

CAREER OF THE WEEK: Port Operative

If you've ever wondered who keeps the huge ships moving and the ports running smoothly, a port operative might just be the role for you. Port operatives are the people behind the scenes at docks and harbours, ensuring cargo is loaded, unloaded, and stored safely. They play a vital part in the supply chain, helping goods move efficiently across the country and the world.

What does a port operative do?

Port operatives handle a variety of tasks. You could be operating cranes and forklifts, directing containers, checking paperwork, or coordinating with ship crews and transport companies. Safety is a huge priority, so part of your day involves following strict procedures to prevent accidents. You might also monitor equipment, inspect cargo, and make sure everything complies with regulations. No two days are the same – one moment you might be moving containers, the next checking cargo manifests or organising shipments for trucks and trains.



What can I expect to earn as a port operative?

Pay for port operatives can vary depending on experience and location. Entry-level roles usually start around £20,000–£25,000 per year, but with experience and additional responsibilities, you could earn up to £35,000 or more. Some ports also offer shift work, overtime, and additional pay for working evenings or weekends, which can increase your earnings.

What subjects should I study to become a port operative?

There's no single subject requirement, but certain areas can help. Maths and IT are useful for keeping track of cargo and using logistics software. Courses in business or logistics might give you a head start in understanding how ports operate. Most importantly, practical skills, safety awareness, and good communication are key.

How can I start my career as a port operative?

Many port operatives begin through apprenticeships, vocational courses, or entry-level roles where on-the-job training is provided. Getting a forklift or crane licence can make you more employable. Ports often advertise vacancies on their websites, and local colleges may offer logistics or port operations courses. Showing enthusiasm, reliability, and a willingness to learn can help you secure your first role and start building a career in this fast-paced industry.

A career as a port operative is hands-on, varied, and essential to keeping the country's trade flowing. If you like working outdoors, using machinery, and being part of a team, this could be the perfect fit.

To research local education and training opportunities that could lead to a career as a port operative, visit our partner website www.logonmoveon.co.uk

Other useful websites to find out more about a career as a port operative:

National Careers Service – Port Operative <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/port-operative>

Associated British Ports – Careers <https://careers.abports.co.uk/>



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