

RMS

TRAINING & RECRUITMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO GETTING A START IN MINING!



Are you ready for a new career?

This guide will provide you with a better understanding of how to get a start in the mining, construction or transport industry!

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1.0 Introduction to RMS Training & Recruitment

Welcome to RMS Training and Recruitment. RMS is an accredited RTO (Registered Training Organisation) 51105 that specialises in many aspects of training across various disciplines. Training provided by RMS encompasses all aspects of mining production, civil construction, transport and logistics including specifics in medical and rescue type training courses.

RMS was founded in 2000 by Graeme and Merryn Richards. Graeme and Merryn are hands on owners of RMS and both have a long history in the mining, construction and transport industries including Merryn's background in medical and emergency response sectors.



Graeme, a registered mining manager has been involved in mining transport and construction industries for most of his working life. Having owned and operated large transport fleets, construction and heavy equipment fleets.

Merryn has a background in medical services including emergency response, road trauma and associated care. Merryn spent several years in the role of occupational health services manager for a global mining company within the gold and nickel industries

Together, Graeme and Merryn have worked side by side within RMS for the past 18 years and have developed a series of training plans and outcomes directed towards accreditation compliance for specific tasks as well as developing specific non-accredited courses or information guides to allow for upskilling in areas such as heavy

equipment operation, mining and construction, transport, driver education, and similar.

RMS differ in many areas to other training organisations in that the company focus is placed on the outcomes and achievements of the individual completing the training. RMS focus on lower classroom numbers for all courses to ensure a more personalised outcome for the individuals.

One of the key drivers of RMS as a company is to develop all its own materials based on research and, based on the knowledge of the owners and staff within the organisation.

From this, RMS develop accredited and or non-accredited type course or information guides to suit a specific requirement. As an example, a training course or information guide may be developed to suit a new type of construction motor grader or to reduce accidents in the areas of heavy transport operation or to enhance the skills of individuals that operate 400 to 800-tonne hydraulic mining shovels and similar.

RMS is a services type company and as such, was established to provide a service to its respective clients. Providing a quality service that has an acknowledged outcome is the foundation of RMS.

Being honest in our dealings and being available to answer questions and assist in helping the customer or client find the right solution for them is what sets RMS aside from the others.

We trust you will enjoy your time with RMS Training and Recruitment and look forward to hearing of the outcomes you achieve during your time with RMS.

Notes associated with this specific information guide;

Please note that RMS Training will not mention any specific work sites or employers by name in this guide. RMS will not provide a direct contact link between yourself and a potential employer as this would be considered unfair to others that did not receive the same assistance.

This information guide will focus on mining, construction and the transport sectors. It will not promote any one specific industry, nor will it suggest that one specific industry offers better conditions, salaries or rosters unless that specific industry has a reputation whereby it does provide a better option.

At times, some comments in this information guide may seem harsh or you may feel they are hurtful. That's not a bad thing, there is no sugar coating of information so if some part, section or comment upsets you, then it might be that you need to take a closer look at yourself and change what you do or how the employer or others within the workforce see you. Remember; having a fantastic high paying job is a privilege, not a right.

1.1 The age-old question, how do I get a start?

The information provided in this guide is not based on any specific formula or scientific program. The information provided is based on facts and real-life situations that if followed, may assist you to gain work within the mining, construction or transport industries.

RMS can take no responsibility if you do not gain a position within the mining, construction or transport sectors after having read this guide. Employers have the right to employ whom they wish without having to justify their decision.

People often ask, how come that guy got a job? He has no experience, he has never operated that type of machine before, he is too young or, he is too old and so on.

Many people have the right qualifications, or they have completed the appropriate amount of training or might even have some associated experience and yet the guy or girl that seems to have none of the above gets the job. This can create disappointment, anger, frustration and even resentment.

Which brings us back to the question, what do you need to do to get a start in mining, transport or construction industry?

Let me tell you how I got my start in mining back in 1980. I was a country boy living in north east Victoria and I decided I wanted to head west to the mines and drive big trucks, dozers, loaders and anything else that ran on diesel.

My written skills were not great, and my spelling skills were at an all-time low. Regardless, I decided to write a letter to a company back then called Hamersley Iron. Hamersley Iron had 2 mining operations that I was aware of, one being Paraburdoo and the other being Tom Price and the port facilities at Karratha/Dampier.

I had never been to WA before, but I found the address of Hamersley Iron via my then girlfriend (now my wife) and from there, I wrote my first letter.

Some weeks later I got a response that was pleasant but basically said that they (Hamersley Iron) employ their people generally from WA and do so on an as needed basis.

The responding person thanked me for my letter and wished me every success going forward.

Now whilst this letter was very polite, it was telling me that I did not have a job and nor was there any likelihood of getting one anytime soon.

You could look at this as being a negative, but I was excited by the fact that I had received a response, so I wrote a second letter that was probably like the first but in the second letter I stated that I was happy to pay my way across to western Australia if there was a possibility of work.

About 3 weeks later I received a letter from Hamersley Iron. This second letter had some hope attached, it thanked me again for writing to the company and stated that on a specific day the coming week, the HR manager from WA was going to be flying into Melbourne and going directly to the city to attend a meeting. The letter stated that this HR manager would have limited time to see me but would allocate 5 minutes of his time between meetings. The letter went on to say that if this appealed to me that I should be at the address provided in Melbourne at 10.00 am on the day and wait in the lobby area of the building for the HR manager to arrive.

Melbourne was about a 4-hour drive for me back then and I had only been to Melbourne 3 or 4 times previously, so the trip and the city traffic was a concern to me. Equally, I had to organise a day off work and given I was not a person to take sick days, I had to tell my employer what I was doing and why.

The day came around and I left home around 6.00 am and drove to Melbourne, I found a parking spot and like the letter said, told the reception lady who I was and then found a seat in the lobby area and waited.

At around 11.00 am a man carrying a briefcase approached me, told me his name and said to wait where I was, and that he would be back soon.

At around 1.00 pm he came back, apologised for the delay and told me to follow him into a meeting room. By this stage I was very nervous. We sat at the biggest table I had ever seen, and he proceeded to tell me that he respected the fact that I had written two letters to his company and that if I could find my own way to Perth that I should drop into Hamersley Iron in St Georges Terrace and ask the receptionist to inform him that I was there. He went on to say that if I did that, he would see if he could find me a job at one of their mining sites. No guarantees, but he would try for me.

On the drive home that day I made the decision that I would go to Perth and get that job. I first had to rebuild my old car as it was not ready for the Nullarbor, so I set about working lots of additional overtime to save up for engine parts to allow me to fix the car and to have enough money for fuel, food and breakdowns. I also had to save additional money to allow me to get back to Victoria if the job did not come through.

Three months later I was on the road and heading for Western Australia. I arrived into Perth on a Monday morning and went straight to Hamersley Iron. As promised, I got to see the HR manager again and was offered a job driving a Terex 170 tonne dump truck at the Paraburdoo site.

Two days later I left Perth and drove 1500 kilometres north to Paraburdoo to commence my career in mining.

People that get a start in mining, construction or transport will have their own story to tell as to how their career all came together. What I learnt from my experience that I have never forgotten is, you need to have some idea as to what type of job or career you want. Once you have worked that out, just keep pushing until you achieve your goals.

I was fortunate to have heavy transport and mobile earthmoving equipment experience prior to going mining. Given my love of heavy earthmoving equipment, I knew exactly what I wanted to do and in which industry I wanted to work.

When I applied with Hamersley Iron back in 1980, I did not have a resume. In the letters I wrote, I failed to mention anything about having any previous equipment experience, and yet they still gave me the job.

I meet people that tell me they want to go mining. I ask them what type of job would they like to do, what type of roster do they want to work, what is their 5 to 10-year plan is and what are they prepared to do to get that good paying job in the mining, construction or transport industry?

The answers I usually get are: I just want a good paying job, I don't care what I do. I don't want to work a long roster as I have my sporting commitments. I am hoping they will train me and do everything to get me job ready. These are the wrong answers and will get these people nowhere at all.

Ask yourself this. When looking for a new car, would you:

- Just go to the nearest car dealer and buy the first car you looked at?
- Go to the dealer and buy a two-seat sports car even though you are a family of five?
- Buy a big 4x4 fuel guzzling wagon even though you hate going four-wheel driving, or
- Would you spend some time looking at options, checking vehicle cost, asking about warranty options, choosing colours and transmission type and then buying the one that suits yourself and your family.

The issue with people looking to break into a better paying career such as mining, construction or heavy transport is they fail to consider the positives or the negatives of what is involved in starting a career like this.

