



California Occupational Guides

Guide for



Biomass Collectors and Sorters in California

May also be called: Front Load Truck Drivers; Heavy Equipment Operators; Roll-off Truck Drivers; Solid Waste Collectors

What Would I Do?

Biomass Collectors operate large trucks or highly sophisticated refuse gathering and collecting machinery. They collect biodegradable materials such as agricultural, food, paper, and wood waste; mill and forest residues; and crops grown specifically to be converted into biogas or electricity. Biomass Collectors drive along set routes to collect material from various clients. Depending on the clientele, Biomass Collectors may collect biomass from urban areas and drive on city streets, sharing the road with the general public. Biomass collected from urban and developed areas may consist of food waste from restaurants, wood from building demolition sites, pallets, and construction waste. Mill residues are collected from home improvement stores and lumber mills. Agricultural waste Collectors may have to drive long distances to farm locations to pick up crop refuse, harvested energy crops, or animal waste. Agricultural Biomass Collectors may need to navigate large trucks on unpaved roads, and share the road with slower motorized farm equipment.

After collecting the various types of biomass, Collectors transport the material to collection and storage sites or processing plants. They must follow rules established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and find routes that can accommodate large trucks. Biomass Collectors are required to fill out driving logs and other types of administrative paperwork in order to record their delivery and drop-off activities.

Biomass Sorters sort through materials that have been dropped off by Biomass Collectors. Sorters separate the materials and remove any items that are not considered biodegradable, such as chemically treated lumber which is a hazardous waste. They may also place the collected biomass material into designated areas before it is converted into biofuel. In addition to their regular duties, Biomass Sorters may also be responsible for keeping the work area clean and free of debris.

Tools and Technology

Biomass Collectors drive and operate trucks and equipment such as front-loading, side-loading, and tractor-trailer trucks. Collectors working on unpaved forest roads may operate specialized slash-binding tractors that can maneuver on rugged terrain. They may also use two-way radios to talk to dispatchers and use mileage logging software to store data on the routes that they travel. Biomass Sorters operate machinery, such as conveyer belts, fork lifts, material hoists, or sorters.

Important Tasks and Related Skills

A formal survey to determine specific skill requirements for Biomass Collectors and Sorters has yet to be completed. Therefore, the sample skills shown below are common for the three closest occupations to Biomass Collectors: Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer, Refuse and Recyclable Material

Collectors, and Recycling and Reclamation Workers. Each task is matched to a sample skill required to carry out the task.

| Task | Skill Used in this Task |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Check vehicles to ensure that mechanical, safety, and emergency equipment is in good working order. | Operation Monitoring |
| Maintain logs of working hours and of vehicle service and repair status, following applicable state and federal regulations. | Transportation |
| Maneuver trucks into loading or unloading positions, following signals from loading crew and checking that vehicle and loading equipment are properly positioned. | Operation and Control |
| Read bills of lading to determine assignment details. | Administration and Management |
| Move levers and controls that operate lifting devices, such as forklifts, lift beams and swivel-hooks, hoists, and elevating platforms, to load, unload, transport, and stack material. | Control Precision |
| Move controls to drive gasoline- or electric-powered trucks, cars, or tractors and transport materials between loading, processing, and storage areas. | Multilimb Coordination |
| Operate processing equipment, such as sorters. | Arm and Hand Steadiness |
| Place materials on conveyor belts. | Manual Dexterity |
| Perform basic vehicle maintenance tasks such as adding oil, fuel, and radiator fluid, or performing minor repairs. | Equipment Maintenance |
| Report vehicle defects, accidents, traffic violations, or damage to the vehicles. | Public Safety and Security |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor [Occupational Information Network \(O*NET\)](https://online.onetcenter.org) at online.onetcenter.org

Working Conditions

The jobs of Biomass Collector and Sorter are physically demanding. The work can be repetitive and may require workers to lift and carry heavy objects and stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl in awkward positions. Some Collectors and Sorters may be exposed to loud noises, foul odors, or dangerous machinery. Safety gear and clothing may need to be worn by some Biomass Collectors and Sorters, such as protective eye wear, protective hearing devices, gloves, hardhats, and other safety devices including respirators.

Biomass Collectors and Sorters generally start work around 5 or 6 a.m. and work eight-hour shifts, although longer shifts are common.

Biomass Collectors and Sorters who are employed by local, State, or federal agencies may be unionized. Biomass Collectors and Sorters who are employed by private sector companies are generally not union members.

Will This Job Fit Me?

The jobs of Biomass Collector and Sorter may appeal to those who enjoy working on projects that require practical, hands-on problems and solutions. This occupation may satisfy those who are committed to improving the environment through the production and use of renewable energy. Those who do not enjoy keeping track of a lot of paperwork or working closely with others may also like this job.

