

Works depot operator Job Description

A free job description template for the Local government industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This works depot operator job description template is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and local government practices at the time of publication. Confirm the applicable modern award or enterprise agreement for your council and ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws and safety obligations.

1. Position overview

A council works depot operator carries out the outdoor works that keep a community moving — maintaining and repairing roads, footpaths, kerbs and drainage, operating plant and machinery, supporting waste and civil works, setting up traffic control, and general labouring as part of a depot crew. The role is physical, safety-critical work that combines plant operation with reliable teamwork.

In Australia, works depot operators are typically classified under the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112) as outdoor or operational employees on the shared Level 1–11 scale, usually around Level 2 to Level 5 depending on the plant tickets held and the range of duties performed. Many councils pay under an enterprise agreement instead of the award.

This template provides a foundation for creating clear, compliant job descriptions that attract skilled, safety-focused staff. Once hired, manage your depot crews efficiently with rostering software.

2. Key responsibilities

Road and infrastructure maintenance

Repairing and maintaining roads, footpaths, kerbs, drainage and council infrastructure, including patching, grading and general civil works.

Plant and machinery operation

Operating council plant such as trucks, loaders, backhoes, rollers and small plant safely and within ticket and licence requirements.

Waste and drainage works

Supporting waste collection, street sweeping, drainage clearing and stormwater maintenance as directed by the works supervisor.

Traffic control and safety

Setting up and maintaining traffic control and worksite safety, following traffic management plans and keeping the public and crew safe.

General labouring

Carrying out manual labouring tasks, loading and unloading materials, and assisting other crews with civil, parks and emergency works.

Depot and equipment care

Completing pre-start checks, cleaning and basic maintenance of plant and tools, and keeping the depot and worksites tidy and safe.

3. Skills and attributes

- Plant operation: Safe, confident operation of trucks, loaders, plant and small equipment within ticket and licence requirements.
- Safety focus: Consistent use of PPE, safe work methods, traffic control and hazard reporting on active worksites.
- Civil works knowledge: Practical knowledge of road, drainage and infrastructure maintenance methods and materials.
- Physical fitness: Capacity for sustained physical, outdoor work including lifting, digging and repetitive manual tasks.
- Teamwork: A cooperative, dependable approach to working in a depot crew and supporting other teams.
- Reliability: Punctuality and the flexibility to respond to on-call, storm and emergency works when needed.

4. Qualifications and requirements

The qualifications for works depot operator positions depend on the plant operated and the type of works. Some are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable.

- Driver's licence (required) — A current, valid driver's licence is required; a truck (MR/HR/HC) licence is often needed depending on the plant operated
- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Physical fitness (required) — Ability to perform sustained outdoor physical and manual work in all weather conditions
- Plant operation tickets — High-risk work licences or plant tickets (loader, backhoe, roller, etc.) are desirable and may be required for specific roles
- Traffic control accreditation — Traffic control / traffic management (implement TMP) accreditation is advantageous
- Construction white card — A construction induction (white) card and first aid certificate are desirable for worksite-based roles

5. Working conditions

- Outdoor work on active worksites and roads in all weather conditions
- Physically demanding tasks including lifting, digging and manual handling
- Regular operation of plant, machinery and hand tools
- Early starts and on-call response for storms, flooding and emergency works
- Work near traffic and the public requiring strict safety compliance

- Compliance with council policies, PPE, traffic management and workplace health and safety requirements

6. Award information

Local Government Industry Award 2020

Most council works depot operator positions in Australia are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112). This modern award sets minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for council outdoor and operational employees. View current Local Government Award pay rates.

The award uses a shared Level 1–11 classification ladder. A works depot operator is typically classified around Level 2 to Level 5 depending on the plant tickets held and the range of duties — for FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). Casual employees receive a 25% loading. Many councils pay above the award under an enterprise agreement — always check. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Penalty rates, on-call and allowances

Under MA000112, weekend and public-holiday penalties apply: for full-time and part-time staff, Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250%. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty. On-call and overtime rates apply for storm, flood and emergency works.

Depot crews may also attract allowances such as adverse working conditions (from about \$1.03/hr up to \$14.73/hr for the worst conditions), first aid (about \$0.54/hr) and camping (about \$33.87/night) for remote work. Confirm the current rates and allowances that apply to your council, and check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a council works depot operator do?

