

Material Moving Machine Operators

SOC: 53-7011 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$46,620

Median Salary

867,700

Employment

+1.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Medium Risk - 35.0% 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

6.0/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.6/10	Investigative	4.4/10
Artistic	3.4/10	Social	5.8/10
Enterprising	4.8/10	Conventional	7.4/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Coordination, Mechanical skills, Visual ability

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Material Moving Machine Operators are skilled equipment operators who use **industrial vehicles and machinery to move, load, and transport materials** within warehouses, factories, ports, construction sites, and distribution centers. Their work ensures that raw materials, products, and supplies flow efficiently through supply chains, supporting production, shipping, and storage operations.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy hands-on work, operating machinery, and contributing to fast-paced logistics and industrial environments.

What Do Material Moving Machine Operators Do?

Material moving machine operators handle heavy equipment designed to lift, stack, and transport materials safely and efficiently.

Common responsibilities include:

- Operating forklifts, pallet jacks, cranes, conveyors, or similar machinery
- Loading and unloading trucks, railcars, or ships
- Moving materials to and from storage or production areas
- Stacking, organizing, or staging goods in warehouses or yards
- Inspecting equipment before and after use
- Following safety procedures and load limits
- Recording movements, inventory locations, or completed tasks

Types of Material Moving Machine Operators

This occupation includes several equipment-focused roles:

- Forklift Operators: Move palletized goods in warehouses or plants.
- Crane and Hoist Operators (related roles): Lift heavy or oversized loads.
- Conveyor Operators: Monitor automated material-handling systems.
- Industrial Truck Operators: Handle powered vehicles for material transport.
- Yard or Dock Equipment Operators: Move freight in shipping and receiving areas.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Material moving machine operators combine equipment control with safety awareness.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Most material moving machine operators enter the field with short-term training:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent: Often preferred
- On-the-Job Training: Learning equipment operation and safety practices
- Equipment Certification (as required): Forklift or machinery certification
- Safety Training: Instruction on workplace and equipment safety
- Advancement Opportunities: Lead operator or supervisor roles

Where Do Material Moving Machine Operators Work?

These operators are employed across logistics, industrial, and transportation sectors:

- Warehouses and Distribution Centers
- Manufacturing and Production Facilities
- Ports, Docks, and Freight Terminals
- Construction and Industrial Sites

- Retail and Wholesale Operations
- Recycling and Materials Recovery Facilities

Work environments may involve noise, heavy loads, and shift-based schedules.

How Much Do Material Moving Machine Operators Earn?

Earnings vary by equipment type, experience, and industry:

- Entry-Level Operators: Typically earn hourly wages
- Experienced or Certified Operators: Often earn higher pay
- Specialized Equipment Operators: May earn more when operating complex machinery

Compensation may include overtime or shift differentials.

Is This Career Difficult?

The work can be physically demanding and requires constant attention to safety. Operators must maneuver heavy loads precisely and follow strict procedures to prevent accidents. The challenge lies in maintaining focus, consistency, and safe operation throughout long or repetitive shifts.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy operating machinery and equipment
- Prefer hands-on, practical work
- Are safety-conscious and detail-oriented
- Can work well in fast-paced industrial settings
- Want steady demand in logistics and manufacturing

How to Prepare Early

- Learn basic equipment safety and operation principles
- Develop hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness
- Practice following procedures and safety rules
- Gain experience in warehouses, factories, or logistics roles
- Seek equipment operation or forklift certification when eligible

Material moving machine operators keep supply chains moving by safely handling the equipment that transports goods through warehouses, factories, and shipping networks—supporting the flow of materials that power modern industry.

Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O*NET

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/material-moving-machine-operators.htm>