



WILLOWBROOK FARM & FOODS

How to become a Food Production Operative

You may already be a production operative and want to move sectors or perhaps you just have a passion for the food industry, then following a career as a food production operative might be for you. It's a career that can be both rewarding and exciting, with those who follow this route starting on an average salary of £14,00 rising to £20,000 with experience.

Career progression opportunities are also readily available in this sector, with many people moving into quality control or progressing into shift supervisor positions.

Food production operatives are typically found in factories and food processing plants, working on production, and packaging lines, but what does a career as a food production operative look like?

What exactly does a food production operative do?

As the name suggests, food production operatives are involved in the production and packaging of food products. Depending on the size of the factory they are working in, they could be working with large machinery that automates processes or could be working in a more hands-on role ensuring that each process is completed correctly and consistently.

Health and safety are of high importance in the food production industry, so those working as food production operatives need to have knowledge of food safety. They need to be aware of food safety issues and be prepared to act if problems arise.

The day-to-day responsibilities of a food production operative normally include:

- Checking and weighing raw materials.
- Ensuring that machine settings are correct.
- Maintaining a clean production environment.
- Running quality checks on, for example, the size and weight of the finished product.
- Assembling, packaging and labelling.
- Simple machine maintenance.

What do you need to become a food production operative?

You don't need any formal qualifications to pursue this career path, but most employers do value individuals who have basic numeracy and literacy skills. Some roles may also specify a minimum age of 18 depending on shift hours and the machinery involved.

People who do well in this career usually have the following skills and knowledge:

- Thorough and pay attention to detail
- Patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- The ability to work on your own
- Knowledge of manufacturing production and processes
- The ability to use, repair and maintain machines and tools
- The ability to work well with others
- Knowledge of maths
- Physical skills like movement, coordination, and dexterity

Employers will usually offer on the job training for those who require it or for those who want a qualification, they can start this job through a food and drink process operator intermediate apprenticeship, or a food and drink advanced process operator advanced apprenticeship.

You can also improve your job prospects by taking an industry qualification in food safety or food team leading.