

Career Profile: Backhoe Operator

Did you have fun playing in the sandpit with toy diggers when you were young? Fancy playing in a bigger sandpit, with bigger machines...and being paid for it? Backhoe Operators operate machinery to level, excavate, load and move earth, rock and other materials from site. This machine looks like an overgrown tractor, but the real skill is in the precision of using the front and rear buckets.

Also known as: Earthmoving Plant Operators

Specialisations: Excavators, Bulldozers, Front End Loaders, Graders, Skid Steer Loaders

What would my working day look like?

Some of the tasks you may complete are:

- ▶ Operating attachments to excavate, break and level earth, rock and other materials
- ▶ Digging trenches on civil infrastructure or largescale commercial projects
- ▶ Take actions to avoid potential hazards and obstructions onsite and ensure occupational health and safety standards are met
- ▶ Moving large amounts of earth, sand or gravel
- ▶ Performing maintenance on the machinery
- ▶ Performing safety checks before the machinery is used
- ▶ Coordinating with other operators to perform the duties required
- ▶ Interpreting signage on a construction site

I might enjoy this job if:

- ▶ Operating different types of machines or tools excites me
- ▶ I enjoy being outdoors
- ▶ I like practical and manual activities
- ▶ I am a physical person who enjoys physically demanding work
- ▶ I have good hand eye coordination
- ▶ I can work independently and as part of a team

Working conditions and hours

Civil Construction Workers mainly work outdoors on large infrastructure, construction sites, road construction and maintenance, residential subdivision and bulk earthworks, foundation work, railway construction and maintenance, tunnel construction and pipe-laying. You may work regular full-time hours (44 hours per week) if working on a project or may include shift work including late nights, early mornings and weekend work.

How do I become a Backhoe Operator?

To work with plant machinery in Western Australia you will need a construction white card and Work Safe require you to have a High-Risk Work License, which you need to be 18 years of age to obtain. To get started if you're still at school, you can enrol in a Certificate II Civil Construction qualification as part of your WACE.

Otherwise, you may like to complete the following qualifications through a Registered Training Provider or as a traineeship, which usually takes 24-36 months to complete and includes on the job training with an employer.

Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
- Civil Construction Plant Operations - Civil Construction	- Civil Construction Supervision - Civil Construction Operations	- Civil Construction Management

Future pathways and opportunities

You can be employed on large construction projects and add to your tickets to operate more than one machine. You can also work on most civil projects anywhere in Australia if you want to travel and work. With further study your career could lead you to complete a Diploma or Advanced Diploma to become a Site Supervisor, Civil Construction Manager or a Plant Engineer.

Average Pay

Up to **\$1,491** per week

depending on your qualifications, experience and hours worked. (Source: Job Outlook)

What skills and personal qualities do I need?

- ▶ Have an awareness of safety issues
- ▶ Be a team player
- ▶ Be able to listen to instructions carefully and perform them accurately
- ▶ Be physically fit and enjoy working outdoors
- ▶ Have good coordination skills
- ▶ Enjoy working with machinery and an aptitude for mechanics



Next Steps

Further information can be found at:

- ▶ Jobs and Skills WA – www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au
- ▶ Civil Contractors Federation – www.civilcontractors.com

- ▶ Australian Apprenticeship Pathways – www.aapathways.com.au
- ▶ Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Providers – www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au