



South Dakota High Demand & High Wage Career

Career Cluster:
Construction



Operating Engineers

Standard Occupational Code 47-2073

What They Do

Operate one or several types of power construction equipment, such as bulldozers, scrapers, compressors, derricks, tractors, or front-end loaders to excavate, move and grade earth, erect structures or pour hard surface pavement. May repair and maintain equipment in addition to other duties.

Is This For You?

Work Interests are described in the following categories (compatible with Holland's Model). People who tend to succeed in this career are:

Realistic (Doers) — Prefer to work with objects, things, machines, tools, plants, or animals. They have mechanical ability, enjoy being outdoors, and working with their hands.

Conventional (Organizers) — Detail oriented and organized. They like to analyze data, keep financial records, and do research. They can be counted on to be accurate and enjoy structure and closure.

Work Styles (personality tendencies) of people who perform well in this occupation have:

Cautiousness — A tendency to be careful, deliberate, and risk-avoidant when making work-related decisions or doing work.

Dependability — A tendency to be reliable, responsible, and consistent in meeting work-related obligations.

Abilities reflect a person's aptitude to acquire skills and knowledge. The following abilities are important for success in the career.

- Control Precision
- Depth Perception
- Multi-limb Coordination
- Near Vision
- Far Vision
- Rate Control
- Reaction Time
- Arm-Hand Steadiness
- Problem Sensitivity
- Response Orientation

Work Activities

- Controlling Machines and Processes
- Monitoring Processes, Materials, or Surroundings
- Operating Vehicles, Mechanized Devices, or Equipment

Education & Training

The minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent is recommended for operating engineers, followed by learning the trade on the job. To be more competitive in the job market, some postsecondary education in a heavy equipment operations type of program would be beneficial.

A registered apprenticeship is another option for preparing for this occupation. To learn more, visit StartTodaySD.com or contact your local Job Service office to get started.

Recommended Levels* for the National Career Readiness Certificate

Applied Math	3
Workplace Documents	4
Graphic Literacy	4

*Using the median skill level.

Where They Work

The South Dakota industries which employ the largest number of operating engineers are:

- Specialty Trade Contractors
- Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
- Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals

South Dakota Employment & Wages

2024 Employment	2034 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Average Annual Openings	Annual Median Wage	Annual Average Wage
2,362	2,633	271	11.5%	229	\$59,500	\$59,330

Additional References

Labor Market Information Center

www.dlr.sd.gov/lmic

Career OneStop

www.careeronestop.org

O*Net Online

www.onetonline.org

mySkills myFuture

<https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>

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