



THE EQUIPMENT SOURCE

How To Operate a Mini Excavator: A Step-by-Step Guide

Do you have a project that requires you to use a mini excavator? Although small excavators are an advantageous and powerful tool, they can be a little intimidating if you've never operated one. Fortunately, you can use this guide as a handy cheat sheet.

But remember, this guide is **NOT** a replacement for the required qualifications and training you'll need before renting and using a compact mini excavator (please see the FAQs at the end). Instead, this guide is a useful supplement to refer to and help reinforce your knowledge.

Preparing to Operate a Mini Excavator

Before you start up the mini excavator, there are a few things you should do first to ensure a smooth operational experience.

- Read the user manual
- While the machine is off, carefully inspect the mini excavator
 - Check the machine for damage (Look for fluid leaks, damage to tracks, loose wires, etc.)
 - Ensure the machine's fluid levels aren't low (Look at the fuel levels, oil levels, coolant levels, etc.)
 - Check the machine's filters (Look at the fuel filter, oil filter, water/fuel separator, etc.)
 - Check that the attachments are properly secured (Familiarize yourself with the controls and safety features)
 - Identify whether the mini excavator's controls operate using ISO or SAE standards

Operating a Mini Excavator

Now that you've taken care of the preliminary steps, you're ready to get to work. The following steps provide an overview of how to safely operate a mini excavator.

- Put on the proper PPEs (Hard hats, gloves, steel-toed boots, safety glasses, etc.)
- Check your work area for people and obstacles (If there are people in the vicinity, alert them that you're about to use the mini excavator and wait for them to move to a safe area. Also, look for any obstacles that might cause a collision and remove them.)
- Get in the mini excavator making sure to use the three points of contact for optimal safety. (1) Put on the seatbelt, (2) Start the mini excavator, and (3) don't move it yet.)
- Pull down the safety lock lever
- Raise and adjust the stabilizer bar

- Set the engine speed (Use a lower speed until you get more comfortable using the mini excavator)
- Use the control levers to pivot and move the machine around.

The exact location and function of the control levers will vary from machine to machine, so be sure to read the manual carefully. In general, there are five control levers for moving around and operating a mini excavator. Here is a summary of how to use the control levers when operating a mini excavator.

- To move forward: Push both joysticks in front of the operator chair forward, away from the chair
- To move backward: Pull both joysticks located in front of the operator chair backward, towards the chair
- To turn to the right: At the same time, push the large joystick on the right side of the operator chair forward, and pull the joystick on the left side of the chair backward.
- To turn left: At the same time, pull the large joystick on the right side of the operator chair backward, and push the joystick on the left side of the chair forward
- To pivot the mini excavator's cab: Use the joystick on the left side of the chair to change direction
- To rotate the arm to the left: Step on the left side of the foot pedal
- To rotate the arm to the right: Step on the right side of the foot pedal
- To move the arm up: Push the joystick on the left side of the operator chair forward
- To move the arm down: Pull the joystick on the left side of the operator chair backward
- To curl the bucket in and close it: Push the small joystick on the right side of the operator chair to the left
- To unfurl the bucket and open it: Push the small joystick on the right side of the operator chair to the right
- To lower the boom arm to the ground: Push the small joystick on the right side of the operator chair forward
- To raise the boom arm: Pull the small joystick on the right side of the operator chair backward
- To excavate: Extend the boom away from you and lower the bucket's teeth to the ground. Then pull the bucket towards you

Remember to pay close attention to your surroundings and to take your time as you get the hang of operating a mini excavator. And if you need help, please call one of our team members to get the information you need.

Are There Any Excavator Rentals Near Me?

With eight different locations, we are ready to help you access the tools and equipment you need to finish your projects. From questions about small excavator rental prices to dropping off a Kubota excavator at your project site, our experienced team is here to help you get the project done.

If you have questions about availability or are ready to reserve an excavator rental now, simply [contact](#) our equipment rental experts today and get what you need to complete your project.

Mini Excavator FAQs

What requirements or qualifications do I need to operate a mini excavator?

Before you can rent heavy equipment like a mini digger, you must meet certain requirements. To rent a mini excavator from us, you must have:

- Proof of OSHA-required training
- Current equipment training for mini-excavators

Does Equipment Source provide operating training for mini excavators?

Ensuring that our customers have safe working environments is our priority. Whether we're dropping off a compact excavator at your worksite or you're picking up a Komatsu excavator from one of our locations, we always provide brief but thorough training before you begin operations.

How do I rent a mini excavator?

Renting a mini excavator is easy and the equipment will help make your job easier and more efficient. To rent one, make sure you have the proper training and then call us to arrange for delivery or pickup. We'll do all we can to make the process easy.