

What's this job all about?

Are you someone who just has to stop and look at the big trucks on the road? You just might be interested in being a heavy equipment mechanic. These are the folks that maintain and fix the machines used in construction, logging and other industrial work. They are a big part of making sure construction jobs stay on time and on track.

When most people think of Alaska they think "big" and this is one job with potentially big opportunities. The gas and oil industry throughout the state, as well as the construction, transportation and mining industries statewide, have big machines with big engines that need knowledgeable mechanics to fix them. And if a gas pipeline is built in our state, there will be even more need for people who know how to keep the big machines moving.

Here's what Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics do:

- Maintain equipment so it operates safely.
- When equipment breaks down, examine it for defects.
- Use hand-held computers to diagnose parts that need repair and fix them.
- Use jacks or hoists to lift and move large parts.
- Check parts for damage using gauges and meters.
- Clean parts by spraying them with or soaking them in solvent.
- Grease and oil parts that need it.
- Repair or replace damaged or worn parts.
- Use welding equipment to fix broken frames or parts.
- Reassemble equipment and test it for performance and safety.
- Heavy equipment mechanics in large repair shops perform more complex repairs. They may rebuild engines, fix electrical problems, or repair hydraulic pumps.
- Able to independently troubleshoot problems, able to work in remote locations, and ability to work independently.

How much money can I make?

Median Wage: \$26.14 per hour.

In Alaska, the median wage for heavy equipment mechanics is about \$4,531 per month. This amount varies slightly by region. Wages and benefits vary by employer. Full-time mechanics may receive benefits such as sick leave, vacation pay, and health insurance.

How long does it take to receive training?

Depending on your ability and focus, becoming certified as a journeyman mobile heavy equipment mechanic takes about three to five years as an apprentice to earn the required total of 6000 hours of on-the-job training and nine to eleven weeks of classroom instruction per year. If you go through a technical school or a university program, getting training varies.

HELPFUL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

Below is a list of high school courses that will help prepare you for this occupation. While you do not have to take all of them, you should consider them in course planning. Some of these courses are also available at colleges and technical schools.

Construction Trades

Electronics

Energy, Power, and Transportation Technologies

Introduction to Mechanics

Advanced Auto Mechanics

Automotive Service

Diesel Mechanics and Repair

Health and Safety Education

Safety and First Aid

Drivers' Education

Industrial and Technology Education

Exploration of Careers

General Industrial Arts

Industrial Safety and First Aid

Equipment Maintenance and Repair

Industrial and Technology Education Work Experience

Mathematics

General Math

Applied Math

When I'm ready to work, will there be job openings?

The outlook for job openings for heavy equipment mechanics is above average to 2014. Average growth is projected. Besides the openings that occur from people in this field retiring, even more openings will occur if a gasline is built. Demand for heavy equipment mechanics follows growth in the economy and Alaska's economy is expected to continue to grow.

Please see the Training Programs section of this booklet to find out more about training in these career fields in Alaska.

