill level as an automotive service technician. Include letters from employers or unions, diplomas, and other documents that describe your training and the work tasks you have performed. These documents must also show where and for how long you have worked as an automotive service technician. It is important to include as much information as possible about your years of experience and your duties at work, because the evaluation of your skills will be based on your on-the-job experience.

When You Arrive in Ontario

The Workplace Support Services offices process all applications for trade certification in Ontario. When you arrive in Ontario, contact the office in your area and make an appointment to see a training consultant. If you haven't already requested a copy of *Apprenticeship Standards – Automotive Service Technician*, you can get one from the office.

Step 1. Meeting a Training Consultant

The training consultant will ask you for documentation that describes your past work experience and training. Take as many of these documents as possible to this first meeting:

- your Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- letters from current or past employers, dated and written on company letterhead, showing the company name and address, the exact dates of your employment, the number of hours that you worked, your title, and a complete description of your job duties
- a letter from a union with the same information as above, if applicable
- trade certificates, diplomas, or licences
- official school transcripts from your training. You should also provide a detailed list of the subjects covered in each course and the length of each course.

If these documents are in a language other than English or French, bring a translation that is signed by a registered translator, a notary public, or a lawyer.

The training consultant will use these documents to compare your work experience to the requirements for certification as an automotive service technician in Ontario.

Step 2. Assessment of Your Previous Training and Experience

The training consultant will assess your documents and compare your training and experience to that required in Ontario:

- If your documented experience is equivalent to that required of an apprentice in Ontario, you will be eligible to write the Certificate of Qualification exam without serving an apprenticeship. You will then complete an application for the Certificate of Qualification.
- If your documented experience is not equivalent to Ontario's training requirements, you may have to get more training and work experience.

Training and Work Experience. If required, you can enter into an apprenticeship to get the skills and on-the-job training you require to work in Ontario. This apprenticeship may be shorter than the apprenticeship for an inexperienced worker in the trade. During the apprenticeship, you will work as you learn and complete in-school training.

To get a position as an apprentice, you must apply directly to employers and find one to sponsor your apprenticeship. You can find employers by looking in the Yellow Pages (the telephone directory for businesses) or in local newspapers. You might also just walk into automotive service stations in your neighbourhood and ask about apprenticeship possibilities. Employers sometimes place job ads at government employment agencies. Employers will want to see a well-written r sum  and to hear what you can do for them.

You will then register your apprenticeship agreement with a Workplace Support Services office. If you require training, consult the list of community colleges on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities website (www.edu.gov.on.ca) and follow the links to Postsecondary Education, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Attestation of Competencies. If your documents do not sufficiently describe your skills and training, but you know you have the skills required, you will be asked to complete and sign an Attestation of Competencies. This document is an oath that you make, stating that you have all the competencies required for the trade. This Attestation of Competencies will be considered as proof that you are able to do the work of an automotive service technician. A false attestation is a serious criminal offence.

Step 3. Application for the Certificate of Qualification

When you have met the requirements for certification, you will complete an application to write the Certificate of Qualification exam.

Step 4. Letter of Permission

When your experience is equivalent to the training standards in Ontario, you will be eligible to write the Certificate of Qualification exam. You will then complete an application for the Certificate of Qualification. When you submit the application, you will receive a Letter of Permission that allows you to work for up to ninety days until you write the exam for the Certificate of Qualification. You must write the exam within this time. This letter is usually given to you during your first meeting with a training consultant, so you will be able to work right away.

Step 5. Exam Preparation

The Certificate of Qualification exam is based on the skills that automotive service technicians need to succeed in the workplace. The content of the exam reflects both on-the-job and in-school training. This is why many workers who have not worked in Ontario find the exam difficult.

The best way to prepare for the exam is to make sure that you can perform all the skills described in *Apprenticeship Training Standards – Automotive Service Technician*. Study the competencies and be sure that you can explain the theory behind each task. Work experience is helpful before writing the exam, so it is a good idea to try to get a job as soon as you receive your Letter of Permission.

