



HOW TO OPERATE A BULLDOZER

A BULLDOZER looks like an intimidating piece of heavy equipment. This earth-moving machine has front-mounted blades and a rear-end ripper claw to assist in smoothing ground for roads, runways, building sites and golf courses. Once you learn how to operate a bulldozer, it really isn't that difficult. However, operating a dozer does require following procedure to keep the driver safe and the machine in good working order.

CONDUCTING A Safety Check

Just like any other vehicle, you want to make sure your dozer is safe to drive.

- **Check the outside for damage.** Look for cracks, dents and wear on the blade and ripper.
- **Inspect for leaks.** Look underneath the bulldozer for oil leaks and for cracked hoses for hydraulic fluid leaks.
- **Make sure all latches and doors are closed.**
- **Check fluid levels.** Do you have enough fuel, oil, coolant, transmission oil and hydraulic fluid?
- **Carefully enter the cab.** Use the safety rails to climb into the dozer's cab.
- **Fasten your seatbelt.**
- **Put the key in the ignition and turn it to the right.** You might need to have your foot on the brake. If the engine doesn't turn over, don't keep turning because you could flood it.
- **Warm up the engine.** That gives the oil time to lubricate the parts.
- **Turn the speed control down.** This is usually located on the left joystick.
- **Turn the throttle to the "run" position.** It controls the engine's power, so the speed needs to be down while you increase the throttle to "full."



Starting the MACHINE

Once you have it turned on, you want to look at the bulldozer controls and get ready to move.

- **Shift the left joystick forward for "drive" or back for "reverse."** You'll hear a small click when it's properly engaged.
- **Gently move the joystick right to control the direction of the bulldozer.**
- **Test the controls individually to make sure they all work.**
- **Stop the movement by depressing the decelerator and shifting the left joystick to the neutral position.**



USING THE Blade and Ripper

Knowing how to operate a bulldozer also involves knowing how to use its main tools: blade and ripper.

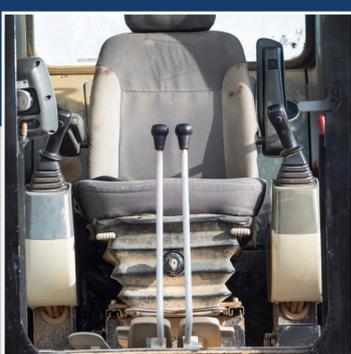
- **Move the right-hand joystick forward to lower the blade and backward to raise it.** Don't put the blade all the way on the ground until you're ready to push dirt.
- **Move the right-hand joystick horizontally to control the blade's tilt.** The tilt indicates the side of the blade that is lower to the ground.
- **Angle the control knob to fan the blade either right or left.** In some machines it's a button; in others it's a small dial. Angling determines the side of the bulldozer the dirt flows to.
- **Engage the ripper by moving the ripper joystick backward.** Find it behind the right-hand joystick near the operator. The ripper's job is to use its shanks loosen dirt.



SHUTTING DOWN THE Bulldozer

This procedure is rather straightforward but needs to be followed for safety's sake.

- **Slowly lower the blade and ripper to ground level.** They should touch the ground with very little pressure.
- **Turn the throttle to the left** to the lowest position.
- **Move the left joystick to the "neutral" position.**
- **Engage the parking brake.**
- **Allow the engine to idle for at least 10 minutes.**
- **Turn the key left to the "off" position.**
- **Exit the bulldozer carefully,** again using the handrails.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING HOW TO BECOME A BULLDOZER OPERATOR? Heavy Equipment Colleges of America offer a wide range of training programs that can prepare you to operate heavy equipment in as few as three weeks.

GET HEAVY EQUIPMENT TRAINING AT ANY OF HEC'S LOCATIONS: Fayetteville, NC; Conyers, GA; Clarksville, TN; Oklahoma City, OK; San Bernardino, CA; Ft. Irwin, CA*; and Lakewood, WA*.

*Only available to veterans through the Army's Career Skills Program (CSP)