



## Plant Operator

**Alternate Title** Backhoe Operator; Bobcat Operator; Bulldozer Operator; Driver (Mobile Plant); Earthmover; Excavator Operator; Front-end Loader Operator; Grader Operator; Hydraulic Rockbreaker Operator; Operator (Mobile Plant); Plant Operator; Paving Plant Operator; Road Roller Operator; Scraper Operator; Trench Digging Machine Operator.

**Description** Plant operators drive backhoes, bulldozers, excavators, front-end loaders, graders, rockbreakers, scrapers, skid steer loaders, rollers and forklift trucks to level, excavate, move and load earth, rock and other material.

### Job Prospects/Employment Opportunities

It is a large occupation with good employment prospects. Major employers include earthmoving and civil construction contractors, private developers, mining and minerals processing companies and government authorities. Work projects vary in size and location. Sites may be located in the city, suburbs or country, and are sometimes in remote areas. Employment in the public sector has declined due to a trend towards contracting out earthmoving work to private firms.

Some plant operators may own and operate equipment on a contract hire basis, although the cost of equipment is high.

- Typical Duties**
- Prepare machines for operation
  - Work from drawings and markers under the direction of supervisors and engineers
  - Back-fill trenches
  - Load and unload equipment from low loaders and move it around work sites
  - Select, change and operate special attachments such as winches, scrub clearers, rippers, pile drivers and rock-breaking hammers
  - Break up paving, rock and similar material by operating hydraulic or pneumatic breakers
  - Excavate or scrape earth, rock or rubble to the correct level and alignment
  - Load trucks with excavated fill
  - Drive machines to and from work sites
  - Service equipment by cleaning, lubricating and re-fuelling it and make minor adjustments and repairs when necessary

### Work Conditions

The work conditions for mobile plant operators can be hot, muddy, dusty and noisy, but most earthmoving machines have soundproofed and air-conditioned cabs for the operator.

### Personal requirements

- Current driver's licence
- Enjoy practical and manual work
- Able to follow precise instructions
- Able to work as part of a team
- Physically fit and good eyesight
- Good hand-eye coordination
- Able to work without supervision

**Entry pathway** Training is usually provided on the job by the employer. A person starts as a labourer, then moves on to gain experience in operating particular equipment. About 2 years' experience is needed to become competent.

You can also become a mobile plant operator through an apprenticeship in Civil Construction (Plant Operations). Entry requirements may vary, but employers generally require Year 10.

### Additional Information

You must have a current driver's licence and you will need to obtain an appropriate licence for the machinery you plan to work with. See [www.safework.sa.gov.au](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au).

### Course or Training Package

- Certificate II in Civil Construction
- Certificate III in Civil Construction
- Certificate III in Civil Construction (Plant Operations)
- Certificate III in Civil Construction (Road Construction and Maintenance)

Some people may complete a pre-apprenticeship or pre-vocational course before entering an apprenticeship. If you are still at school, **doorways2construction™** is the best first step into this career. Ask your VET coordinator for more details.

**Related Jobs**

- Bulk Materials Handling Plant Operator
- Crane Operator
- Miner
- Rural Heavy Vehicle Operator

### Further information

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- CITB [[www.citb.org.au](http://www.citb.org.au)]
- Construction Industry Skills Board [<http://www.constructionskills.com.au>]
- **doorways2construction™** [<http://www.doorways2construction.org.au/>]
- Civil Contractors Federation [<http://www.civilcontractors.com/>]
- Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) [<http://www.cfmeu.asn.au/construction/states/sa/>]
- Big Plans [[www.bigplans.com.au/](http://www.bigplans.com.au/)]
- Be Constructive [[www.beconstructive.com.au/](http://www.beconstructive.com.au/)]