A council works depot operator carries out outdoor works that keep a community moving — maintaining and repairing roads, footpaths, kerbs and drainage, operating plant and machinery, supporting waste and civil works, setting up traffic control, and general labouring as part of a depot crew. It is physical, safety-critical work that combines plant operation with reliable teamwork and emergency response.

Q: What award covers works depot operators in Australia?

Most council works depot operator positions are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112), which sets minimum pay, penalty rates and conditions across a shared Level 1–11 scale. Many councils instead pay under an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your council.

Q: What classification level should I use for a works depot operator?

Under the Local Government Award, works depot operators are typically classified around Level 2 to Level 5 depending on the plant tickets held and the range of duties. For FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). See our Local Government Award pay guide for current rates, and check any enterprise agreement.

Q: Do I need to include pay rates in a job description?

It's not legally required, but including indicative pay rates can attract more applicants and set clear expectations. You can reference the applicable award or enterprise-agreement rate, or use phrases like 'Award rates plus penalties' or 'Competitive hourly rate based on experience.' Check the current Local Government Award rates for guidance.

Qualifications

Q: What licences and tickets do works depot operators need?

Requirements vary by role. A valid driver's licence is essential, and a truck licence (MR/HR/HC) is often required depending on the plant operated. Plant operation tickets (loader, backhoe, roller), traffic control accreditation and a construction induction (white) card are commonly required for specific works. Verify all tickets before a worker starts and keep records — HR software helps track expiries.

Q: Do works depot operators need a formal qualification?

Not always a trade qualification, but plant tickets and licences are usually essential. Many operators build their tickets over time, and councils often hire on reliability, physical fitness and a clean driving record for entry-level Level 2 roles, then support staff to gain further plant and traffic control accreditations.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a works depot operator?

Mandatory requirements usually include a valid driver's licence (and often a truck licence), working rights in Australia and physical fitness. Preferred qualifications include specific plant operation tickets, traffic control accreditation, a white card and a first aid certificate. Match the essential requirements to the actual plant and works the role involves.

Q: Can I hire works depot operators without experience?

Yes, for entry-level roles. Many councils hire labourers at Level 1–2 and train them on plant and tickets over time. Focus on reliability, physical fitness, a clean driving record and a safety-first attitude. Clear job descriptions help candidates understand the physical, safety-critical nature of the work and self-select appropriately.

Employment

Q: Should I hire casual or permanent works depot operators?

This depends on your workload. Casual operators offer flexibility for peak works and emergency response but attract a 25% casual loading under the Local Government Award. Permanent part-time or full-time staff provide crew continuity and stronger retention. Many councils use a mix — permanent staff for core crews and casuals for peaks, storms and leave cover.

Q: What penalty rates and on-call apply to works depot operators?

Under the Local Government Award (MA000112), for full-time and part-time staff Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250%. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty. On-call and overtime rates apply for storm, flood and emergency works. Use award interpretation software to calculate rates accurately.

Q: What allowances apply to council depot crews?

Under the Local Government Award, depot crews may be entitled to adverse-working-conditions allowances (from about \$1.03/hr up to \$14.73/hr for the worst conditions such as sewer/septic work), first aid (about \$0.54/hr, max \$20.62/week) and camping (about \$33.87/night) for remote work. Confirm the current allowances and any enterprise-agreement terms that apply to your council.

Q: What should I include in a works depot operator employment contract?

Key elements include: position title and classification level, employment type (casual, part-time or full-time), hourly rate, applicable award or enterprise agreement, reporting structure, main duties, depot location and required licences and tickets. For casuals, include the 25% casual loading. Use our digital employment contracts to simplify this process.

Rostering

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to depot crews?

Award and agreement roosting rules vary, so confirm the notice period that applies to your council. As a general practice, providing rosters at least 7 days in advance gives crews visibility of their works and sites. Using roosting software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I roster works depot crews and on-call cover?

Assign crews based on scheduled works, plant tickets and each operator's availability, and build a fair on-call roster for storm, flood and emergency response. Use roosting tools to track on-call and fill gaps when staff are absent. This keeps works programs on track and emergency cover in place without overloading individual operators.

Q: What breaks are works depot operators entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or enterprise agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Because crews work off-site on active worksites, set clear break policies and ensure staff record their time accurately. Use time and attendance tools with GPS clock-in to support compliance.

Q: How do I manage depot operator availability for roosting?

Collect availability preferences during onboarding and update them regularly. Use HR software and roosting tools to track when each operator can work and any ticket or licence constraints. Set clear policies about minimum availability, on-call rotation and how to request changes, which simplifies crew and emergency planning.