



Training notes from the woods & the classroom

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General Equipment Maintenance

By Lee Schauman

Everyone knows that preventive maintenance is the key to a successful operation of your equipment. Required periodic maintenance is crucial to successful machine operation. Necessary lubrication requirements, periodic filter replacement, periodic fluid replacements, and daily fluid level checks are all items of preventive maintenance that will make your day go better, and will mean less downtime, longer machine life, and more profits at the end of the day.

In addition, the daily walkaround inspection will give the operator a great visual check of his machine to identify problems, while they are small rather than waiting until they have become major. A small insignificant issue becomes a larger issue when not taken care of immediately. The walkaround gives the operator the chance to identify and fix the problem BEFORE it becomes a major catastrophe. It also makes the machine a safer machine to operate.

All too often, without preventive maintenance efforts, machinery reaches a state of disrepair. This is not only dangerous to the operator, but becomes a financial burden to the owner. All heavy equipment has safety features to protect the operator and an operator's manual to help you familiarize yourself with the machine. DO NOT take them for granted.

Check all hydraulic systems daily for leaks that might cause erratic hydraulic operations. Leaks can also deposit oil on walking working surfaces, which can create slips and falls. Check all protective screens/windows on cabs to be sure they are intact. A few minutes each day to perform a safety check looking for defects and broken or missing parts can ensure the operator an accident free work day. The operator's manual will identify those items that should be taken care of on a regular basis as well.

Below is a list of items to be checked each day to provide a safe, efficient machine:

1. Check all fluid levels and check for leaks – repair as necessary.
2. Check for loose parts, nuts, bolts – cracks in framework, worn pins, etc.
3. Check tires for cuts, pressure, lug nut tightness, rubbing against frames.
4. Check cable rigging (cable skidders) booms etc., (forwarders) for damage
5. Keep equipment free of debris, oil on surfaces, etc.
6. Be sure fire extinguishers and first aid kits are current
7. Each morning check for vandalism.
8. Be sure exhaust system is intact to prevent fires.

9. At each startup, be sure all gauges are working so proper information is given to the operator.

With a little common sense and knowledge of your machine, you will be able to keep your machine safe and in top operating condition.

Operate Safe!

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