You can also study from the following textbooks that can be found at community college libraries and bookstores, in public libraries, and sometimes in general bookstores:

- *Auto Mechanics Fundamentals* by M. W. Stockel (distributed by General Publishing)
- *Automotive Mechanics* by W. H. Crouse (McGraw-Hill)
- *Automotive Transmissions and Power Trains* by W. H. Crouse and D. L. Anglin (McGraw-Hill)

Many community colleges offer pre-exam or exam preparation courses. These courses give applicants practice in writing the exams. They usually provide about sixty hours of training over several weekends and cost about \$300.

Some community agencies may also offer special training courses for foreign-trained automotive service technicians. Contact the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). (See the contact information at the end of this fact sheet.) OCASI can provide information about settlement agencies in your community.

Step 6. Certificate of Qualification Exam

You may write the Certificate of Qualification exam for automotive service technicians at a Workplace Support Services office, once you have either completed an apprenticeship or shown (attested) that you have the competencies required for this trade. The exam is available year-round, usually by appointment. You can arrange a date to write the exam during your meeting with a training consultant, or you can call the Workplace Support Services office to make an appointment to write the exam within ninety days of your application. You must show photo ID on the day of the exam.

Description of the Exam. The Certificate of Qualification exam is a written exam with multiple-choice questions. These questions test your practical knowledge of workplace procedures and tasks. You are allowed three hours to complete the exam.

Readers/Translators. If you have difficulty with English, you are allowed to bring a reader with you to the exam. Readers can be anyone whose English skills are strong; they may be relatives, friends, or interpreters from your community. Readers can translate the parts of the exam that you don't understand, but they are not allowed to help you answer the questions. The exam is highly technical; make sure that you choose someone who knows English well, but does not have knowledge of the automotive service technician trade. Readers must sign a statement that they don't have any training or experience in the trade.

Dictionaries, pencils, erasers, and paper are available in the exam room. If you bring your own dictionary, you will be asked to submit it to the exam supervisor for inspection.

Pass Mark. The pass mark for the exam is 70 per cent. If you pass the C of Q exam and you did not require the help of a reader, you will receive a Red Seal on your certificate. The Red Seal is the interprovincial certification that allows tradespeople to work in other Canadian provinces and territories.

Rewriting Failed Exams. Your exam results will be mailed to you. The results sheet will detail the score as a percentage for each section of the exam, so if you fail, you will know which areas you still need to improve. If you fail an exam, you can rewrite it after ninety days.

If you fail the exam twice, you will be required either to take a refresher course to upgrade your training or to get more work experience before you can try the exam again. You will be able to reapply for a Letter of Permission. However, if you fail the exam a third time and wish to contest the results, you can also reapply for a Letter of Permission if proof of upgrading is provided. There is a \$100 fee every time you write the exam.

Step 7. Certificate of Qualification

If you pass the exam, your Certificate of Qualification will be mailed to you. You can get an official duplicate (copy) of the certificate from the Workplace Support Services office for a fee of \$60.00. Automotive service technicians must renew their certificates once every three years. The renewal fee is \$60.

Fees and Costs (in Canadian dollars)

Assessment	no fee
Application for the Certificate of Qualification	no fee
Registration of an apprenticeship, if required	\$40.00
Certificate of Qualification exam.....	\$100.00

Rewriting failed exams (re-examination).....	\$100.00
Official duplicate (copy) of the Certificate of Qualification...	\$60.00
Renewal of the Certificate of Qualification	\$60.00

Labour Market Information

In Ontario, automotive service technicians work for small, independent repair shops, garages and service stations, service departments at large car dealerships, and many other types of motor vehicle repair shops and service centres. Some shops offer generalized car repair services, and others offer specialized services, such as for brakes and transmissions. About 99 per cent of automotive service centres are independently owned. Non-union automotive service technicians perform most of the work.

An experienced mechanic can earn between \$20 and \$30 per hour. Employment opportunities vary somewhat with the economy. When the economy is good, so are employment opportunities.

