



Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators

SOC Code 53-7051 • Projected Growth (2020) 5 %

Description

What Material Moving Machine Operators Do

Material moving machine operators use machinery to transport various objects. Some operators move construction materials around building sites or earth around a mine. Others move goods around a warehouse or onto and off of container ships.

Duties

- Control equipment with levers, wheels, or foot pedals
- Move material according to a plan or schedule they receive from their superiors
- Set up and inspect material moving equipment
- Make minor repairs to their equipment
- Record the material they have moved and where they moved it from and to

Training Opportunities Linked to Those Jobs

[\(Degree Types and Colleges/Universities\)](#)

How to Become a Material Moving Machine Operator

There are generally no formal education requirements. Some employers require previous work experience.

Education and Training

Although it is usually not required, some companies prefer material movers with a high school degree.

Training

Most material moving machine operators are trained on the job in less than a month. Some machines are more complex than others, so the amount of time spent in training will vary with the type of machine the operator is using. Training time also can vary by industry. Most workers are trained by a supervisor or another experienced employee, who decides when the workers are ready to work on their own.

The [International Union of Operating Engineers](#) offers apprenticeship programs for heavy equipment operators, such as excavating machine operators or crane operators. Apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job training with technical instruction.

During their training, machine operators learn a number of safety rules, many of which are standardized through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Employers must certify that each operator has received the proper training. Operators who work with hazardous materials receive further specialized training.

Licenses

Several states and many cities require crane operators to be licensed. To get a license, operators typically must complete a skills test in which they show that they can control a crane. They also usually must pass a written exam that tests their knowledge of safety rules and procedures.

Work Experience

Forklift operators usually have a few years of experience in a related occupation, such as hand mover or conveyor operator. For more information see the profile on [hand laborers and material movers](#).

Crane operators and excavating machine operators usually have several years of experience in related occupations. They may start as construction laborers and work as construction equipment operators or hoist and winch operators. For more information, see the profiles on [construction laborers and helpers](#) and [construction equipment operators](#).

Advancement

Some material moving machine operators become construction equipment operators. Others find work as a production or mining worker. In warehousing or retail environments, experienced workers can move to other parts of the company, such as the sales department.

Important Qualities

Alertness. Machine operators must stay aware of their surroundings while operating machinery.

Manual dexterity. Operators sometimes have to maneuver their machines through tight spaces, around large objects, and on uneven surfaces.

Mechanical ability. Operators make minor adjustments to their machines when necessary.

Visual ability. When operating their machines, operators must be able to see clearly where they are driving or what they are moving. They also must watch for nearby workers, who may unknowingly get in their path.

Postsecondary Education

Texas Southmost College	South Texas College	Texas State Technical College	The University of Texas at Brownsville	The University of Texas - Pan American

Local Employers

A-1 Truck Svc	Harlingen	Johnson Equipment CO	Brownsville
Action Group Intl	Brownsville	Kiki's Tortilleria	La Feria
Burton Bearing & Ind Inc	Harlingen	Los Fresnos Millwork CO	Los Fresnos

Career Options

(Specific Job Types)

- Forklift Operator
- Material Handler
- Fork Lift Operator
- Truck Driver
- Fork Truck Driver
- Lift Truck Driver
- Forklift Driver
- Fork Lift Technician
- Spotter Driver
- Fork Lift Driver

Salary Ranges

Wages for **Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators**

Location	Pay Period	2012				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$9.80	\$11.78	\$14.53	\$18.12	\$22.33
	Yearly	\$20,400	\$24,500	\$30,200	\$37,700	\$46,400
Texas	Hourly	\$8.79	\$10.42	\$12.91	\$16.01	\$19.44
	Yearly	\$18,300	\$21,700	\$26,900	\$33,300	\$40,400
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX MSA	Hourly	\$7.72	\$8.16	\$8.91	\$10.25	\$12.86

Location	Pay Period	2012				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
	Yearly	\$16,100	\$17,000	\$18,500	\$21,300	\$26,700

Professional Associations linked to the Careers

For more information about careers as a material moving machine operator, visit

[Material Handling Industry of America](#)

[The Warehousing Education and Research Council](#)

[International Union of Operating Engineers](#)

[National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators](#)

Sources

The information provided in this document was collected from the following sources:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>)
- O*NET OnLine (<http://www.onetonline.org/>)
- Texas CARES (<http://www.texascaresonline.com/>)
- CareerOneStop (<http://www.careeronestop.org/>)



Course Overview: Focuses on careers in the planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail, and water, and related professional and technical support services.

Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators

Career Goal (O*NET Code): (53-7051) - Material moving machine operators use machinery to transport various objects. Some operators move construction materials around building sites or earth around a mine. Others move goods around a warehouse or onto and off of container ships.

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

SUGGESTED COURSEWORK

EXTENDED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Middle School	8th	HS Courses:	Exploring Careers			Curricular Experiences: Business Professionals of America Future Business Leaders of America SkillsUSA Technology Student Association	Extracurricular Experiences: Language Immersion Programs School Newspaper Student Government UIL Academic Competitions Yearbook
High School	9th	Core Courses*:	English I Algebra I or Geometry Biology	World Geography Foreign Language I Physical Education	Fine Arts		
		Career-Related Electives:	Principles of Transportation, Distribution and Logistics				
	10th	Core Courses:	English II Geometry or Algebra II Chemistry	World History Foreign Language II Elective	Elective		
		Career-Related Electives:	Energy, Power and Transportation Systems or Aircraft Technology				
	11th	Core Courses:	English III Algebra II Physics/Principles of Technology	United States History Foreign Language III** Professional Communications or Speech			
		Career-Related Electives:	Transportation Systems Management or Logistics, Planning and Management Systems or Advanced Aircraft Technology				
	12th	Core Courses:	English IV AP Calculus 4th Science	Government/Economics Fine Arts Elective			
		Career-Related Electives:	Advanced Aircraft Technology or Advanced Electronics or Practicum in Transportation, Distribution and Logistics				
How to Become a Industrial Truck and Tractor Operator There are generally no formal education requirements. Some employers require previous work experience.						COLLEGE CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES -- High School Students should take Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit, Advanced Technical Credit (ATC), or locally articulated credit courses, if possible. List those courses that count for college credit on your campus.	Professional Associations: Material Handling Industry of America The Warehousing Education and Research Council International Union of Operating Engineers National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators
Postsecondary		Texas Southmost College South Texas College Texas State Technical College			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forklift Operator • Material Handler • Fork Lift Operator • Truck Driver • Fork Truck Driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift Truck Driver • Forklift Driver • Fork Lift Technician • Spotter Driver • Fork Lift Driver 	
		University of Texas at Brownsville University of Texas - Pan American					

*Students must meet local & state graduation requirements. ** Required coursework for Distinguished Graduation Plan (In addition to other measures). *** Based on campus availability. Students may select other elective courses for personal enrichment purposes.

This plan of study serves as a guide, along with other career planning materials, for pursuing a career path and is based on the most recent information as of 2012. All plans meet high school graduation requirements as well as college entrance requirements.