

Heavy Equipment Operator



What They Do

Heavy equipment operators are responsible for the loading and unloading of goods. Heavy equipment operators on farms also drive and control farm equipment to till soil and to plant, cultivate, and harvest crops. They may also perform tasks, such as crop baling or hay bucking. Additionally, they might operate stationary equipment to perform post-harvest tasks, such as husking, shelling, threshing, and ginning.

Job Duties

- Operate or tend equipment used in agricultural production, such as tractors, combines, and irrigation equipment
- Operate towed machines such as seed drills or manure spreaders to plant, fertilize, dust, and spray crops
- Adjust, repair, and service farm machinery and notify supervisors when machinery malfunctions
- Irrigate soil, using portable pipes or ditch systems, and maintain ditches or pipes/pumps
- Weigh crop-filled containers and record weights and other identifying information
- Drive trucks to haul crops, supplies, tools, or farm workers
- Load and unload crops or containers of materials, manually or using conveyors, hand trucks, forklifts, or transfer augers
- Observe and listen to machinery operations to detect equipment malfunctions
- Direct & monitor the activities of work crews engaged in planting, weeding, or harvesting activities

Job Earnings

****U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
(2019 Median Annual Salary)**

Median Annual Salary: \$41,390

- Entry Level Annual Salary: \$30,480
- Experienced Annual Salary: \$46,480

Education/Training

A high school diploma, CDL, and forklift certification may be required to become a heavy equipment or forklift operator.

Job Outlook

The future outlook for a heavy equipment or forklift operator will be great over the next five years.

Heavy Equipment Operator - Career Pathway

Ways to Start Preparing for Your Future Career TODAY!

1

Middle/High School Classes to Take:

- Agriculture Classes
- Diesel Mechanics
- Mathematics

2

Clubs/Extracurricular Activities:

- Future Farmers of America (FFA) Club (www.FFA.org)
- 4-H (www.4-H.org)

3

Local BOCES/Career & Technical Education Programs:

- Genesee Valley BOCES (www.GVBOCES.org)
 - Conservation (Batavia & Mt. Morris Campuses)
 - Diesel Mechanic Program (Batavia & Mt. Morris Campuses)
- Monroe2-Orleans BOCES (www.Monroe2BOCES.org)
 - Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance
- Orleans-Niagara BOCES (www.ONBOCES.org)
 - Diesel Technology/Heavy Equipment

4

Local Colleges/Training:

- Colleges:
 - SUNY Alfred (www.alfredstate.edu)
 - SUNY Cobleskill (www.Cobleskill.edu)
 - SUNY Morrisville (www.Morrisville.edu)
- Adult Education Training Programs:
 - Genesee Valley BOCES Adult Ed CDL Training (www.GVBOCES.org)
 - Monroe2-Orleans BOCES CDL Commercial License Class B (www.Monroe2BOCES.org)