There are things to consider such as:

- Rosters. What rosters are available? How do I find out the roster for different work sites and are there different rosters I can choose to suit family life?
- Location of the job? Is it going to be hot? Will I be able to handle that type of heat? Will it be remote with limited access? What would happen if I needed to get home in a hurry?
- The job itself. Will I be an operator? Will I be cleaning toilets? Will I have opportunity to advance up the ladder?
- The salary. Is this job going to be great for my family? Will I be on less money by taking this job? Will there be opportunity to advance my learning and career prospects?

There is a lot for you to consider before finally deciding on your career prospects. In this information guide we will try and cover all the areas associated with getting a start in mining, construction or transport and provide you with some helpful knowledge that will hopefully steer you in the right direction.



We will also cover areas associated with what not to do and explain the basics of how to avoid being viewed as a liability in the mining, construction or transport sectors.

As previously stated, there are no guarantees you will get the dream job you're after, but that's life. If you really want a new career in mining, construction or transport then all you need do is stay focused on getting that job.

Don't be disappointed if you don't succeed right away, keep going and keep bettering yourself until you get the job you're looking for. Giving up on your dream should not be an option.

1.2 What do I have, that the employer would need?

Finding and filling a job position is a simple process when you break it all down, it goes something like this:

- A company has a vacancy and needs a new employee.
- Various people will apply for this new position.
- The company looks at the introductory letters, applications and resumes sent in and considers their options.
- Interviews are conducted with a selected few candidates, and if all goes well,
- Your phone rings with the good news that you have been selected for the position.

Let's assume the company above is a transport company that requires a mature person with a safe driving record, good customer presentation and a HR licence. If you have the skills required by the employer to fill this position and you present well at the interview, then why would the company not employ you.

So, how do you get a mining, construction or transport job? You must have what the employer wants. For example: If the employer is a gold mining operation located in a FIFO (Fly In, Fly Out) setting, and the position is for a loader operator to feed a primary crusher, and as a secondary skill, operate a hydraulic rock breaker to unblock the crusher if needed, then it would be beneficial to understand what the job requires and secondly, to have some knowledge on how to do that job.

If you break the job down, the job is relatively simple and for the most, a common position in the gold mining sector. The position is for a loader operator to load reclaimed stockpiled ore into a primary crusher at a steady rate that will allow for continuous feed into the process mill. As a secondary skill, if the rocks that are being loaded into the primary crusher cause a blockage, the loader operator will be required to operate the rock breaker to dislodge the blockage.

The job is a basic job that would not be too difficult to understand or complete. So how would you get a job like that?

The simple answer is, you would need to have some idea on how this job works. You would need to have (at a minimum) an understanding of wheel loader operation and a ticket for a wheel loader. It would be great to have a basic understanding of how to use the rock breaker (small excavator) and, hold an excavator ticket. It would be advantageous to understand how a primary crusher operates. It would also be beneficial to have some knowledge on what the feed rates are for various size crushers, what the maximum rock size is for a medium cone or jaw type crusher and what the common causes are for crusher downtime and what you could do as an operator to make sure these downtimes are minimised. If you obtained a loader and excavator ticket and spent several hours doing some online research into how cone and jaw crushers operate what the feed rates are and other related information, can you imagine how confident you would feel when being interviewed? At the interview stage if you were asking the employer about feed rates, primary crusher types, downtime prevention and similar there is a very good chance you would get noticed.

All too often I see people arrive for an interview unprepared and they bring nothing to offer the employer. When the interview starts, the only questions asked by the candidate are things like; how much money will I get paid each week? What is the roster? Do you offer employees unlimited sick leave? How many weeks annual leave will I get paid? Etc.

What incentive is there for the employer in the above situation to employ this person? The employer is looking to give this person a job and will provide an income for the position advertised, but keep in mind the employer wants something in return. This is a two-way partnership, it's not all about the employee.

If you want a job such as the one mentioned, then you will need to meet the employer at least half way and it would be wise to get yourself ready to do all this prior to sending your resume or completing an interview.

Going into an interview means you are halfway towards getting that dream job, arriving at the interview with nothing to offer and no knowledge of the job is just a wasted opportunity.

Remember, the employer needs to fill a position. That position is not going to alter or change because you don't have what the employer wants. Regardless of how the interview goes, the employer still needs a loader operator to work in a FIFO role whereby that person can operate the loader to feed the primary crusher and as needed, use a rock breaker to dislodge blockage. This is the position and it won't alter. You need to be ready to provide the employer with the solution in that you have the enthusiasm, tickets and understanding to do the job.

Unless you understand this process, you will struggle to understand the rest. Most of us want to work and be well rewarded for our efforts. To be in a position whereby you are well rewarded, you must have something to offer the employer. If you just offer your hands and tell the employer that you have no skills, no tickets and no idea what the job is, then where is the incentive for the employer to give you a job?

If 5 people apply for the position of loader driver / rock breaker operator, you would expect the employer will look for the most cost-effective outcome to fill that position. If the 5 people range from no skills, no tickets and no idea about the job to one person having the right tickets, has done some research on primary crushers, feed rates and similar and is keen to do the job, then it's not that difficult to work out who will be offered the job. You don't always have to be experienced at that job, but you will need to bring something to the table to get into the game otherwise you are wasting your time and the employers time and the continued disappointment of not getting the job will be hard to deal with.

Question: have you ever hired a plumber, electrician or painter to do a job at your house? Most of us at some time have hired a trades person to do some work for us.

Think about this: if you hired a plumber to replace the shower taps and repair a water leak inside the wall of your house and the plumber arrived at your house with no tools and no idea how to do the job, would you be happy to pay that plumber \$100 an hour while he read some books and did some courses to learn how to fix your taps and water leak?

What if three (3) plumbers arrived at your house for the job? After chatting with each plumber to find out what skills and or qualifications they have, I can almost guarantee that you would hire the plumber that has the tools, skills and ability to do the job.

If the above example sounds about right, why should it be so different for the employer that you are now sending your resume to? They too have budgets and may not have the capacity to spend endless dollars training a totally unskilled workforce.



You need to think of the employer as you would if you were the person employing that plumber. If you have that attitude, then you will understand that, like the plumber, you need to bring something to the table. You cannot expect the employer to do it all for you.

I have observed people getting out of an aircraft on the job ready to start work wearing a pair of flip flops, singlet and shorts.

When asked where their steel cap safety boots and PPE are, they responded with "you have to provide me with that".

Historically, the mining, construction and transport industries have picked up the tab and provided new employees with everything they need, but as the industry evolves, so must the job seeker. The time has come where the employee must also do their bit prior to employment.

If you want to be a Doctor of Medicine, you will need to study for 5 to 7 years at your expense before being eligible to apply for a job as a doctor. If you want to be a nurse, you will need to allocate 3 years of your time to study in an unpaid learning role before being eligible to apply for a Registered Nurses position, so why should it be different for the mining, construction or transport industries?

Many people feel it is their right to be given a \$100 to \$150K a year job whereby they sacrificed none of their own time to earn that right, and yet the nurse had to study for 3 years without pay to get a job that pays \$70K a year.

The industry owes you nothing. Sitting on your hands waiting for someone to hand you a golden egg may take longer than you think.

No one is saying you need to spend 3 years with your head in the books studying but you do need to get your head out of the sand and understand that you will need to put in some effort if you want to realise your dreams of getting that dream job in the mining, construction or transport sector.

You need to offer the employer something, especially if you want the employer to notice you.



The employer does not know anything about you other than what you have provided them via an application letter and or resume. Most employers are simply looking for the "right person" that fits the job they have on offer. If that is the job you want, then you need to make yourself the right person so that the employer wants you.

If that means doing some online or library-based research to find out what's involved in that job, what skills or knowledge are needed for that job, then you should spend time doing that. If it means going out and getting some basic skills or tickets to suit that job, then you should try to gain those skills or tickets before applying for that job.

Like the nurse, you need to bring something to the employer that makes them want to employ you. It would not make any difference if the nicest most caring, most compassionate person in the world arrived at the local hospital and applied for a nurse's position. That person would not be selected for a nurse's position because no matter how nice or compassionate or caring they may be, they don't have the qualification the employer requires.

So, if you want to be a heavy haulage truck driver, then go out and get what it is you need so that when the employer looks at your application, they will be able to tick all the right the boxes.

1.3 Does attitude play a key role?

It is not uncommon to hear stories within various companies whereby the HR staff share their disappointment in choosing a certain employee given that employees reputation for having a disruptive bad attitude.

Many employers will openly tell you that they would rather have an unskilled person join their team that had a good attitude and decent work ethics as opposed to having a skilled employee that was hard to get along with, took sickies whenever it suited them and generally made the workplace uncomfortable for the rest of the team.

Training a new employee will incur a cost to the employer, but having said that, so will employing a skilled person that brings a disruptive attitude to the organisation. In the end, having an employee with an easy going "can do" attitude will far outweigh any costs associated with training that new employee.



