

What does it take to become a **FREIGHT HANDLER?**

The primary responsibility of a freight handler is to supervise the loading and unloading of all cargo consignments, ensuring properly packaging and correct loading. They play a pivotal role in the economy as they help transport products or raw materials from one point to the next. Freight handlers are found in the transportation industries, such as airlines, shipping, and railroad companies. They may work specifically as baggage or cargo handlers, or truck loaders and unloaders. Their specific duties differ, according to work setting or industry. They may also work in warehouses or storage areas. The job carries responsibility as the cargo controller forms the link between the customer and the safe, quick and efficient delivery of consignments.

Skills & Knowledge

High school courses in languages, computer science and mathematics provide a strong foundation for a Freight Handler's career. You will need a calm demeanour, physical strength and determination, and good communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Freight Handlers working in the airline industry must speak, read and write English fluently, and communicate effectively. The airline and shipping industries have tight schedules and exacting regulations so the ability to constantly work under the pressure of a deadline is needed. Experience operating a forklift or other industry related machinery is an asset.

Training

Jobs in this field are considered entry-level and the necessary skills can be learned quickly. Most new employees enter as apprentices and receive on-the-job training while being supervised by an experienced cargo handler or manager. Regulations vary, but licensing may be required for handlers who drive forklifts or operate other heavy equipment. As they gain more experience, workers not only perform their tasks more quickly, but can do more complex jobs.

Working Conditions

This work is physically strenuous. It involves frequent kneeling and bending, and the lifting of heavy materials. Freight Handlers work with tools, such as dollies, forklifts, hand trucks, jacks, pallet trucks or wrapping machinery. In managing warehouse floor loads, they also may work with computers, such as data entry software or industry management software, but generally, they work outdoors in all types of weather. The work also requires high levels of concentration in verifying and recording the count and condition of cargo received.



Job Prospects

Most freight handlers work in the transportation industries, such as airlines, shipping, and railroad companies. Overnight courier delivery companies are also considered major employers of freight handlers. Most work full time, and some work nights and weekends to accommodate passenger and cargo delivery schedules. They may also work in big consumer goods warehouses or storage areas.

You too can live your passion and qualify as a Freight Handler. If you are physically fit, deadline driven and possess good communication and customer care abilities, you are a good candidate.

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