What Wages and Benefits Can I Expect?

Wages for Biomass Collectors and Sorters in California differ widely depending on job duties, work experience, type of industry, and location of the work.

Wages

A formal salary survey is not available; however, references to annual salaries range from the lower boundary of \$24,000 to the upper boundary of \$48,400. All salaries depend on the pay structure established by each employer for work performed, the nature of the project, and the skill of the Biomass Collector and Sorter. Generally, workers in large cities earn higher wages than those who work in small towns and rural areas.

Benefits

Benefit packages vary widely from company to company. Biomass Collectors and Sorters generally receive health insurance, vacation, sick leave, and holidays. The type of benefit package is determined by company policy or union contract.

What is the Job Outlook?

As this is an emerging occupation, the number of Biomass Collectors and Sorters in California is unknown at this time. Employment opportunities should increase in the future considering society's growing interest in environmental protection and the development of alternative energy sources.

How Do I Qualify?

Education, Training, and Other Requirements

Many employers prefer applicants with a high school diploma or GED. Most employers only require applicants to be over the age of 18 and able to physically perform the work. Biomass Collectors and Sorters generally learn skills informally, on the job, from more experienced workers or their supervisors.

Experience

Prior truck driving experience is desirable but not required for employment as a Biomass Collector.

Early Career Planning

High school preparation courses in English and writing are helpful for students interested in careers as Biomass Collectors and Sorters.

Licensing

Collectors who drive the trucks must have a valid California Commercial Class B Driver License or better, and have a good driving record. A medical exam is also part of the requirement to obtain a Commercial Driver License. Drivers must also take bi-annual medical exams to keep their license, and in some cases may be required to take a medical exam more often. Most employers require pre-employment medical exams and sometimes drug testing. Random drug and alcohol testing may also be required while on the job.

Where Can I Find Training?

There are currently no training providers offering courses related to this occupation; however, there are two ways to search for training information at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?Pageid=1013:

- [Search by Field of Study](#) to find what programs are available and what schools offer those programs.
- [Search by Training Provider](#) to find schools by name, type of school, or location.

Contact the schools you are interested in to learn about the classes available, tuition and fees, and any prerequisite course work.

Where Would I Work?

According to the *California Green Economy Survey*, the largest industries employing Biomass Collectors and Sorters are Landscaping Services and Waste Management, in addition to dairy and crop farms.

Finding a Job

Direct application to employers is one of the most effective job search methods. Jobs may also be found through classified advertisements in newspapers and online job boards.

Online job opening systems include JobCentral at www.jobcentral.com and CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov.

To find your nearest One-Stop Career Center, go to [Service Locator](http://www.servicelocator.org) at www.servicelocator.org. View the [helpful job search tips](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/JobSearchTips.pdf) at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/JobSearchTips.pdf for more resources. (requires [Adobe Reader](#)).

Yellow Page Headings

You can focus your local job search by checking employers listed online or in your local telephone directory. Below are some suggested headings where you might find employers of Biomass Collectors and Sorters.

- Biomass
- Trash Hauling
- Truck Driver Leasing

Find Possible Employers

To locate a list of employers in your area, use "Find Employers" on the LaborMarketInfo Web site at <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/aspdotnet/databrowsing/empMain.aspx?menuChoice=emp>

- Select the search for employers by occupation.
- Select a geographic area.
- Search for an occupation by keyword, occupation, or category.
- Select one of the top industries that employ the occupation.
- This will give you a list of employers in that industry in your area.
- Click on "View Filter Selections" to limit your list to specific cities or employer size.
- Click on an employer for the street address, telephone number, size of business, Web site, etc.
- Contact the employer for possible employment.

Where Could This Job Lead?

With time and experience, some Biomass Collectors and Sorters may be able to promote to supervisor or a management position.

Related Occupations

Below is a list of occupations related to Biomass Collectors and Sorters.

- Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators (53-7032)
- Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators (53-7051)
- Recycling and Reclamation Workers (51-9199.01)
- Refuse and Recyclable Material Collector (53-7081)
- Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer (53-3032)

Other Sources

- California Energy Commission
www.energy.ca.gov
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
www.nrel.gov
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov
- U.S. Energy Information Administration
www.eia.doe.gov
- California Biomass Energy Alliance
www.calbiomass.org
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
www.teamster.org

These links are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement by EDD.

For the Career Professional

The following codes are provided to assist counselors, job placement workers, or other career professionals.

| System | Code |
|---|------|
| SOC – Standard Occupational Classification at www.bls.gov/soc | N/A |
| O*NET – Occupational Information Network at online.onetcenter.org | N/A |

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