So where does this leave you? Hopefully you are the good employee we are talking about here. If yes, then you need to get that information across to the potential employer as this could be the reason they will consider you over the next person.



Having a skill set is one thing, having a good attitude is another, employers will look for both. If you have the skills or tickets the employer is looking for, and you have an easy going "can do" attitude, then that will place you ahead of the others.

Many employers, including the recruitment companies that serve the employers, will endeavour to find out what your work ethics are like, this may include researching things like:

- Ability to get along with other employees and work in a team environment.
- Ability to take instructions from supervisors, managers and other company personnel.
- Attendance record (sick days, unplanned leave, missed flights to site, etc).
- Customer service skills (if applicable to that job).
- And, the employer will more than likely look at your social media status to find out what you are really like.

Attitude is key to workplace success. Others may suggest otherwise but they would be wrong. No one wants to work with people that display a bad attitude towards them or other workers. Being disruptive, bullying people, being loud mouthed, swearing in public areas such as lunch rooms or offices or continually complaining about the job or workplace or the people in the workplace all comes under the heading of bad attitude.

If the job has an issue that is upsetting you, then deal with the issue, talk to the employer and find a solution to the problem. Don't be the one that badmouths the company or everyone in it because you have an issue.

On the day of your interview, the attitude you display to the people conducting the interview is the same attitude you should be taking to work every day.

If that's not the case, then change your attitude. If you don't, you will never reach your full potential. A bad attitude will always hold you back and reputation (good or bad) will follow you everywhere.

There are a lot of good people in the mining, construction and transport industries that never need to ever apply for a job. The reason why is their reputation always ensures they are in full time employment. When you meet people like this the first thing you will notice is their respectful decent attitude towards you and others.

Make it a point to have a good attitude as this will pave the way for you to not only get the job you want but will more than likely see you excel into other jobs and career choices.

1.4 Applying for that new job.

Resumes, the tool we use to sell ourselves to get the job we really want. Nearly everyone has a resume now and most of us tend to put a lot of information into these resumes. I recently looked at a resume for a potential new employee and it read like a book. The information provided in that resume dated back to the candidate's school years. The candidate that sent this resume was 62 years of age. Trust me, the employer is not going to be too concerned about what school you attended back in 1969.

If applying for a job in the mining, construction or transport sectors, take a moment to consider how your resume reads. A resume should include;

- Full name, date of birth and current home address or a mailing address.
- Mobile phone number, email address and your home phone number if you have one.
- Education level achieved, any trades or tertiary qualifications you hold that are relevant to the job.
- Skills and tickets that you hold, previous experience on equipment (even if it was only training), any skills you gained that would be applicable to the position you're applying for, any high-risk government licences you hold as well as any National Accreditation Certification for equipment, plant or skills.
- Your last 3 employers or possibly 10 to 15 years of previous employment. Note; if you've had A lot of jobs in the last 15 years that are similar, i.e. drove a truck for ABC transport, drove a truck for XYZ transport and so on, then maybe look at skimming or reducing the content so that the person reading this resume is not bogged down finding out you have had 12 jobs in the last 15 years that were all very similar.
- Finally, but most importantly, write a brief introductory letter about yourself. Tell the potential employer what type of person you are and what your long-term goals are. Remember, the person reading this does not know you and won't get to meet you unless you get their attention. When writing the introductory letter, you need to be the one that writes this part yourself. Don't have some professional resume writer start making you sound like a contender for Australia's man or woman of the year contest. Be honest and tell the employer who you are and what is important to you, and why they should consider you for the job.

Note: the shorter and more direct the resume is, the more likely it is to be read from start to finish. Keep the resume brief, be informative but with minimal wording and don't add information that is not relevant.

Most people will include the names and contact details of 3 or 4 referees. The referees are the ones that will hopefully say a few good words about you when contacted by the HR staff. Trouble is, most HR people have heard it all before and become unmoved by all the kind words being tossed at them by the referee.

Having a referee that is a family member is really of no value. Most HR personnel will not bother ringing your mum to find out if you're a good person, pointless when you think about it. Co-workers, best mates, school mates, family, husbands, wives and similar should be removed as referees and replaced with professional work personnel that are credible.

The best referees are supervisors or managers that you have worked for that can provide an honest opinion of your work ethics and behaviour. If you don't have any referees due to not having worked previously, then join a couple of community groups and do some unpaid work with these groups and ask the group leaders if they can write a reference for you as well as being a phone contact referee.

Written references provide credibility. Ask your referee if they can write you a reference as a signed written reference will carry a lot of weight and will provide additional credibility when applying for that new job.

When putting together your resume or writing a letter or email to gain a new position, you should take a moment prior to sending so that you can put yourself in the position of the person that will read your application. All too often, we forget to do this and just expect that whatever we send will be awesome and surely the person that gets this will have an absolute clear picture of who I am and what I can offer the employer and why that employer should choose me.

When sending in your application, you only get one chance, if you don't sell yourself properly, then you will more than likely miss that opportunity.

When applying for a great paying job that has the potential to greatly improve your living standards with things like a new car, new house, family holiday or similar, then you have make sure you do the hard yards to get that job. If you think sitting at home and sending a couple of resumes via email is doing the hard yards, then you are mistaken.

If you want the job, then get off the couch, jump in your car or on a bus or get on the train and take a bunch of your resumes and introductory letters with you and go knock on some doors.

Ask yourself this question: if someone sends you an email trying to sell you fresh apples, what would you do? I'm guessing most would delete the email.

If that same person knocked on your door and was well presented and friendly and offered you some fresh apples, what would you do? You might be tempted to take a closer look at the apples. Same deal with getting a job, go knock on some doors, you might be surprised by the outcomes. Be ready for some knock backs, but also be ready for the opposite.

1.5 Rosters, home life and hobbies.

Before you decide on that new career, you should sit down with your family and discuss how the different jobs and their locations and roster will affect the time you have at home between work cycles. The best way to do this is to do a positive vs negative life / work / income graph to see what the best outcome for you and your family would be.

It is common knowledge that a mining FIFO (Fly In, Fly Out) position will generally pay you more than an 8.00 to 5.00 job in the city. But having said that, there are some construction jobs that will pay more than a mining job and there are some transport jobs that will pay somewhere in the middle. There are career pathways to consider.

A good starting point is to look at the categories below and work out what would best suit you and your lifestyle;

- The job title or job position (the job that you will be doing every day).
- The income that you will earn from doing this type of job.
- The roster (amount of days) you would need to work in a calendar month to achieve the income you want.
- The allocated time off to spend time with family and friends.
- The location of the job (FIFO, drive in/drive out, local employer, etc)

These are some of the key points that you will need to consider when trying to make an informed decision on what is the best scenario for yourself and your family and lifestyle.



An effective way to approach this is to decide what it is you want to achieve. Not everyone is chasing big dollars, some are looking for the right job that will earn them a good income but also provide them with quality family time.

If you choose a mining role in Australia, then for most mine workers this will place yourself into a FIFO position. This means you will be required to board an aircraft and travel to the site whereby you will live in a camp setting for a specified amount of time before flying home to enjoy some time off.

Mining rosters vary and are often more user friendly than construction rosters. Mining rosters can be as follows:

- Even time roster or 7 days onsite, 7 days at home or 2 weeks onsite and 2 weeks at home. Even time rosters can vary a bit so find out what is meant by an even time roster for the site you are looking at.
- 8/6 or 8 days on site and 6 days at home. Some call this an even time roster because you are home for 7 nights and away for 7 nights – 8 days worked, 6 clear days at home.
- 2/1 roster or 2 weeks onsite and 1 week at home or 4 weeks onsite and 2 weeks at home. These are a popular roster and will often pay more given you are working more days in the year.
- 3/1 roster or 3 weeks onsite and 1 week at home, like above, this roster will general pay more than all the others listed given you are working a lot more days in the year.

There are several roster variations in use, the above gives you brief example as to what is on offer.

Construction rosters are generally not as appealing as their mining counterparts. Most construction rosters that I have experienced in recent years are usually 4/1 or 4 weeks onsite and 1 week at home. Some of the recent major oil and gas projects around Australia have all predominately been a 4/1 type roster for the blue-collar employees. Some of the larger construction projects offered a couple of variations in rosters, one being 26 days onsite and 9 days off and the other being 23 days onsite and 10 days off which is slightly better than a 4 week on 1 week off roster. Some construction rosters have excluded travel time. If that is the case, the employer will expect you to travel to and from site (FIFO) in your own time. This can reduce your time off by as much as a half to a full day every roster cycle.

Heavy haulage transport FIFO rosters will be a mix of even time right through to 4/1 type rosters. If the transport job is a long-haul driving job, then FIFO won't be an issue. Whilst you won't be flying to site for weeks on end, you will be away from home driving the truck to its destination and back which can often be more demanding than the FIFO roles.