Automotive service technicians provide their own tools for work. The average investment in a tool kit is somewhere between \$10,000 and \$30,000. Employers see a well-stocked tool kit as a commitment to the trade.

For more information on labour market conditions for this trade, see Ontario Job Futures on the Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) website (www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca) or on the Ontario Job Futures website (www.ontariojobfutures.net). This information is also available in the Ontario Job Futures binder at public libraries and at HRDC Employment Resource Centres in your community.

Related Trades and Occupations

Automotive service technicians are able to work on all parts of vehicles (i.e., cars, motor homes, trailers, buses, and small trucks) that weigh less than 9,000 kilograms. While automotive service technicians are often called *mechanics*, there are many different automotive trades that employ other kinds of mechanics.

For example, mechanics who work on truck-trailers (large trucks) that weigh more than 9,000 kilograms can be either truck and coach technicians or truck-trailer service technicians. Mechanics who work on these large trucks need a certificate (licence) to work in Ontario.

It is also possible to become certified in specialized areas of the automotive trade. Certification (licensing) is required for the following specialized automotive trades, but the training standards are different from those for automotive service technicians:

- alignment and brakes technician
- automotive accessory technician
- fuel and electrical systems technician
- transmission technician

- auto body and collision damage repairer
- auto body repairer

Certification is not required for the following automotive trades:

- air-cooled marine engine mechanic
- automotive machinist
- farm equipment mechanic
- heavy-duty-equipment mechanic

For more information on these and other automotive trades, contact a Workplace Support Services office or visit the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities website – www.edu.gov.on.ca – and follow the links to apprenticeship. You can also get more information about these occupations at public libraries, at HRDC Employment Resource Centres (www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca), and from the Ontario Job Futures website (www.ontariojobfutures.net).

Workplace Support Services Offices in Ontario

To order a copy of *Apprenticeship Training Standards – Automotive Service Technician*, to get more information about certification, or to make an appointment with a training consultant, contact the Workplace Support Services office in your community.

Barrie Regional Office

Ontario Government Building
34 Simcoe Street
Barrie, Ontario L4N 6T4
Telephone: 705-737-1431 or
1-800-560-3821
Fax: 705-737-5684

Cornwall Area Office

113 Amelia Street
Cornwall, Ontario K6H 3P1
Telephone: 613-938-9702 or
1-877-668-6604
Fax: 613-938-6627

Mississauga Regional Office

The Emerald Centre
10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle
Suite 610
Mississauga, Ontario L5R 3K6
Telephone: 905-279-7333 or
1-800-736-5520
Voice-mail: 905-279-7709
Fax: 905-279-7332

Belleville Area Office

1 Bridge Street East, 3rd Floor
Canada Trust Building
Belleville, Ontario K8N 5N9
Telephone: 613-968-5558 or
1-800-953-6885
Fax: 613-968-2364

Hamilton District Office

Ontario Government Building
119 King Street West, 5th Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y7
Telephone: 905-521-7764 or
1-800-668-4479
Fax: 905-521-7701

North Bay Area Office

Northgate Plaza
1500 Fisher Street, 2nd Floor
North Bay, Ontario P1B 2H3
Telephone: 705-495-8515
or 1-800-236-0744
Fax: 705-495-8517

Brantford Area Office

515 Park Road North, Suite 7
Brantford, Ontario N3R 7K8
Telephone: 519-756-5197
Fax: 519-756-0724

Kenora Area Office

810 Robertson Street, Suite 105
Kenora, Ontario P9N 4J5
Telephone: 807-468-2879
Fax: 807-468-2881

Ottawa District Office

1355 Bank Street, Suite 703
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8K7
Telephone: 613-731-7100 or
1-877-221-1220
Fax: 613-731-4160

Brockville Area Office

Ontario Government Building
P.O. Box 1511
Oxford Street
Brockville, Ontario K6V 5Y6
Telephone: 613-342-5481 or
1-877-417-9333
Fax: 613-342-9299

Kingston Area Office

1055 Princess Street, Suite 404
Kingston, Ontario K7L 5T3
Telephone: 613-545-4338 or
1-877-220-2721
Fax: 613-545-1204

Owen Sound Area Office

Nor-Towne Plaza, Suite 108
1131–2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 2J1
Telephone: 519-376-5790, ext. 23
or 1-800-838-9468
Fax: 519-376-4843

Note: Office is closed Tuesdays
and Thursdays.

