

Heavy Equipment Mechanic

Keep excavators, dozers and loaders running. Half diesel engine, half hydraulics, and a laptop plugged into a machine the size of a house.

TYPICAL PAY

\$65,510

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$47k to \$94k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Dealer shops, mine and quarry sites, construction yards, a field s...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Shop, welding and math. Fix small engines, bikes, anything with a motor. Employers can tell in ten minutes whether you have actually taken something apart.
- 2 Pick a route** Decision point
 Either a one- or two-year diesel and heavy equipment program at a community college or technical school, or a registered apprenticeship where an employer hires and trains you from day one.
- 3 Learn the systems** 1 to 2 years
 Diesel engines, hydraulics, powertrains, electrical and electronic controls, plus welding. Hydraulics is the part that separates this trade from car mechanics.
- 4 Work through the hours** 3 to 4 years
 A registered apprenticeship typically runs several thousand hours of on-the-job training alongside classroom time before you are signed off.
- 5 Manufacturer training and certification** Ongoing
 Dealer technicians get sent to brand schools for the machines they service. Certification through the national automotive service testing body is the portable proof of skill.

Pros and cons

- + Paid while you train if you get an apprenticeship, with no student debt
- + Overtime is normal and it adds up fast
- + The skill is needed everywhere there is construction, farming or mining
- Heavy, dirty, cold and awkward work on your back under a machine
- Tools cost thousands of dollars and they are yours to buy
- Call-outs at night and on weekends when production is down

Good to know

It is a hydraulics job first

A car mechanic thinks in engines. An excavator is mostly a hydraulic machine: pumps, valves and cylinders moving oil at several thousand pounds per square inch. A pinhole leak at that pressure can inject fluid...

The laptop is a hand tool

Modern equipment logs everything and is serviced through manufacturer software. Technicians plug in, read fault histories, calibrate systems and update machine software. A mechanic who wil...

Optional boosts

Commercial driver's license. Welding certification. Manufacturer master technician programs. Hydraulics specialist training.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines (49-3042.00)
 ASE, the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence
 Universal Technical Institute: diesel technology program
 Apprenticeship.gov, the United States Department of Labor apprenticeship site

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/heavy-equipment-mechanic>



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