

# Maintenance more than just lubricants

IT MAY NOT BE THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR, BUT CLEANING MACHINERY IS EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT AS LUBRICATION, ADJUSTMENT, AND REPAIRING OR REPLACING PARTS.



Maintenance work never goes away – even when production is reduced or even halted. In fact, when a large vehicle manufacturer temporarily suspended production at its UK plant last year its spending on maintenance products actually increased, as engineers found the time and opportunity to tackle jobs they had previously been postponing!

An important part of maintaining any machinery is cleaning: an essential operation which should take place:

- pre-inspection
- before parts are removed
- before lubrication
- before parts are replaced
- before re-bonding
- after repair

Cleaning firstly enables easy inspection and can reveal otherwise hidden wear and hairline cracks. Secondly, it reduces wear by removing accumulated dirt which can build up into a devastatingly effective grinding paste. Thirdly, it helps to prevent electrochemical reactions which cause corrosion. And finally, it maintains or improves the surface finish which – in food processing plants in particular – is an important consideration for hygiene.

However, just as MRO is about more than repair and lubrication, so cleaning is about more than just finding the most aggressive



cleaning product and applying it all over equipment or components. The necessity to achieve the correct balance between cleaning power and compatibility with materials such as plastics, and between evaporation rate and flammability, means careful, informed choices have to be made.

#### An effective cleaner must:

- have good penetration so that it actively gets into the soiling agent rather than simply sitting on top of it
- have excellent wetting properties, so that it spreads out evenly across the area to be cleaned, with fewer applications
- be effective at dissolving the dirt once it has been applied and has penetrated
- have a high evaporation rate for faster drying

The skill of the cleaning products manufacturer is two-fold. As well as creating products which can do all of the above, they must also address other issues. These include potential flammability caused by fast evaporation, the possible effects of aggressive cleaning agents on certain plastics or composites, the problems of odours in confined spaces or food processing operations, toxicity,

residues (particularly on surfaces to be painted), and other Health & Safety and environmental considerations.

Ambersil, for example – available from ERIKS – has the most comprehensive range of industrial MRO cleaning products in the UK, for a wide variety of applications. The products are specifically designed and clearly designated for particular tasks, with icons on the packaging defining suitability for corrosion inhibition, fault finding, metal cutting or metalworking, and so on.

Developing its products in its own laboratory, and manufacturing them at its own facility, Ambersil is able to offer highly effective cleaning products which meet the needs of MRO, whilst at the same time achieving Health & Safety compliance and matching the very latest environmental thinking. For example, the latest Ambersil air duster product has a global warming potential of just 6, compared with traditional products with a potential of 1400 – giving engineers the option of effective cleaning with less environmental impact, if required. The in-house laboratory also means Ambersil can react more quickly to changes in legislation, or to the identification of ingredients as toxic, by reformulating products to remove the offending chemical or chemicals, without compromising cleaning capability.

In addition to its cleaning products range, Ambersil offers a range of lubricants comprising oils, greases, pastes, and dry film lubricants, completing a comprehensive choice of solutions for all your cleaning and lubricating requirements. And both Ambersil cleaning products and Ambersil lubrication products have numerous product approvals for your peace of mind, together with additional benefits such as a 72-month



Achieving effective compromises between conflicting qualities demands insight, innovation and a comprehensive product range.

shelf life, and the 360° Spray System for easy aerosol application in even the most inaccessible places.

Corrosion is yet another challenge facing the maintenance engineer, both in the short- and the long-term, and whether machinery is indoors, under shelter or outdoors. As you would expect, Ambersil has suitable anti-corrosion products to complement the rest of its MRO lines.

Without lubricants it's obvious that the wheels of industry would soon stop turning. It's less obvious, but equally true, that without cleaning products industry would also soon grind to a halt. So effective cleaning must always be an essential part of the MRO process for any industrial machinery. Which means that effective cleaning products – such as those produced by Ambersil – must be an essential part of every MRO engineer's toolkit.