Chatham Area Office

870 Richmond Street
P.O. Box 220
Chatham, Ontario N7M 5K3
Telephone: 519-354-2766
1-800-214-8284
Fax: 519-354-3094

London Area Office

217 York Street, Suite 201
London, Ontario N6A 5P9
Telephone: 519-675-7788 or
1-800-265-1050
Fax: 519-675-7795

Pembroke Area Office

169 Lake Street
Pembroke, Ontario K8A 5L8
Telephone: 613-735-3911 or
1-800-807-0227
Fax: 613-735-6452

Peterborough Area Office
Ontario Government Building
306 George Street North
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3H2
Telephone: 705-745-1918 or
1-877-433-6555
Fax: 705-745-1926

Sault Ste. Marie District Office
70 Foster Drive, 1st and 2nd
Floors
Roberta Bondar Place
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 6V9
Telephone: 705-945-6815 or
1-800-236-8817
Fax: 705-945-6818

Toronto District Office
625 Church Street, 1st Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2B5
General inquiries: 416-326-5800
Front desk: 416-326-5775
Fax: 416-326-5799

Pickering Regional Office
1420 Bayly Street, Unit 1
Pickering, Ontario L1W 3R4
Telephone: 905-837-7721 or
1-800-461-4608
Fax: 905-837-6726 or 1-800-461-
5385

Sudbury Area Office
450 Notre Dame Avenue
Sudbury, Ontario P3C 5K8
Telephone: 705-564-3030
or 1-800-603-5999
Fax: 705-564-3033

Waterloo Area Office
285 Weber Street North
Waterloo, Ontario N2J 3H8
Telephone: 519-571-6009 or
1-800-265-6180
Fax: 519-571-6047

St. Catharines Area Office
301 St. Paul St., 9th Floor
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 7R4
Telephone: 905-704-2991 or
1-800-263-4475
Fax: 905-704-2985

Thunder Bay Regional Office
28 Cumberland Street North, 3rd
Floor
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 4K9
Telephone: 807-345-8888
or 1-800-439-5493
Fax: 807-768-2536

Windsor Area Office
1427 Ouellette Avenue, 2nd Floor
Windsor, Ontario N8X 1K1
Telephone: 519-973-1441 or
1-800-663-5609
Fax: 519-973-1415

Sarnia Area Office
1319 Exmouth Street
Suite 101, 1st Floor
Sarnia, Ontario N7S 3Y1
Telephone: 519-542-7705 or
1-800-363-8453
Fax: 519-542-3391

Timmins Area Office
1270 Hwy 101 East
Ontario Government Building
P.O. Bag 3095, C Wing
South Porcupine, Ontario P0N 1C0
Telephone: 705-235-1950 or
1-877-275-5139
Fax: 705-235-1955

For More Information

For information on certification requirements and training in Ontario, contact:

- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities – training hotline (no charge in Ontario): 1-800-387-5656; website: www.edu.gov.on.ca
- the Workplace Support Services office in your community (see the addresses and fax and telephone numbers listed above)

For information on where to get help once you arrive in Ontario, contact:

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

110 Eglinton Avenue West

Suite 200

Toronto, Ontario M4R 1A3

Telephone: 416-322-4950

Fax: 416-322-8084

E-mail: general@ocasi.org

Website: www.ocasi.org

For information on settling in Ontario, visit www.settlement.org.

For information on access to employment for foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople in Ontario, contact:

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Access to Professions and Trades Unit

900 Bay Street, Mowat Block

12th Floor

Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Tel: 416-326-9714

Fax: 416-326-6265

E-mail: aptinfo@edu.gov.on.ca

Website: www.equalopportunity.on.ca

Certification Process

