

# Mistakes you cannot afford to make when using lubricants

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Any mistake in the application of lubricants can be extremely costly to an industry. Did you apply an insufficient amount, over-apply or misapply the product? The consequences may be unexpectedly negative. Even carelessness with storage and incorrect lubricant selection can result in significant losses, such as machinery breakdowns and unexpected production line stoppages.

It is important to remember that lubricant is essential for the proper operation of industrial machinery. This input, in addition to reducing friction between moving parts, can also regulate temperature, prevent corrosion and clean the equipment's internal components.

A well-lubricated machine maintains operational effectiveness and productivity over the course of its useful life.

In this post, we will highlight some of the most common lubricant mistakes that you should avoid. As simple as some of them are, it never hurts to be reminded of their significance so that you don't make the same mistake again. Check it out!

## What are the most common errors?

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### Insufficient or excessive amount of lubricant

One of the most common operational errors in the application of this product is an inaccuracy in the amount of lubricant used.

Trying to save money or simply getting the wrong amount can result in insufficient lubrication that does not serve its purpose. This will eventually cause damage to the machinery.

Similarly, pouring a huge amount of lubricant does not solve the problem. Aside from the loss due to wastage, the excess can cause a series of failures during operation, particularly when thicker greases are used.



When in doubt, the maintenance professional should always check the manual to ensure proper lubrication.

### Choosing the wrong lubricant

Another type of failure that unfortunately occurs on a regular basis is the use of incorrect lubricants for the equipment. The truth is that there is no universal lubricant. Each machine requires a distinct sort of product in order to function properly.

You should be aware that adding a lubricant designed for X equipment to Y equipment may result in failure. Many times, in industries with several lubrication points, it is possible the operator might get confused.

However, this failure is frequently caused by the lack of understanding on the part of the maintenance staff or by inadequate assistance from the equipment provider.

### Noncompliance with the Maintenance Plan

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To minimize unexpected failures and breakdowns, each equipment requires a preventive maintenance routine. Not following the manufacturer's instructions is like taking a huge risk with the investment in that machine.

The maintenance plan should never be disregarded. And, of course, this advice also applies to lubrication! Failure to implement recommended improvements might accelerate wear on moving parts and shorten the equipment's life.

### Improper storage

As ridiculous as it may sound, some companies continue to store their lubricants improperly, exposing them to rain, sun and humidity.

Since water may contaminate any form of lubricant, it should never be present in areas where this product is stored. Even dust can contaminate the lubricant, resulting in mechanical damage. As a result, it is critical to pay special attention to the storage location of these items.

### Inadequate cleaning of equipment

While various lubricants provide the function of cleaning the internal parts of machines, this does not mean they perform all of this task by themselves. Very dirty equipment may contaminate the product, the same way dust in a storage area does.

It is important to do regular cleaning in order to avoid the accumulation of dirt. This is true for both the external side of the machines and the lubricating points. The cleaning frequency is mostly determined by the machine's working parameters and the type of material processed.

### Delays in oil changes

Delaying the oil change interval, whether from negligence or a lack of maintenance planning, can be damaging to the system's efficiency. Given that both the equipment maker and the lubricant manufacturer provide suggestions for this interval, the ideal is to follow the advice for the smallest time interval.

Failure to pay sufficient attention to ensure timely oil changes can result in unexpected breakdowns, increased maintenance costs and lower overall productivity.

### Choosing a lubricant by price

Contrary to popular belief, pricing is not the only aspect to consider when selecting a lubricant. The procurement and maintenance departments are tasked with the responsibility of selecting suppliers for a variety of reasons. Price is only one of them.

You will want to find lubricants approved by manufacturer's specifications and able to meet a variety of other critical requirements. Besides, it is critical to consider the manufacturer's origin and the product's quality.

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## How to avoid such mistakes?

A significant portion of the mistakes listed thus far can be avoided with a relatively simple measure: the development of an efficient maintenance plan that takes into account the recommendations of equipment manufacturers and lubricant manufacturers, as well as the operational requirements of the business.

To develop this strategy, it is essential to count on the assistance of lubricant specialists, professionals and companies that can alert the maintenance team to these problems, providing clear instructions and supplying training as needed.

Those who are familiar with lubricants in the industry are able to examine the equipment and the process in which it is used in detail, including load, temperature, rotation speed and intensity of usage. From there, it is possible to determine which product is most suited for lubrication, as well as other critical information, such as change intervals and quantities used.

Nonetheless, it is suggested that maintenance workers have a working understanding of lubricants, including the distinction between lubricating oils and greases.

Industry work has no room for inconsistencies of any type. Any operational error might result in unanticipated stoppages and, at worst, financial loss. In the worst scenario, the management may have to deal with serious work accidents and lesions.

Now that you're aware of the lubricant-related mistakes to avoid, take some time to learn about the types of industrial lubricants and their applications!

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