

Heavy Equipment Apprentice

Did you know?*

- Overall employment of construction equipment operators is expected to grow 23 percent from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations.
- The likelihood of increased spending on infrastructure to improve roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, and the electric power grid, all of which are in great need of repair across the country, is expected to result in numerous jobs. In addition, population growth increases the need for construction projects such as new roads and sewer lines, which also is expected to generate some jobs.
- Without the extra spending on infrastructure by the federal government, employment may be flat as states and localities struggle with reduced taxes and budget shortfalls to pay for road and other improvements.

*Statistics retrieved from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What Construction Equipment Operators (Heavy Equipment) Do

Construction equipment operators drive, maneuver, or control the heavy machinery used to construct roads, bridges, buildings, and other structures.

Tasks:

- Learn and follow safety regulations.
- Take actions to avoid potential hazards or obstructions, such as utility lines, other equipment, other workers, or falling objects.
- Locate underground services, such as pipes or wires, prior to beginning work.
- Monitor operations to ensure that health and safety standards are met.
- Adjust handwheels and depress pedals to control attachments, such as blades, buckets, scrapers, or swing booms.
- Start engines, move throttles, switches, or levers, or depress pedals to operate machines, such as bulldozers, trench excavators, road graders, or backhoes.
- Coordinate machine actions with other activities, positioning or moving loads in response to hand or audio signals from crew members.
- Load and move dirt, rocks, equipment, or other materials, using trucks, crawler tractors, power cranes, shovels, graders, or related equipment.
- Check fuel supplies at sites to ensure adequate availability.
- Drive and maneuver equipment equipped with blades in successive passes over working areas to remove topsoil, vegetation, or rocks or to distribute and level earth or terrain.

What are the Working Conditions?

Construction equipment operators work in nearly every type of climate and weather condition. Workers often get dirty, greasy, muddy, or dusty. Some operators work in remote locations on large construction projects, such as highways and dams, or in factories or mines.

How is the Training Structured?

- 3 year training program
- 6,000 hours on-the-job training
- 144 hours of related instruction per year
- Individual program requirements may vary by sponsor

What are the Application Requirements?

- Applicants must be at least 18 years of age
- High school diploma or equivalent

- Physically able to perform trade
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation

What Skills Should I Possess?

- **Operation and Control** — Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- **Operation Monitoring** — Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Coordination** — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- **Equipment Maintenance** — Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- **Troubleshooting** — Determining causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.

Additional Resources

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics maintains information on all occupations. For more information on the Construction Electrician trade in the United States, visit:

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/construction-equipment-operators.htm>

Who to Contact in Mississippi

For more information on becoming an Heavy Equipment Operator contact MCEF at 601-605-2989.