

Heavy equipment mechanics have wide range of hiring opportunities

By Emilia Benton
CORRESPONDENT

Across the country, the transportation industry is one that's continuing to thrive and produce more and more openings for qualified job candidates. The area of heavy equipment mechanic positions is no exception.

According to ZipRecruiter.com – a jobs marketplace – heavy equipment mechanics maintain, diagnose, repair and adjust industrial machinery such as mobile mechanical, pneumatic and hydraulic equipment such as bulldozers, cranes, conveyors and graders. These roles can be found within a variety of industries, including commercial transportation, aviation, loading and earth moving. Heavy equipment mechanics are responsible for ensuring that mechanical products and equipment are functional and safe at all times.

Their on-the-job responsibilities on all construction equipment include:

- Testing,
- Diagnosing,
- Repairing and
- Performing routine maintenance work.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2018 median pay was \$50,320 per year, or \$24.19 per hour, and overall employment of heavy vehicle



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and mobile equipment service technicians is projected to grow 8 percent from 2016 to 2026, about as fast as the average for all occupations.

According to both the BLS and ZipRecruiter, candidates are qualified to enter the field once they have earned their high school diploma or GED certificate. However, it's becoming more common for employers to prioritize

applications from candidates who have postsecondary degrees or certifications in subjects such as engineering, diesel technology and small engine repair. At the same time, regardless of education level, much of the training for a heavy equipment mechanic is done on the job, which means experience in the field is considered to be a big plus for employers.

Specialists within the heavy equipment mechanic field include automotive master mechanics, who diagnose problems and repair parts of vehicles and transmission systems. Farm equipment mechanics operate on industrial farm machines such as harvesters, irrigation systems and tractors. There are also opportunities within the areas of motorboat mechanics and elec-

tric motor repairs.

Heavy equipment mechanic jobs would likely appeal to people who prefer not to work in one setting day in and day out. Workers often spend half their day in an indoor setting such as an office or warehouse and the other half on the actual job site, which would normally be outdoors.

Schedules are usually consistent, and there are

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sometimes opportunities to earn overtime. These jobs usually do not include much in the way of administrative tasks, with employees instead spending most of their time gaining hands-on experience through their projects.

AmeriTech Staffing in Houston is an agency that matches candidates to heavy equipment mechanic jobs (among many other jobs in other industries). It works to find candidates who have experience in the fields they're inquiring about above anything else, and many of its recruiters are well-versed in the industries they're working to match people with.

For more information about or to submit an application with AmeriTech Staffing, visit ameritechsi.com. For industry information and to search for job listings in Houston and throughout the U.S. via ZipRecruiter, visit www.ziprecruiter.com.

Training for heavy-duty mechanic career path includes several options

By Valerie Sweeten
CORRESPONDENT

With Houston's boom in construction on highways and housing, heavy-duty mechanics and diesel service technicians are in demand.

Darrin Brust, campus president at Universal Technical Institute, said these positions go where the work is, such as in infrastructure and the oil and gas industry.

"In Houston, we haven't seen the demand that we're seeing today. There's a shortage of technicians across the board," Brust said.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, duties of a diesel service technicians range from inspecting, repairing, and overhauling buses and trucks as well as repairing any type of diesel engine.

BLS reported the median annual wage for diesel service technicians and mechanics was \$47,350 in May 2018.

Work conditions can vary from repair shops and worksites.

Payscale.com reported that duties can include performing regular inspections to ensure machines comply with local, state, and federal regulations. Advanced mechanical skills to troubleshoot and fix industrial equipment using heavy tools is also needed to perform this job.

Requirements for a heavy-duty mechanic are a high school diploma or technical degree and a valid license to operate industrial equipment. Previous mechanic experience is helpful.

Brust said a person interested in this career is self-motivated, eager to learn and be in charge of themselves.

"They can go through our training, and auto/diesel mechanics are always continuing to learn. The technology is changing that fast," he said.

Schooling, such as at the Universal Technical Institute, has various options.

Brust said the core diesel program is 45 weeks long, but if taken in combination of the auto/diesel pro-

gram, it's 75 weeks. There is also training for working on diesel/industrial training with Cummins engines, which is 57 weeks.

Classes are full-time, held six hours a day, five days a week. Students have the options between choosing a morning or afternoon class time. The morning time is

from 6:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., and the afternoon class time is from 2-8:15 p.m.

Each three-week session is dedicated to a specific course before moving onto the next course. Each class is 50/50 lecture and lab.

"The cool thing is that everybody is hands-on in the lab. The important thing about this education is that it's industry aligned, and career focused," said Brust.

If looking to get in this field, Brust recommended for potential mechanics to research and compare all educational options.

"Look at all outcomes and what's best. There are so many career opportunities available," he said.



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CAREER RESCUE

Let technical skills shine during the interview process

Q: Skilled labor staff have a whole different set of skills to highlight for employers. How can they "shine" during the hiring process by highlighting these skills?

A: Technical skills may get you in the door for an interview, but the real need for employers involves candidates who can communicate in a variety of ways. Make no mistake about it, being invited for an interview is the single most important meeting during your job search.



Kimberly Thompson

Knowing how to present your skills is often the deciding factor toward a job offer.

Skilled workers represent numerous industries where specific skills are needed for the job. Most are technical in nature and require training to obtain them. But here's the catch – most candidates who are seriously being considered for the same job position as you will often have the same technical skills.

Distinguishing your background from other candidates means you need to carefully study the job description and use an interview strategy to help the interviewer remember you.

Burning Glass analyzed millions of job postings across the United States and reported three top skills that were requested by employers across all industries from candi-

dates. The skills are communication, writing and organization, along with the technical skills need for the job.

Naturally, in today's market, you need basic computer knowledge, which is becoming a minimum qualification for even low-wage jobs.

For job seekers who want to move their career toward management or more advanced roles, skills such as supervision, negotiation, analysis, research, and project management are a plus.

Knowing the skills most employers request, in addition to the technical skills needed, gives you the extra edge during interviews. Most job candidates hear about the need to "sell" their background to the employer, yet are uncomfortable with sales.

Truth be told, trying to be a salesperson for the first time during the most important meeting of your job search is a lot of pressure. You want to stand out in a good

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