

SSFOT06 Footwear Machine Operator (Cutting)

Disclaimer

These Occupational Frameworks and Skill Profiles have been developed as workforce planning, occupational mapping and skills reference resources for the Australian textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry. They are intended to describe the typical functions, responsibilities, skills and capabilities associated with occupations across the industry.

These documents are not intended to replace or override industrial instruments or employment arrangements, including awards, enterprise agreements, employment contracts, position descriptions, classification structures, licensing or regulatory requirements, or other statutory obligations. Where differences arise, the relevant industrial, legislative or regulatory requirements take precedence. The Skill Profiles should be used as complementary reference documents to support workforce planning, career development, training and skills recognition.

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Footwear Production
Functional area	Industrial [machine based] production
Job role	SSFOT06 Footwear Machine Operator (Cutting)
Job role description	Operates cutting machinery to accurately cut leather, synthetic and textile materials into footwear upper and component parts according to approved patterns and production specifications. Ensures material efficiency, quality standards and safe machine operation.
Performance expectations	- Achieve daily cutting output targets. - Maintain high accuracy in component cutting. - Minimise material waste and offcuts. - Ensure safe operation of cutting machinery. - Meet quality inspection standards. - Maintain accurate production records.
Specialisation	- Clicker press operation. - Automated computer numerical control (CNC) cutting systems. - Leather grading and material optimisation.
Application in other TCF sectors	Transferable to cutting operations in leather goods, apparel and textile manufacturing sectors.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	- Set up and operate cutting machinery. - Select appropriate dies and digital cutting files. - Position materials to optimise yield. - Inspect cut components for defects. - Maintain equipment cleanliness and safety standards. - Record production quantities and material usage. - Report equipment faults or material issues.
Critical work functions	- Maintaining precision and dimensional accuracy. - Maximising material utilisation and reducing waste.

	• Ensuring consistent component quality. • Operating machinery safely and efficiently. • Supporting workflow continuity in production. • Identifying defective materials early in process. • Maintaining accurate documentation.
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3. Technical skills

Cutting machinery operation	Operate clicker presses and automated cutting systems.
Material identification	Recognise grades and characteristics of leather and synthetic materials.
Pattern and die alignment	Align patterns accurately to material grain and stretch.
Digital cutting systems*	Operate CNC or automated cutting software.
Quality inspection procedures	Inspect components for accuracy and defects.
Basic machine maintenance	Perform routine checks and report mechanical faults.
Material optimisation techniques*	Apply nesting and yield improvement methods.
WHS compliance	Follow safety procedures for machine operation.

*Technical skills identified as emerging skills in TCF industry.

4. Generic Skills

Attention to detail	Ensure precise cutting and component accuracy.
Time management	Meet production throughput targets.
Problem solving	Identify material or equipment issues.
Communication	Report production and quality issues clearly.
Teamwork	Coordinate with closing and assembly departments.
Reliability	Maintain consistent attendance and performance.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Advanced CNC and automated cutting systems. • Digital nesting optimisation software. • Integration with enterprise resource planning (ERP) production tracking systems. • Sustainable material waste reduction practices. • Data-driven yield performance monitoring. • Automation-aware workflow integration.
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST20722 Certificate II in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles or equivalent.
Advanced development	No qualification.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Possible job progression: Machine Operator → Senior Machine Operator → Production Technician → Production Supervisor.
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 2-3.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 4.
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	731432 Footwear of Footwear Production Machine Operator.



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