



**Construction Trades II**

**Career Explorations:**  
**Excavator Operator**

**April 22, 2020**



## 11-12/ Construction Trades II

Career Explorations/Excavator Operator: [April 22, 2020]

### **Objective/Learning Target:**

Students will explore the possibility of becoming an excavator operator as a career path.

# Excavator Operator Career Info

An **excavator operator** controls heavy machinery used to dig holes and trenches and to transport industrial or raw materials. They must be in good physical shape and have mechanical aptitude and excellent vision. Excavator operators may also be required to perform routine maintenance on the vehicles they operate. In order to be more marketable to employers in the construction industry, excavator operators should also be able to safely operate other construction vehicles, such as bulldozers or forklifts.

# Watch The Video:

[How to Become an  
Excavator Operator](#)

# What does it take to become an excavator operator

<b>Education Required</b>	High school diploma or GED
<b>Experience</b>	Entry-level work under an experienced excavator
<b>Licensure and Certification</b>	Driver's license and/or commercial driver's license (CDL) may be required; industry certification may be preferred by employers
<b>Salary (2018)*</b>	\$47,810 per year (median salary for operating engineers and other construction equipment operators)

*Source: \*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

# How can I become an excavator operator

## Earn a High School Diploma

Most employers require that heavy machinery construction operators have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Excavator operators may begin their education by taking courses at the high school level, including auto shop, mechanics, computer science, or science.

## **Obtain Credentials or Licenses**

A driver's license is required for excavator operator positions, and some employers require a commercial driver's license (CDL). Requirements for a CDL vary by state. Employers may also prefer that workers hold industry certification related to the equipment they operate.

## **Complete a Training Program**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), some employers may hire applicants who have little or no formal training; however, construction equipment operators who undergo formal training have better job prospects due to the skills that are learned in school (according to *www.bls.gov*).



Workers may be trained on the job through a traditional course or under the supervision of a qualified worker. Some course topics in a construction-equipment operating program may include vehicle safety, traffic control, trenching, and backfilling. Students use heavy equipment simulators to learn how to operate construction vehicles.

## **Get Construction Work Experience**

The BLS reports that construction workers often begin their careers at the entry level and work under a more experienced coworker until they have proven their skills. They may start by operating smaller vehicles and then progress to large industrial vehicles.

The best job prospects are expected to be reserved for individuals who can operate more than one type of equipment.

Excavator operators might consider learning how to work with such equipment as asphalt spreaders, graders, or concrete paving machines.

Excavators must have a high school diploma or equivalent, obtain credentials or licenses, complete training, and gain work experience.

# **Excavator Operator fun facts**

# **1. An excavator operator is responsible for leveling and setting the grade on a construction site?**

- True
- False

# **Answer: True**

An excavator operator is the primary source of “dirt work” in the industry.

## **2. The average salary for an excavator operator according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics is?**

- \$20,000 - \$30,000 annually

- \$30,000 - \$40,000 annually

- \$40,000 - \$50,000 annually

- \$50,000 - \$60,000 annually

**Answer: \$40,000  
- \$50,000**

According to the Bureau of Labor and  
Statistics the median income for an  
excavator operator in 2018 was \$47,810



### **3. Traits of an excavator operator include?**

- Good physical strength
- Mechanical aptitude
- Excellent vision
- All of the above

# Answer: 4

An excavator operator should have the following characteristics, physical strength, mechanical skill and good vision.

**4. You must attend a 4-year university in order to receive the certification required to become an excavator operator?**

- True
- False

# Answer: False

These guidelines are set at the state level and often only require a high school diploma.

## **5. Typical subjects that may be covered in an excavator operator training program may include.**

- Vehicle Safety
- Traffic Control
- Trenching
- Backfilling
- All of the Above
- None of the Above

# **Answer: All of the above**

All of these topics should be covered in an excavator training program.

## **6. Excavator operators can learn the basic skills by using a simulator?**

-True

-False

# **Answer: True**

The majority of excavator operators start out by using a simulator.



**7. An excavator operator can be more employable if they can operate a variety of heavy equipment?**

-True

-False

# Answer: True

An excavator operator is more employable if they can operate a variety of equipment.

Back hoes, trenchers, bull dozers and forklifts to name a few.

## **8. An excavator operator should have which of the following?**

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Obtain credentials and licenses
- Complete training program
- Gain work experience
- All of the above

# **Answer: All of the above**

Excavators must have a high school diploma or equivalent, obtain credentials or licenses, complete training, and gain work experience.

# Credit

- x Bureau of Labor and Statistics
- x Study.com