Driving a truck between Perth and Sydney will take you around 6 to 7 days to complete a return trip and that is providing all goes to plan. If you're required to complete 3 round trips a month, that would be like working a 3/1 roster. If the transport company prefer their trucks to have only one dedicated driver, then it may be that you have a 2-day break at the completion of each trip before going again so that would be a totally different type of roster if compared to your standard (FIFO) mining or construction rosters.



You cannot always choose the roster you want, but you should try and choose a roster that will suit you and your family's lifestyle.

Applying for and getting a job whereby you end up hating the job because you're away from home too much will only create issues for you, your family and your employer and there will be no winners in that situation.

Take the time to work out what you are prepared to do at both a personal and family level, and from there, agree on what type of roster would be suitable for you.

Once you have worked all this out, think about the reasons why you have decided to give mining, construction or transport a go.

If you go to all the trouble of getting yourself a good paying job that has the potential to give you financial freedom, then don't waste that opportunity, I can assure you that many do. I have met countless individuals that have enjoyed earning good money and yet have nothing to show for it. I recently spoke to a guy that I placed into a mining job some 12 years ago. I employed him into a dump truck driving position on about \$105k a year plus penalties. Being a single man there would have been lots of opportunity for him to live a good life and save heaps of money in the process. In speaking with this guy recently, he told me he had absolutely no money and was in the process of selling his car to pay back some money he borrowed off his friends.

Do not let this happen to you. You need a plan, no different to working out your roster and lifestyle, you need a 5-year plan as this will give you something to work towards.

Set some goals for yourself like paying double mortgage payments on your house or even one extra payment every second month or putting X amount of dollars into a long term saving plan or investing in real estate or something that will give you a reason to continue in the role you're in for the next 5 years until that plan comes to fruition. Make sure the plan has an end date and if you achieve your target, shout yourself a holiday or something special for yourself.

If you're going to work long hours on continuous type rosters, consider getting yourself a hobby as this will give you an opportunity to unwind and do something for yourself.

Regardless of the reasons you chose to take on this new career, you owe it to yourself to have an out or a way to unwind after working long hours or being away for weeks at a time.

Some guys and girls buy themselves a motorbike and go for a ride on their days off, others join clubs or get a small boat and go fishing and some take up knitting, it does not matter what you do, but if the FIFO or long work hour lifestyle becomes all work and no play, then your 5-year plan will quickly lose its appeal.

Starting a career in the mining, construction or heavy transport industry is an excellent choice and one that should reward you well, but like all big decisions, you need to put some planning into all aspects of this career.

Sometimes it's good to get advice that is not from family members. If you can, sit down with a financial planner or someone like that and talk to them about your 5-year plan and what it is you are hoping to achieve, you may find their advice helpful.

Your family is the reason you're taking this career step so include them in the decision-making process.



1.6 Contractors, companies and recruiters.

Who will you work for? There are so many mining, construction and transport companies out there, way too many to list. You have your bigger tier one global mining giants that we all know about, you also have some major contractors out there that have been around for a long time and the same goes with some of the big-name transport companies.

But what about the smaller or mid-size contractors? There are many and yet very few know who they are. Whilst I have absolutely nothing against the big global companies out there, I do prefer to spend my working time with the mid-size and smaller contractors as many of these companies have a smaller workforce, you get to know each other, and they offer career advancing opportunity to their good employees.

Contractors (companies that contract to other companies or organisations) will often have multiple jobs on the go such as contracts for road construction, mine development, rail line construction and similar.

Unlike some of the bigger mining companies that only work in mining, the smaller and mid-size contractors will offer broader career alternatives to their workforce by way of opportunity to move between different jobs and sites.

Some of the mid-size contractors may have long term contracts within larger mining operations and can offer you long-term employment within their mining, construction or heavy transport sectors. Some of these contractors might also have employment opportunity that would allow you to move between various job locations within Australia and might even offer overseas job opportunities to long term, trusted employees.

In the past, many of the smaller and mid-size contractors are the ones that have put their time and effort into training and assisting non-experienced personnel to break into the industry. Often, their hard work and effort is lost during boom times when the global mining giants start offering better salaries for experienced people.



What is interesting, and something for you to remember when looking at employment opportunities is; in many circumstances, it was the bigger mining companies that terminated staff when things slowed down. In many cases, it was the small to mid-size contractors that picked up those mining people and provided them with job opportunities.

Whilst we often think the grass is greener on the other side, it is not always the case.

If successful in securing work with a small to mid-size contractor or transport company, consider putting down roots for a while and work with this group of people to help grow and advance their company.

If you're a "can do" employee that shows some initiative and is not afraid to lend a hand, there is every chance you will grow with the company and advance your own career.

Many people gain their way into the industry via a recruitment company. Recruiters work a bit like this: recruitment organisations will receive a request or be contracted to find a person or group of people to fill specific roles for their client. Most recruiters will have to comply with the requests of the client that has contracted them to find the people, this often leaves no wiggle room for the recruiter if the applicants do not have exactly what the client has requested.

An example would be: the client owns and operates a fleet of Komatsu 930E dump trucks. The client has instructed the recruiter that the successful applicants must have Komatsu 930E truck experience as they (the client) do not wish to provide any onsite training. This leaves the recruiter with no choice other than to dismiss any applicant that does not possess Komatsu 930E experience.

In many cases (based on the above situation) people get it into their head that without experience, you cannot get a job. In some situations, you will need experience, especially if it is for a specific role or a specialised task, but in more situations than not, what you will need is the right attitude, as well as the tickets or qualifications for the job and the determination to get out there with your resume and knock on some doors.

Recruiters are there to fill roles based on client requests. The vast majority of recruiters work on commissions based on how many jobs they fill. Don't be surprised if they don't call you every day to see how you are going. If you are not needed by them and you're not on their list, they will have no need for you. Don't be afraid to bypass the recruitment companies and go directly to the employer. Another good avenue is to go to company websites where you can often upload your resume for upcoming positions. Many companies will also advertise upcoming projects. This is great for you as you will see what jobs are on offer and if interested, you can get yourself job ready!

1.7 Everyone says I need experience!

Do you need experience? People say you must have experience to get a job in the mining, construction or transport sectors. Can you think of anyone you know that started a career in mining (their first day on the job) that had any mining experience?

Think about that for just one minute, how many dump truck drivers do you know that are operating a Cat 793 or a Komatsu 830E (240 tonne truck) right at this moment that had any 240-tonne truck experience before joining a mining company? I would suggest the answer is none. Only a large mining company or contractor would have a big truck like that, so they must have gained their experience on the job.

It is true that some of the bigger companies advertise vacancies and demand that you have experience. Like many, I believe that to be a slap in the face to the smaller companies and contractors. In essence, what these big companies are saying is that they are not going to train you, they expect other companies should do that at their expense and then once you are trained and have some experience, they might consider giving you a job.

Honestly, you should try avoiding employers that have an attitude like that. If they're only prepared to employ experienced people, then it's fair to say your chances of getting any ongoing training once employed are slim at best so career advancement will be very limited.

RMS has opened the door to hundreds of people that had zero industry experience. It all comes back to the person seeking the job, their attitude and what they are prepared to do to get into the industry of their choosing.

I have met people that will spend a few dollars of their own money completing some courses to enhance their employment opportunity. Once they have done that and sent their resume to prospective employers, they sit back on the couch waiting for the phone to ring with a million-dollar job offer! I'm guessing these same people are still on the couch waiting by the phone.

I have also met people that spend a few dollars of their own money completing courses and rather than sit at home waiting for the phone to ring, they hit the pavement with their resumes in hand and before the day is over, have secured a job with a well-known quality employer. So, what does that tell you?

I am at times gobsmacked by the number of people that will send their resume to an employer or recruiter and do nothing more than sit at home waiting and hoping.

C'mon people, you need to jump off the couch, clean yourself up, put on some nice clothes and knock on a few doors with your resume and introductory letter in hand ready to go.

Be assured, you will get some knockbacks along the way, but wash that off, then go to the next potential employer. At all times, be pleasant regardless of how you are treated, and do not be afraid to go back to the same place every 2 or 3 days to see if circumstances have changed. It is your career, so don't let others tell you it's not available, it is available and there are jobs out there right now, you just need to get yourself ready and you need to be prepared to start at the bottom of the ladder. Half the fun is climbing the ladder after you start.

I know we said earlier that you should choose a roster that suits your family lifestyle. Initially, you may have to compromise and be prepared to work a longer roster and possibly earn less money for the first 6 to 12 months. You need to start somewhere, and starting is the key to your career, so be ready to take a lower salary and be prepared to work a longer roster in the short term until you have earned the right to alter that.

