

Plant Fitter

Plant fitters repair, service and maintain light and heavy plant equipment. This includes machinery such as bulldozers, cranes, diggers and fabrication machinery and also smaller items such as air compressors, pumps and generators.

The Work

You could be:

- dealing with all aspects of the equipment: electrical, electronic, mechanical, hydraulic or pneumatic
- doing regular servicing, checking for damage or wear and making adjustments
- finding the cause of breakdowns using manuals, worksheets and technical drawings
- using computer diagnostic equipment to find faults in complex machinery
- using various hand and power tools, as well as welding gear and electrical testing equipment
- repairing or replacing damaged parts and reassembling and testing the machine
- recording on daily log sheets the work done and time spent on it.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

The starting salary for a plant fitter is usually around £16,000 a year, rising to between £23,000 and £37,000 a year or more with experience. You can earn extra through overtime and other allowances.

Conditions

- You might work on construction sites and be outdoors in all weathers.
- At other times you might work in a workshop where conditions might be noisy, dirty and oily.
- You might have to work at heights, for example on cranes.
- You may have to bend, stretch and lift heavy machinery parts.
- You would usually have to wear a protective helmet, boots and safety glasses.
- Overtime working, including weekends, is common and you may work nightshifts.
- You may have to travel from one site to another to service machines.

Getting In

- You could enter through the Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship (FA), which you can start in S5 and study at school and college. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually need 3 subjects at National 5 including English and Maths. Some colleges also ask for Physics.
- Most entrants start through a Modern Apprenticeship. Many employers look for 3-4 subjects at National 4

or 5 including English, Maths and a science or technological subject.

- You may have to sit an entry test to see how suited you are to this type of work.
- You must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or equivalent if you work on construction sites. You will need to pass the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Health, Safety and Environment Test and have a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) certificate.
- You might also need to have the Client Contractor National Safety Group (CCNSG) Safety Passport. See the Electrical Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) website for more details.
- You should have good general health and be physically fit, as this can be a very active and strenuous job.
- A full UK driving licence is usually essential and a special category of licence for driving heavy vehicles is sometimes required.
- Certain colour vision conditions may affect careers in this branch of engineering.

Construction plant mechanics are employed by civil engineering companies, building contractors, suppliers and distributors of plant equipment and plant hire companies.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- good at communicating
- interested in machinery and prepared to learn good mechanical skills
- practical with good hand skills
- accurate, methodical and systematic
- patient when finding faults
- responsible and able to follow health and safety procedures
- willing to work at heights.

You need to be able to:

- work alone and also as a good team member
- plan your own work and improvise if required
- work quickly to avoid delays on site
- pay attention to detail.

Training

- Through a Modern Apprenticeship, training would be to the standards set by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the sector skills council that covers construction engineering.
- Your apprenticeship would combine on the job and off the job training at college and lead to SVQ in Construction Plant or Machinery Maintenance at SCQF Levels 5 and 6.
- You need to be willing to keep up to date with changes in technology. In particular you need to attend the specialist training courses provided by manufacturers of machinery.

Getting On

- You could be promoted to supervisor or manager after suitable experience.

- You could also progress into plant technical or sales services.
- Some mechanics are self-employed.
- You may be able to work abroad with major civil engineering companies.

Contacts

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Tel: 0344 994 8800

Website: www.citb.co.uk

Website (2): www.citb.co.uk/bconstructive

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)

Website: www.ecitb.org.uk

GoConstruct

Website: www.goconstruct.org

Mineral Products Qualifications Council (MPQC)

Tel: 0115 983 6580

Website: www.mp-qc.org