

Blower Bearing Maintenance Basics



Blowers are the heart of any pneumatic conveyed scrap collection system. That's why when it comes to preventive maintenance of your pneumatic trim and dust conveying system, maintaining the blower bearings should be at the top of your list. If you're not sure what you need to be doing, read on.

New Puhl blowers include a tag with bearing greasing instructions (intervals and amount) and tool-less access to the bearing grease fittings. With Puhl's 3-D CAD designed guards, the shaft guard nests in between the bearings meeting OSHA guarding requirements and keeping the grease fittings outside of the guard so that you don't need tools (other than the grease gun) to grease the bearings. Many other brands of blowers require the guard to be removed to grease the bearings and many times replacing the guard is forgotten leaving the blower's owner open to OSHA citations for exposed rotating equipment. If your blower has a missing guard, be sure to have it locked out prior to working near the rotating shaft. And we recommend ordering a new guard as soon as possible.

With the onset of cold weather, in some cases the bearings end up being greased with cold grease. Cold grease can make the rolling elements of the bearing (balls or rollers) skid in the bearing race and cause damage up to and including catastrophic failure. Rolling element skid will shorten the bearing life.

The key to avoiding rolling element skid when greasing the bearing is to use warm (room temperature) grease. Make sure to grease the bearing only after it has been running long enough to warm up to operating temperature.

All bearings eventually fail. If you have blowers mounted in remote locations, detecting the signs of a bearing that is in the beginning the failure sequence may be difficult or a matter of luck. Remote electronic bearing monitoring systems (available from Puhl) can alert you via a PLC that the vibration is approaching or exceeding operating limits, an early sign of bearing failure. Un-detected bearing failures can do more than just destroy the blower shaft. They can result in fires. It is rare but it happens. Making regular greasing a part of your PM program and installing a detection system are the best ways to prevent unplanned downtime and reduce the risk of fires.

Questions? For more information, give G.F. Puhl a call at 615.230.9500 or email us at sales@gfpuhl.com.