In talking with some mid-level contractors recently, many say they have no issue giving the new person a start, what does concern them is when the new person demands full dollars from day one and then expects the contractor to spend money and time training them.

If you are serious about getting a start in the mining, construction or heavy transport sectors, then you need to be prepared to start at the bottom and work your way up.

Taking on that new job and displaying a "can do" positive attitude will quickly see you reach your goals. At one mining operation where RMS managed the training and recruitment for that site, we interviewed and employed approximately 100 people into a production mining traineeship role.

The primary skill that we focused on for all the candidates interviewed was "attitude". We believed that if we found people with a positive attitude, that we could do the rest. This traineeship became one of the most successful training programs that we have conducted. Of the 100 people we employed and trained over a 6-month period in a live active mining operation, all but 3 made it to full time employment with the host company.

Many went on to become leading hands, supervisors, all round operators, trainers, site safety reps and so on. The host company was blown away by the "can do" attitude of the trainees.

So, don't for one minute believe that you must have experience to get a job in mining or the other major sectors, what you will need is determination and commitment. Having the right qualifications and tickets and a "can do" attitude will fast-track you into the right job.

1.8 Do I need all these tickets to get a job?

Current standards within the mining, construction and transport sectors dictate that all employees will possess recognised qualifications for the tasks they complete.

Most heavy equipment (dump truck, loaders, dozers excavators and similar) all have nationally recognised qualifications as do most of the tasks associated with process plants, workshops and others.

Other areas such as road transport, warehousing and high-risk activities also have ticketing that must be completed prior to operation. There really are not too many tasks that you can undertake whereby you won't need to show some form of competence prior to undertaking that task.

There would not be too many sites left now that would allow you to operate fixed or mobile plant and equipment without having the appropriate tickets and current qualification.

Many sites will also want you to undergo a VOC assessment either before they employ you or at the time of employment. A Verification Of Competence (VOC) is designed to verify your competence for the qualification that you hold.

There are some people out there that are misinformed as to what a VOC really is so if unsure, you can go to the RMS website and follow the prompts to the VOC page and you will find all the information you need to know regarding what an actual VOC is and why they are completed.

If positions are being advertised such as dump truck operator, process plant personnel, general labourers or similar, you would be wise to try and obtain some skills or qualifications before applying for the job.

We discussed earlier about having a plan and knowing the type of job you would prefer.

If you know what type of job it is your chasing, then focus on getting some skills and or qualifications for that job. If the job you are chasing is to be an MC heavy road train operator, then it would be a great idea to have an MC licence before you apply for the job.

It would also be beneficial to have a current first aid ticket, possibly a white card induction and a current police clearance. These 4 licenses and tickets would put you in with a good chance.

If on the other hand you have your heart set on being a wheel loader operator on a construction site, then having a wheel loader qualification (ticket) would be a good start, you may also need a white card and first aid ticket.

If on the other hand you want to work as an EWP operator for a shutdown maintenance crew, you will need a current WP high-risk license, a working at height qualification and have some knowledge on how to complete a risk assessment.



Your employer will know this, what you are showing the employer is you have the initiative to get job ready, all you need now is the opportunity to prove your worth.

Another innovative idea is to learn a little about the job you would be doing. If you decide that you want to be a road train driver, then take the time to learn things like radio terminology and what that means, the load capacity of the various trucks and trailers, how power trailers operate, the distance it takes to stop a loaded road train, cost of tyres and how to prevent tyre failures and pointers on what makes a good road train operator.

You can find out a lot about the above by looking online and reading information that the manufacturers provide. Go to the website of the manufacturers and read about their trucks and start getting a feel for what you will be doing once you get that dream job.



There are other licenses you may need, but if you walk in with none, then your chances of getting a job are slim.

Some people still believe they should have to do nothing to be job ready as that should be the employers job and responsibility.

All I have to say is, good luck with that! Most employers will expect that you do some pre-training for the position.

Having a ticket for a loader, EWP, road train or whatever equipment or task it is that you prefer does not mean you have experience.

1.9 Mining automation, where does that leave me?

Automated equipment has been around for a while now, especially in the areas of manufacturing, processing and similar. Of recent years we have observed the introduction of autonomous mining trucks into the tier one mining arena.

I first worked with autonomous trucks in 2002 when a leading equipment manufacturer had two trucks working in the southern parts of WA under a veil of very tight security. This was a time of learning and refinement for heavy equipment automation, so it was to be expected that the manufacturers would be keeping developments close to their chest.

In Western Australia there is close to 200 autonomous trucks working in the larger iron ore-based mining operations. The question being asked by many that are looking to start a career in the mining sector as a dump truck operator is, will this mean there are no more employment opportunities for people to operate big mining trucks?

If you were to ask this question of the tier one iron ore miners that own and operate the autonomous truck fleets in Australia they would probably tell you that employment opportunities have increased rather than decreased. Taking the operator out of the truck cabin has opened the door for people to learn new skills such as autonomous truck programming, truck movement coordination, troubleshooting as well as technical support and site-based roles that support the 24-hour a day ongoing operation of the autonomous trucks.

Some new and exciting employment opportunities have been created due to the automation of the dump truck fleet. The mining operators together with the truck suppliers have established city-based control operations for the autonomous trucks and manage the truck fleets remotely.

This changes employment opportunities for some in that you can be fully involved in autonomous truck mining activities without having to live and work at the mine site. Many that have taken on this role are now city-based employees and enjoy the excitement of still working in the mining arena as well as being able to go home at the end of each working day.

Automation of a large dump truck can often see ongoing productivity increases of up to 15% or more for that truck. The increases are largely due to less downtime. It all comes back to how many times a day the dump truck is stopping for driver meal breaks, restroom breaks and other non-productive events.

Taking the driver from the cabin and re-training that employee into a support role for the autonomous trucks has not removed the employment opportunity. All it has done is re-position the employee's work station from the cabin of the truck to a control room or site support environment.

If looking to be a dump truck operator, don't get too concerned about technology taking away your job opportunities just yet. Autonomous mining equipment comes at a cost and to date, it has only been adopted by the tier one iron ore miners that can afford this technology. It is the opinion of the author that very few miners or contractors will venture down the autonomous pathway anytime soon. It is one thing to have a truck that can operate without an operator in the cabin, but you also need to keep in mind that the infrastructure, expenditure, expertise and technical support needed to support an autonomous truck fleet is huge and requires much investment and ongoing commitment from the mine operator.

To date, only the larger mining trucks (240 tonne or more) have been selected for automatization. Mining trucks in the 50, 75, 100, 150, 170, 180 tonne categories still require a driver in the cabin and there are still hundreds of dump trucks in the 240, 360 and 400 tonne categories that also still require an operator.

Statistically, it would be difficult to calculate exactly how many mining trucks are in service in Australian mining or construction roles that require an operator to drive them when compared to the 200 or so autonomous trucks in operation. I would take an educated guess and put the comparison at around 25 operator required dump trucks to 1 autonomous truck. Whether that figure is exact or not is irrelevant. There are still heaps of dump truck driving positions available for people that are looking to follow that career pathway.

Keep in mind that most dump trucks that do require a driver, will require anywhere from 3 to 4 drivers for each truck.

If you consider the dump truck is working on a continuous basis you will need to allow for a day shift operator, a night shift operator and one operator having time off.

There will always be positions available for dump truck operators given the sites do require quite a few for each working dump truck.

Photo on right is a Komatsu 980E – 400 tonne diesel electric dump truck – with a driver in the cabin!



1.10 Salaries, conditions and bonuses.

What can I expect to be paid? The question we all want to ask, however, don't let that be the first question you ask at an interview. How much you get paid will depend on several things that may include but will not be limited to:

- Rosters – days worked in one year.
- Job position or title.
- Location of the job – Pilbara, North Queensland, Hunter Valley, etc.
- Type of work – mining, construction, transport, etc.
- Employer – working directly for the employer, on a fixed contract, on labour hire.
- Current skills of the employee.

Rosters will play a key role in your salary. People working an even time roster can expect to earn less money than a person working a 4 week on 1 week off roster.

An even time roster is 26 weeks worked, 26 weeks off for the year or, 182 days worked with 182 days rostered off. If you compare an even time roster to a 4/1 roster the difference would be 42 weeks worked and 10 weeks off or, 294 days worked and 70 days off.

If you look at the differences in days worked between an even time and 4/1 rosters, you would be working an additional 112 days a year more if you work a 4/1 roster.

Working a longer roster will see you compensated financially, so it is difficult to compare salaries for the same job when people are working different rosters. You can compare hourly rates, but many sites use a fixed rate that does not show overtime, public holidays night shift rates or similar as the rate has been calculated to include all penalties.

