

Food Processing Equipment Workers

SOC: 51-3091 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$40,050

Median Salary

282,600

Employment

+5.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Medium Risk - 38.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

■■ Work-Life Balance

4.9/10 - Fair work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.4/10	Investigative	5.0/10
Artistic	3.8/10	Social	4.6/10
Enterprising	4.0/10	Conventional	8.0/10

■ Top Skills Required

Detail oriented, Physical stamina, Physical strength, Math skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Food Processing Equipment Workers are production professionals who operate and monitor **machinery used to process, package, and prepare food products** for distribution and consumption. They play a critical role in transforming raw agricultural ingredients into safe, consistent, and ready-to-use food items while following strict sanitation, safety, and quality standards.

This career is well suited for individuals who prefer hands-on work, structured procedures, and contributing to the systems that keep grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions supplied with food.

What Do Food Processing Equipment Workers Do?

Food processing equipment workers oversee machines and production lines that prepare food at scale. Their responsibilities focus on efficiency, cleanliness, and product consistency.

Common responsibilities include:

- Operating food processing and packaging machinery
- Monitoring equipment to ensure proper operation
- Adjusting machine settings for speed, temperature, or portion size
- Loading raw ingredients and removing finished products
- Inspecting food products for quality and defects
- Cleaning and sanitizing equipment and work areas
- Following food safety and workplace safety regulations

Types of Food Processing Equipment Workers

This occupation includes several machine-focused roles:

- Food Batchmakers: Mix ingredients according to precise formulas.
- Food Cooking Machine Operators: Control ovens, kettles, roasters, or fryers.
- Food Packaging Operators: Run machines that seal, label, and package food products.
- Meat, Poultry, or Seafood Processing Operators: Handle specialized processing equipment.
- Beverage Processing Equipment Operators: Work with bottling, canning, or brewing systems.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Food processing equipment workers combine mechanical awareness with consistency and discipline.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Most food processing equipment workers enter the field with basic education and on-the-job training:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent: Typical minimum requirement
- On-the-Job Training: Learning machine operation and safety procedures
- Food Safety Training: Instruction in sanitation and hygiene standards
- Equipment-Specific Training: Provided by employers or manufacturers
- Advancement Opportunities: Pathways to lead operator, quality control, or supervisor roles

Where Do Food Processing Equipment Workers Work?

These workers are employed in food manufacturing and production facilities:

- Food and Beverage Manufacturing Plants
- Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing Facilities
- Bakeries and Grain Product Plants

- Dairy Processing Facilities
- Frozen and Prepared Food Factories

Work environments may involve cold, heat, noise, or shift-based schedules.

How Much Do Food Processing Equipment Workers Earn?

Earnings vary by industry segment, experience, and shift:

- Entry-Level Workers: Typically earn hourly wages
- Experienced Equipment Operators: Often earn higher pay with machine expertise
- Specialized or Lead Operators: May earn more with responsibility for complex systems

Compensation may include shift differentials or overtime.

Is This Career Difficult?

The work can be physically repetitive and requires constant attention to detail. Workers must follow strict safety and sanitation rules while maintaining steady production speed. The challenge lies in staying focused, maintaining consistency, and responding quickly to equipment issues.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Prefer hands-on, structured work
- Are comfortable working with machines
- Value clear procedures and expectations
- Can maintain focus on repetitive tasks
- Want steady employment in an essential industry

How to Prepare Early

- Learn basic machine operation and safety principles
- Practice following detailed instructions accurately
- Build physical stamina for standing or shift work
- Develop attention to quality and cleanliness
- Explore entry-level manufacturing or production roles

Food processing equipment workers ensure that food is produced safely, consistently, and efficiently, forming a vital link between agriculture and the meals people rely on every day.