

The 4 Reasons Why We Accept Lubrication Failure

"Death by Lubrication"



By Ricky Smith CMRP

Why do professional maintenance management teams accept lubrication problems which could account for a large majority of equipment failures in their plant? Recent studies have shown that over 80% of maintenance managers' say lubrication is a major problem. Failures are more frequent than most maintenance managers even know.

So what are the reasons for Lubrication Failure?

1. Improper lubrication practices are at the heart of many equipment reliability issues.

Studies have shown that 70-85% of equipment failures are self induced, meaning that maintenance practices and processes are directly responsible for the failures.

In a recent survey companies responded saying poor lubrication practices represent about 40% of maintenance-related self-induced failures.

A problem with these failures many times begins with the standard Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM's) lubrication recommendations.

- Lubrication recommendations are time based
Example: Changing oil in a hydraulic system, changing oil in a hydraulic system should be a rare occurrence.
- The amount of lubrication introduced into a bearing is not defined by the OEM

Example: Conveyor Bearings – Grease all over the place
(more grease the better)

Solution: Utilize formal processes to determine lubrication requirements for equipment such as FRACAS, RCM, FMEA, etc. It is all about preventing a Failure Mode from occurring.

2. Root Cause Analysis is not utilized effectively in most companies. If so they would find lubrication to be a big problem and resolve them.

Solution: Make RCA a key part of your maintenance process (Bad actors)

3. I have found consistently that full time lubrication specialist and operators induce failures into their equipment.

Recent studies support my claim. In fact one study found that over 45% of all personnel who perform lubrication have not been formally trained.

Example 1: (True Story) Lubricator lubricating without grease in grease gun. Reason for the problem, No management oversight

Example 2: Lubricator introducing hydraulic fluid into a reservoir with a dirty funnel and open container. A closed hydraulic system is a requirement, along with filtering hydraulic fluid before introducing it into a reservoir.

Solution: Develop Repeatable, Effective Lube Procedures and train your lubrication technicians and operators using these procedures.

4. Maintenance and production personnel do not perform lubrication on their equipment to standard and have only been given on the job training by the previous person who was in that position.

Solution:

1. Develop Effective, Repeatable Lube Procedures and then insure people follow them.
2. Formally train all personnel who perform lubrication practices to equipment
3. Make lubrication procedures mandatory
4. Have a percentage of personnel in maintenance and operations certified in Lubrication.

Conclusion: Stop your maintenance and operations staff from doing the wrong things in lubrication. This requires procedures, training, and discipline and only then will the results will appear. If you have questions or comments send them to rsmith@gpallied.com

Check out my new website at: www.MaintenancePhoenix.com