Job position will dictate salaries. You can expect to earn more driving a quad trailer road train coupled to a power trailer for 12 hours a day as opposed to the guy down the road driving a small truck, working an 8-hour day doing general deliveries around town.

Location will see a variation in pay rates. Many people that work in the northern sectors of Australia will often earn a higher rate than the people living and working close to the coast or populated city areas.

FIFO (Fly In, Fly Out) roles will often pay a much higher salary base which can increase depending on site conditions. There are some locations that experience extremely hot weather. Some people try to avoid these areas in favour of a cooler working location. Employers know the only way to keep a stable workforce in these hotter or more desolate regions is to offer a little extra salary or maybe offer a better roster that compensates for the harsher living conditions.

The type of job you do will influence your salary. Mining has a reputation of paying well and this reputation tends to steer people towards the mines. Construction has over the last few years been offering great salary packages. Some of the construction rosters are not always as favourable as mining but given large construction jobs are not usually long-term projects, many will put up with the longer roster and take the good money while they can.

Typical salary range for mining if you worked a 2/1 roster, may look something like this:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| - Dump truck operator | \$95,000 to 125,000 |
| - Excavator or loader operator | \$110,000 to 150,000 |
| - All round multiskilled operator | \$120,000 to 150,000 |
| - Process mill operator | \$85,000 to 130,000 |
| - Site supervisor | \$120,000 to 180,000 |

Remember, values listed are rough at best. Variations exist, and some sites will have different packages whereby you may earn a slightly lower rate but get an additional 1 or 2 weeks paid annual leave a year, so it is hard to compare.

Construction workers on the bigger jobs working a 4/1 roster could earn something like this:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| - General hand labourer | \$100,000 to 150,000 |
| - Concrete and formwork | \$100,000 to 170,000 |
| - Dogman / rigger | \$120,000 to 200,000 |
| - Crane operator | \$150,000 to 250,000 |



Heavy haulage operators on the bigger FIFO jobs working a 2/1 roster could earn something like this:

- MC truck operator \$90,000 to 125,000
- MC truck/loader operator \$95,000 to 130,000
- Site supervisor \$100,000 to 150,000

Remember, salaries are based on variable roles and every site and job position may be different to the next. All salaries will be entitled to superannuation and other site agreed entitlements.



In some cases, site personnel will earn less if working under a labour hire agreement or employed by a recruitment company as opposed to working directly for the site employer.

Many professional recruitment organisations are well placed to look after the personnel they employ both financially and as an employer themselves. Not all recruitment providers work to the same standards and some may not offer the standards or conditions that others do. Recruitment providers are a human resource business and as such, they do have internal costs, commissions and profit margins that will need to be achieved. In some cases, the recruitment organisation may choose to pay their labour hire personnel a lower salary to ensure their financial targets are met.

Do some homework to find out who the good recruitment organisations are and try to avoid the ones that may have a reputation of taking advantage of their contract workforce.

The skills you have will alter your earning ability. If you're employed as a dump truck operator, you can expect to earn less than an employee that has the skills to operate multiple types of equipment such as excavators, loaders, dozers and similar. If you're employed as a dogman on a construction site, you may find the riggers and crane operators are earning more than yourself given they have additional skills. The more skills you gain, the more employable you become and the more you can expect to earn.

Bonuses are sometimes provided by employers to achieve an outcome for the site. The bonus or rewards may be related to productivity, site safety or similar. Other benefits offered may include: healthcare benefits for you and your family, gym memberships, novated lease options for personal vehicles and many more.

Bonus incentives have been around for a long time. Some work well, others are a waste of time. Some bonuses create negatives within the work group. An example of that could be tonnes moved in a 24-hour period. The site may offer a bonus for tonnes moved over and above a fixed amount. The problems that can arise with this type of bonus is the shovel or excavator operators are working their heart out to achieve the bonus targets, whilst several others that are part of that work crew and will benefit from the tonnes moved bonus are sitting back not contributing.

Another example is underground mining will often pay variations in bonuses for metres drilled, rock moved and so on but often, the bonus goes to the operator that drilled the metres or moved the rock, it is not distributed to others such as the workshop guys that fixed the drill to allow the driller to drill more holes.

Some of the better bonus schemes or systems are crew based and focus on safe work practices, zero lost time injuries, attendance records and similar. If you are part of a crew bonus system, make sure you fully understand how that system works and what is expected from you.

If the bonus system is based on zero injury lost time, don't be like some that do hurt themselves and sustain an injury but do not report that injury as to do so, could mean they will lose their potential bonus. Understand how the systems work, be honest in all your dealings and allow the bonus scheme to work as it was intended, not because it can be manipulated.

Note: This guide is not intended to focus on safety as a subject, so we will leave that topic for another time, however, if you are employed onto a site that uses safety as a target for performance which in some cases, ends up looking something like a bonus system, then make a point of finding out exactly how the site measures the performance of the workforce.

Safety targets often focus on lost time injury statistics or zero workplace incidents or similar. Whilst most sites have fine-tuned their safety performances, there are still sites out there that will reward employees for achieving zero incidents, zero accidents and zero lost time injuries.

I think it's great to strive for zero harm and you as a potential new employee should have the same focus, but it can be an issue when you have employees not reporting injuries, accidents or incidents for fear of being the one that caused the rest of the crew to lose their zero-harm status.

If you are to be involved in an incentive program, be that a productivity bonus program, site-based safety program or similar, then take the time to find out what your role is in that program and what is expected of you as a team member of that crew or site.



1.11 Jobs, and where to find them.

What type of job do you want? The mining, construction and transport sectors when combined do have a lot to offer in the way of job positions. The question is, do they offer the type of job or career that you're looking for?

Production mining job opportunities may include but would not be limited to;

- Rigid dump truck, articulated dump truck and water truck positions.
- Wheel loader, excavator and hydraulic shovel positions.
- Grader, track dozer, skid steer, backhoe and wheel dozer positions.

Mining process opportunities will vary depending on the type of mining operation, but these may include;

- Primary crusher operators, rock breaker operators, crusher control room operators.
- Site maintenance personnel looking after conveyors and associated plant.
- Train loading, reclaiming operators, skid steer clean-up operators and so on.

Construction opportunities will also vary and depend largely on the job being completed, opportunities may include;

- Concrete workers, steel fixers, dogman, riggers, crane operators, labourers and welders.
- High-risk operators, safety advisors, cleaners, scaffolders and the list go on for ever.

Transport roles will vary depending on what the role of the transport company is. Opportunities may include;

- Bulk haulage drivers, side tipper operators, loader operators, grader operators looking after haulage roads.
- Double, triple and quad train operators whereby power trailers are required, long haul operators, etc.

The above is just a very basic example of the jobs that may be available. It could be that you decide to work for a catering contractor that provides personnel to look after the site camp, or you may want to look at safety advising positions, security jobs or medical roles that are required in all industry sectors. There are loads of avenues that you could pursue once you decide on the type of job that would best suit you.

What is a small or medium size contractor? Hard to say really, to me a small contractor would be less than 100 employees, a medium size contractor would be less than 2000 employees and a large contractor or company would be more than 2000 employees.

A tier one company will be a well-known global miner or oil and gas organisations. These are the companies that have the resources to build large operations that employ thousands of personnel.

When people ask me things like, who should I contact to get a job, I usually encourage them to approach the small to medium size companies first. Feel free to contact the bigger organisations but keep in mind it is usually the tier one organisations that require you to have experience before they will employ you.

Every state in Australia will be different so advising on where to go is pointless. What you can do is a web search on mining or construction contractors for your area and focus on the companies that may provide the type of job that you are looking for. From there you can make notes on what each company does, where they are located and their contact details including their postal mailing address. If possible, see if you can find a contact name within that company that may be able to assist you in your efforts to secure employment.

Once you have checked out each company, make a list that includes the companies that you like. Do some further research on their history, the jobs or contracts they have or are completing and their goals and aspirations so that when you get an interview with this company, you will be talking the same language as the people interviewing you.

If the companies you select are within reach by public transport or personal vehicle and you can afford the time to visit the companies, then get your resume and introductory letters ready and go knock on some doors.



If the companies are difficult for you to access due to distance or other reasons, then upload your resume and covering letter to that company. Where possible, give that company a call within 2 days of uploading your resume to see if they would be interested in meeting you in person. Don't be frightened to call them more than once.

1.12 Camps, cooks and uniforms.

An exciting part of a new FIFO job is finding out what the camp life is like and learning what activities are available for the residents of the camp. Most camps today are pretty good in that most have ensuite rooms and if you're lucky, you will have a room with an ensuite all to yourself or, if not so lucky, you will have an ensuite that is shared between 2 rooms.

