

The Craft of Agricultural Mechanics

Agricultural mechanics are concerned with fault finding, repair, overhaul and maintenance of farm tractors and farm machinery.

Central Aspects
Learning new practical skills
Learning how machines work
Repairing machines and components
Working with vehicles
Learning and developing new craft-related skills

Secondary Aspects
Being responsible for controlling or adjusting equipment
Understanding technical drawings and diagrams
Being accurate with numbers in counting, measuring and arithmetic
Providing advice
Practical skills and theoretical knowledge

Other Aspects
Providing a service to members of the public
Driving vehicles
Working with electricity or electronics
Keeping accurate records or reports
Being well-organised and careful with practical tasks
Travelling from place to place
Working evenings or weekends
Taking responsibility for own learning, including the allocation of study time

Work activities

The work of agricultural mechanics ranges from the repair of agricultural tractors, light and heavy commercial trucks and vans, earth-moving track machines, forklift trucks and farm machines, that is. forage equipment, balers, mowers, crop sprayers, fertiliser applicators, combine harvesters, tillage and slurry handling equipment.

Besides the normal tractor and machinery trade, employers such as garages and large agricultural contracting firms who utilise fleets of tractors and equipment also employ their own maintenance staff of agricultural mechanics. A considerable number of firms that deal in garage and factory equipment are now recruiting agricultural mechanics as their technical sales persons and service engineers.

Personal qualities and skills

You need to have technical ability and you must be good at solving problems. It is very important that you can diagnose faults and repair them quickly. You will also need knowledge of mechanical and electrical systems.

You also need good communication skills, to explain to farmers how machinery works and to discuss faults and repairs.

Pay and opportunities

The basic working week for an agricultural mechanic would be a basic 39-hour week. This may vary, due to seasonal factors.

During your apprenticeship you will be paid an apprentice rate. The actual rates paid may vary, depending on the occupation and employer. Generally, the rates will increase in a number of steps during the apprenticeship. You should seek details of rates of pay for apprentices from your prospective employer.

All apprentices are paid a training allowance by FÁS while attending off-the-job training phases 2, 4 and 6.

Opportunities arise from time-to-time for promotion to supervisor level. Many persons use an apprenticeship as a first step in proceeding to such occupations as instructors, teachers, training advisers, managers and owners of businesses.

Where apprentices and crafts persons have the necessary ability, initiative and basic qualifications, opportunities are available for advancement. These include advanced technological and management courses which are available in Institutes of Technology, schools of management, professional institutes, etc.

People anxious to advance themselves in their careers are advised to discover for themselves what opportunities are available.

Note: Wage and salary figures quoted under pay and opportunities are approximate and are for guideline purposes only. These may vary depending on experience or economic and local circumstances. Any variances are outside the control of FÁS.

The craft is designated for apprenticeship training and as such is governed by the statutory apprenticeship rules that have been made by FÁS