



Explore a Career as a MACHINE OPERATOR OR MACHINIST

Target Occupation Profile

What do Machine Operators and Machinists do?

Machine operators and machinists who specialize in metal and plastic use machine tools to make or modify parts by setting, operating, and tending machinery that changes the shape of metal and plastic. They typically work in machine shops using specialized measuring and cutting tools. Because the technology of machining is changing rapidly, workers must learn to operate a wide range of machines. Some newer manufacturing processes use lasers, water jets and electrified wires to cut the workpiece. An understanding of the unique capabilities and features of different machines, including those that extrude, forge, roll, cut, drill, grind, lathe, mill, mold, and cast is important to these occupations.

Training & Educational Opportunities

You will have plenty of employment opportunities as a machine operator or machinist - metal and plastic, but first you will have to complete specific training. Many need only a high school diploma or GED and complete on-the-job training, some earn a certificate or complete some college. Students of machining will complete courses in trigonometry, geometry, blueprint reading, metalworking, and drafting.

As a Machine Operator or Machinist – Metal and Plastic you will:

- Align, secure and adjust cutting tools
- Measure, examine and test completed products for defects
- Monitor the feed and speed of machines
- Present finished workpieces to customers and make modifications if needed
- Set up, operate and disassemble manual and automatic machine tools
- Turn, mill, drill, shape and grind machine parts to specifications

Machine Operators and Machinists - Metal and Plastic are in demand in Cook County!

Cook County employment of machine operators and machinists- metal and plastic is expected to increase through the year 2020.

Machine Operator or Machinist – Metal and Plastic

Training Providers

There are many training providers available in Cook County to supply you with the training you need for a career as a machine operator/machinist – metal and plastic.

To access a list of training providers for this occupation and many more, please visit Illinoisworknet.com and select the 'Training and Credentials' menu option to view 'WIOA Approved Training Programs.'



Types of Employers

There are many types of employers that hire machine operators and machinists – metal and plastic in Cook County including:

- Aerospace parts manufacturers
- Forging and stamping businesses
- Machinery manufacturers
- Transportation equipment manufacturers

Wages & Openings

Machine Operators and Machinists – Metal and Plastic Wages for Cook County*	Starting Wage	Experienced Wage
Extruding and Drawing Machines	\$10.87	\$16.98
Forging Machines	\$14.85	\$21.87
Rolling Machines	\$9.68	\$16.45
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machines	\$9.31	\$16.37
Drilling and Boring Machine Tools	\$9.62	\$15.72
Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tools	\$12.17	\$17.62
Lathe and Turning Machine Tools	\$12.61	\$18.79
Milling and Planing Machines	\$12.46	\$19.26
Machinists	\$11.30	\$19.11
Foundry Mold and Coremakers	\$11.03	\$15.69
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machines	\$9.46	\$16.46
Multiple Machine Tools	\$10.50	\$18.75

Machine Operators and Machinists – Metal and Plastic Job Openings Data*

Average Annual Job Openings Cook County	491
Average Annual Job Openings Chicago Metro	1,175

*Source: Emsi, 2017.2

Opportunities

After you complete your training as a machine operator or machinist – metal and plastic, you will have many opportunities for additional certification and advancement. Some opportunities include:

- CNC Programmer
- Machine Supervisor
- Mold Maker
- Tool and Die Maker

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