If you're extremely unlucky, you will be in a room that has no ensuite and you will have to walk to a communal shower/toilet block. The good news is, all rooms are airconditioned and will generally have a fridge, wardrobe, TV, reading light, desk and chair.

Other than that, you will have to do your own decorating (providing that is allowed). Some camps will allocate you a room and you will get to use that same room each time you're onsite. Often the room will have a lockable wardrobe where you can lock your personal items into a cabinet so that others that use the room in your absence cannot access your personal items. Other camps will operate a bit like a motel whereby when you leave, you will have to put your personal belongings aside and they will be stored until you return, when you return you will almost always be in a different room.

Smoking is not permitted in the rooms and discovery by the cleaners that you have been smoking in the room will more than likely see you removed from the camp. If your accommodation is withdrawn, then it's almost a certainty you will lose your job given you no longer have a place to live. Excessive drinking, fighting and abusive loud behaviour will bring about the same consequences as smoking in your room, so be considerate of others and do the right thing.

Camp activities vary depending on who owns and runs the actual site. To keep fit or keep amused, you will generally have access to walking trails, pushbike riding trails, gymnasium, pools and common room. Most sites (not all) will have a wet mess where you can enjoy a beer or two and all camps will have a dry mess for your daily meals, lunches and snacks.

If the site employs a gym instructor or an activity coordinator, you may have access to all sorts of sports such as football, basketball, tennis and similar. Equally, you can get involved in fitness programs run by the camp staff.

Other basics such as laundry rooms will be provided (washers and dryers) and on some sites, the camp staff will wash your clothes for you. All camps are different, so do some research to find out what the conditions are at the camp you're going to.

Food quality and the variety of food offered will depend greatly on the quality of the caterer and the budget they have been given to feed and accommodate each person daily. Some camps will offer a fantastic range of meal types that will include seafood, vegetarian and vegan dishes on their menu. Having said that, I have been to camps where you get a very limited choice to choose from. Get to know the cooks and catering staff at your camp. If you think they have done a decent job, give them a pat on the back occasionally, they do work hard, and it can be a thankless job.

Clothing for the camp when you're not working is generally very casual (shorts, shirts and flip flops) but keep in mind that you do need to be clean when entering shared communal areas such as the dry mess, common rooms, TV rooms and similar. Equally, if you decide to go for a swim, have a shower first so the pool remains clean and does not end up looking like a mud pond.

When entering the communal areas, always wear something on your feet (flip flops will do) don't go into a shared or communal area in bare feet as this would be unhygienic and considered disrespectful to others.

High viz work clothing needs to be kept clean. Setting aside regular wash days is essential if you want to be considered one of the professionals in the industry. Anyone can walk around in dirty unkept clothing, nothing too hard about that. Take a moment to observe the senior staff onsite and you will see that most of the senior staff take the time to present for work in a clean tidy state.

Most sites will provide a uniform that you will be required to wear, however, not all sites will do this. A standard uniform issue may include:

- Long pants with high viz tape around the leg area.
- Long sleeve shirts with high viz tape around the waist and or chest area of the shirt.
- Steel cap lace up high ankle boots
- High vis bomber type jacket.

Other PPE may include safety hard hat (and sun brim), safety glasses (clear and dark) hearing protection, sun screen, dust masks and whatever else the site dictates you may require or must wear.

Some employers will provide you with every item you require, other employers may provide you with the basic items and expect that you will bring some items with you and some employers will expect that you supply your own high viz clothing and safety boots but may provide consumables like hearing protection, safety glasses, sun screen and similar.

If being employed via a recruitment company, ask the questions as to what will be supplied and what you must provide. Many employers (for good reason) will not provide you with several hundred dollars' worth of uniforms, boots, etc if they are only employing you via a recruitment agency for a short-term project. Ask the question so there are no surprises.

1.13 Where to from here?

Time to make some decisions based on what we have discussed and put together a plan to start your new career in the mining, construction or transport industry.

First things first, you need to work out what it is that you want to do, this means working out what type of job you would like to do. There is no point choosing a job that is not appealing to you. Some people just crave the chance to drive a dump truck that is big, others are intrigued by the process side of mining, some just live for the day they get to drive a road train that is 4 or 5 trailers long and some are looking forward to working as a rigger on a construction site.

For you to be successful, you will need to be honest with yourself and choose a job or a couple of job options that suit what you like doing. Of all the decisions you will make, this will be the most important as you need to be happy with the job you choose. If you want to drive road trains, then don't consider being a cleaner for a site-based catering company as your heart won't be in it. If operating an excavator is your passion, then strive for that position.

People do say that they will do anything so long as they can get their foot in the door so to speak. People that say this do not last very long in the industry as they end up working in a job they hate and that makes for an unhappy situation for all involved.

If you are flexible in your job choice, narrow the jobs you would be happy with down to 3 jobs. Have a primary job that you would prefer but you can also have a couple more that you would be OK with.

Once you decide on the job that suits you, look around the various advertising portals that advertise position vacancies to see how many of the jobs that you like are available. For example: if you decide you want to be a nuclear rocket technician, then you may find those positions are few and far between. On the other hand, if you decide you want to be a water truck operator and it happens to be the middle of summer, you may find several vacancies.

During your job search, look for the other positions that you would consider doing to see what vacancies exist for these as well.

Do not be put off by a lack of vacancies advertised. New positions pop up every day and there will be positions coming up tomorrow that are not listed right now.

Some job choices will limit you to a specific industry, for example, if you decide you want to drive a 240-tonne dump truck, then it's fair to say you will be going to a mining operation.

If your job choice is to be a scraper, loader or track dozer operator, then it could be a mining or construction type role and the same would go for many job titles.

When considering various industries, remember that most FIFO construction roles will generally have longer work rosters than their mining equivalent, so keep that in mind as a point of consideration.

Most heavy transport roles (road trains or heavy haulage) can be associated with both mining and construction so if looking to join the transport sector in a heavy transport role, like most, you will have to consider which sector would best suit you as the rosters and job requirements may vary according to the location of the job.

Point to consider: It is not uncommon with some contractors and sub-contractors to see the contractor working a longer roster than company-based employees. What this means is, the site-based employees that are working directly for the client company have a different roster to the contractors onsite. Recently when onsite with a large construction company, I observed a sub-contract transport haulage company working a much more user-friendly roster than the actual company employees.

I have also seen the opposite whereby the company employees are working a 2/1 roster and the sub-contractors are working a 4/1 roster.

Why would a sub-contractor do this? It all comes down to the cost. Additional flights incur additional costs for the employer as does having additional employees to work a 2/1 roster as opposed to a 4/1 roster. Cost is critical, and the sub-contractor may be working on lower margins for that job and cannot afford to offer a 2/1 roster to their employees.

Before you start applying for jobs, do some research and find out what rosters are associated with the jobs that interest you. There is nothing wrong with working a 4/1 roster and you will make good money doing so, but if that roster is going to cause home life issues, then don't consider jobs with that roster. Not too many years ago, there were contractors out there working a 10 week on 1 week off roster, so 4/1 is not too bad really.

If you look at the application process for getting a job, I think the most commonly used process now is for the applicant to send an email with an application and introductory letter. This seems to be the most common method, but it can also be the most impersonal way of getting a job.

You can use the internet to find positions but do not be afraid to take your application and a written introductory letter to the company that is advertising the job and hand deliver it to the reception staff. Doing this also gives you an opportunity to possibly meet people within the company that you hoping to gain employment with.



As previously mentioned, if hand delivering your resume, you will meet company representatives that are not interested in receiving your resume and may tell you not to bother them. Don't be put off by this, if these people treat you like this at first contact, then it is possible they may treat you the same way as an employee. Be polite and courteous and move onto the next potential employer.

When approaching and introducing yourself to the company representatives, be clear, polite and direct in explaining who you are and why you are there. Make sure you provide the staff with a written introductory letter as this will be added to your resume. A resume is not sufficient on its own, you need a short introductory letter that tells the potential new employer who you are and what your ambitions are. Any relevant current qualifications should be attached to the resume. If you have recently completed a qualification or you have obtained a current police clearance or similar, then provide a copy of that for the employer, this will demonstrate you are ready for an immediate start.

If you are invited in for an interview, make sure you're ready to be interviewed. That means you will have done some background research to find out who this company is and what they do. You will look foolish if you have no knowledge of what the company does. The night before going out to hand out resumes in person, select maybe 10 to 12 companies that you want to target and do some research on each company. This will demonstrate to the staff that you are interested in knowing who the company is and what the company does. Where possible, do your best to address the interviewer by their first name, it means a lot to have someone remember your name, don't call them mate or buddy.

It would be a great idea to have some knowledge of what the job position entails. As an example: if during the interview the employer asks you what it is about operating a primary crusher that you like, and you answer with, "dunno, mate, just love the crunching noise crushers make" then that might not end well for you.

