

Operating Engineer/Equipment Operator

Operating Engineers or Equipment Operators operate and maintain a variety of powerful equipment ranging from bulldozers, backhoes, and earthmovers to very large power shovels and cranes. They also lubricate, maintain, and perform minor repair and adjustment to the machinery.

Working Conditions

Because almost all the work is out-of-doors, working conditions are governed by the weather. The work is physically demanding and operators are subject to jarring, jolting, and continuous noise. Working with the equipment offers danger of injury and requires constant attention.

Aptitude and Interest

Operators must have good eyesight and better than average coordination in order to operate both hand and foot levers simultaneously. They must have good judgement in order to perform complicated tasks, and must be able to work closely with other crafts without constant supervision. Skilled operators are constantly alert and observant of their surroundings.

Training

To become a skilled equipment operator training is essential. It can be acquired informally through "learning-by-working;" through company on-the-job training programs; by attending trade or vocational/technical schools; through unilaterally (management or labor) sponsored trainee programs; through registered labor-management apprenticeship programs; or a combination of the above. It is generally accepted that the more formalized training programs give more comprehensive skill training. Recommended high school courses include English, algebra, geometry, general sciences, and mechanical drawing.