



# 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.

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