Be ready to answer the interviewer's questions. Be honest in telling them that you don't have any hands-on experience, but you have completed some accredited training courses and now hold current qualifications required for crusher operations. Also, you have completed some online research on the type of crushing plants this company operates, and you feel with a little site training, you would make a great crusher operator and would be an asset to their company.

An employer would consider your approach in that you have made the effort to voluntarily come and see them, you have completed some training for the position off your own back and you have spent time doing research on the actual crushing plant that the employer operates. Why would they not give you the job?

Unlike some, you have taken the time and made the effort to get yourself employed. If doing this did not see success today, keep at it because with the right attitude, you will succeed tomorrow.

Now for a discussion that may offend some. Please be assured that the author is only putting a point across for you to consider, if you decide that the point is not important, then that is your decision. Tattoos have become popular and for many, the tattoos are a reminder of a loved one or have some special meaning attached. Most employers today understand that. What some employers may not be so acceptable of is metal rings in the facial area, especially nose rings, or metal pins or clips around the eyelid area, nose or lips. These metal object will pose a safety risk if working around plant and equipment and many sites will have in place strict policies that prevent these types of metal items being worn.

Large ear rings will also pose a safety risk. For a person to wear fashionable jewellery to an interview is not the issue, the issue is metal or sizable items that could get tangled in moving parts of equipment when on the job. Whilst this may not seem too concerning to some, many sites will no longer allow employees to wear wedding or finger rings or bracelets as these items can become entangled in equipment and get ripped off during work.

Metal piercings that are not visual will probably not be an issue. On the day of the interview, it is up to you whether you remove facial piercings before the interview or wear them to the interview. Whilst you have every right to wear facial body piercings, remember that the employer has every right to not employ someone that could be a danger to themselves when onsite. It is your call as to how you present yourself on the day, be assured, everything you do and say at the interview will be noticed as that is what interviewers do, they take notice, so they can make an informed decision.

Don't lose site of the objective! Your objective is to get a start in the mining, construction or heavy transport industry. Like any goal you set yourself, the intent is to see it through and achieve a positive outcome. Remember the objective is to get a start. If you take onboard the advice and information put to you in this information guide, there is a very good chance you will achieve your objectives.

Don't be put off by a knockback from a potential employer, think of the knockbacks as a practice run for the next employer you visit. Stay focused, be determined and always be respectful. People move around in these industries, the person you offend today could be the one you need help from tomorrow.

Finally, how you behave at an interview, how you dress and present yourself for an interview, how you talk and what you say at an interview will all play a role in whether you get the job or not. Going to an interview but not getting the job because others that have applied for the same job had more to offer in the way of skills or experience is not something to get upset about. However, if you did not get the job because you arrived for the interview late or in dirty clothes or you made unwanted comments during the interview then that is something you will need to change immediately if you are wanting to succeed. Your attitude and how you are viewed is a big part of the interview process. Listen to what the interviewers have to say without butting in and answer the questions they ask to the best of your ability. Always be honest, respectful and polite and never arrive for an interview late.

1.14 Summary

Hopefully the information provided will see you gainfully employed in the very near future. I would personally like to thank you for taking the time to read this information guide.

Over the years, RMS has placed hundreds of non-experienced people into the mining, construction and transport sectors. Whilst there are never any guarantees of a job, I do believe that people will get what they want if they are prepared to do what is needed to achieve their goals.

I thought it would be good to include a couple of real-life stories about some people that, like you, wanted to get into the mining industry but had absolutely no experience. All too often we hear only negatives, and in many cases, the negatives are based on Chinese whispers.

In the two stories relayed here, both accounts are based on the attitude of the person. I personally believe that attitude is the absolute key to being successful in achieving your goals. Hopefully hearing these real-life accounts will inspire you to forge ahead and create your own story.

The first is about a guy that arrived on our doorstep several years ago. He presented well and came across as a very genuine person. He told me he had left his wife and kids behind in NSW and driven over to Perth in his Mitsubishi L300 van. He had been in WA for about 3 weeks and had been living in his car under a street light in the back streets of Welshpool. He was using a garden hose from a truck yard to shower under and was surviving on 2-minute noodles.

He told me he had always wanted to go mining and loved the idea of operating big equipment. In northern NSW where he lived, he was not able to make ends meet and could not afford a house and was barely able to pay the rent, so he made the decision to take what little money he and his wife had and head to the west to get his dream job.

At that time, RMS was running a training program for a large nickel mining operation, after meeting and talking with this guy and based on his "can do" attitude and honest personality, we offered him a job in the training program as a dump truck operator.

Within 6 months of starting his new career, he had relocated his family to WA and was looking to buy his first home. He progressed from dump trucks to wheel loaders, excavators and other equipment and was living his dream.

When I spoke to him some 4 years later, he had been promoted to site supervisor, he had brought his first new house in the northern suburbs and was about to buy a second house as an investment. Good attitude, good result.

The second account is about a guy that I met 20 odd years ago in the goldfields. When I met this guy, he was holding a stop and go sign and his job was to make sure the dump trucks from our mining operation did not run into any private vehicles when the trucks crossed the public access road.

As I was driving past this 22-year-old guy holding the stop / go sign, he waved me down and asked me if I would give him a job in the mine. In talking with this guy for a while, he told me he had left school at 14 years of age. He told me his mother had passed away when he was young and that his father was very hard on him, so he left home and just knocked around looking for work.

He explained to me that he did have a learning difficulty and as a result of that, his father had all but given up on him. He told me his father had often said to him that he would never amount to anything and that he was useless.

This guy decided to pack up what little belongings he had and make his way to WA to find a full-time job, so he could prove his dad wrong. On the day I met him, he had been in the west Australian goldfields for about 4 months and was picking up a few odd jobs here and there but nothing of any substance.

Whilst he had told me of his reading, writing and learning difficulties, what caught my attention though was his attitude! This guy had lost his mum, had a dad that thought he was a waste of time and told him as much and all he wanted to do was get a job, make some money so he could fly his dad to WA and show him that he wasn't a waste of time.

His enthusiasm and "can do" attitude was infectious, so after chatting with him on the side of the road for 30 minutes, I told him to be at the mining office the next day and I would see what I could do for him. The next day I arrived at work around 6.00am and this guy was sitting on a chair in reception waiting. Other staff members later told me he had been there for at least 90 minutes prior to my arrival. That to me is commitment.

We only spoke briefly as I had already decided to give this guy a job. We trained him to drive our 180 tonne dump trucks and after he mastered that, we trained him to work in a drill and blast position as that was his dream job.

Around 12 months after starting at that site, he did bring his dad over from the eastern states which I am told was a huge turning point in his father's opinion of his son.

That was 20 years ago. I recently heard that this same guy owns several rental properties that he purchased from his mining income and now lives a more relaxed lifestyle south of Perth.

Why did I choose these guys over other people looking to get a start in the industry? These guys like many others that I have employed demonstrated a "can do" attitude and were prepared to put unlimited effort into getting a start in the mining industry.

In closing, don't be put off by negative comments. I find it amusing when people say things like, you need 2 years mining experience before you can get a job in mining.

My response to a statement like that is, name one person that started their first day in mining that had any mining experience.

I find it even more amusing when the people telling you this seem to have totally forgotten that at some point in time not too long ago, they too had absolutely zero mining experience! So how did they get their job?

Don't be put off by the negatives out there. What you do need more than anything is commitment and a good attitude. You will also need to be well presented and polite at interviews and you will also benefit from having the right tickets and qualifications for the job you are seeking. If you do this and you remain determined to get a job in the mining, construction or heavy transport industry and you are prepared to knock on a few doors, then there is absolutely every possibility that you will get what you want.

Above all else, always maintain a good attitude. Whilst the mining, construction or transport industry can reward you well, it can also push out the employees with disrespectful attitudes. Memories are long in these industries so look after your reputation as it is the key to your ongoing success.

End.

RMS will be releasing several more information guides over the coming weeks and months. The guides or information books are designed to enhance your knowledge in specific areas of the mining, construction and transport sectors. They may include:

Understanding the operation and job position of;

- Mechanical drive dump trucks, Diesel electric drive dump trucks, Heavy haulage road-trains and trucks.
- Track dozers, Wheel loaders, Graders, Hydraulic shovels and excavators, Wheel dozers scrapers and more.

These information guides will provide you with an insight into the internal operation of the specific item of equipment and how best to operate that equipment.

RMS will also provide information guides on various areas within process operation in mining, civil construction processes and transport including long haul, heavy haulage, mining work and similar

Check the RMS web page for updates, positions vacant and changes to what we offer.

I personally wish you every success in your endeavours to securing a new career in the industry of your choosing.

Graeme Richards (Author)



Group Operations Manager
RMS Training & Recruitment