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TINGUE TOPICS

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Articles

Keys to Obtaining Maximum Ironer Efficiency

by Bill Rountree

Would you take care of a Rolls Royce automobile, if one was given to you? How about if your company purchased it for you? How about if you purchased it with your own money?
Well, we cannot promise you a Rolls Royce, but chances are that you have some equipment in your laundry that approximates the cost of one. At least one of those pieces of equipment is probably a flatwork ironer and if you want to obtain maximum efficiency from yours, you must treat it just as the manufacturer recommends and with as much care as you would a Rolls Royce.
The following discussion will cover some of the areas that need attention in order to reach maximum efficiency from your flatwork ironers.

Heat

You should know your steam supply and return system better than the people who installed it. Study your steam supply.. Make sure you have a 2.5" line with no restrictions or reductions in size. Check your main valve and bypass valve. Do they work properly? Examine your pressure guage and thermometer. Are they accurate? This will help you determine what problems you have and isolate them.
The temperature of steam is approximately 337 degrees Fahrenheit at 100 pounds pressure, so you know the ironer should have enough heat to do its job.

What about the ironer itself? If the steam pressure to the ironer is what the manufacturer recommends, then the heat is determined by (1) steam flow and (2) the condition of the ironer.

Be sure to check all steam traps at regular intervals. The best way to do this is to use a stethoscope (borrow one from a doctor friend). Place it on the trap and listen. You should be able to hear the valve open and close at least once every two minutes or so.

If your steam flow is correct, you can normally be assured that the return is functioning. Do not take it for granted, though. Be sure it is maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.

It is impossible for the steam to do its job if the ironer chest is in poor condition. The ironing surface must be clean and smooth. Any buildup acts as an insulating blanket. As a result, the temperature of the surface with which the linen makes contact can be substantially lower and the drying capability of the ironing surface can be severely altered.

The steam chamber must not have pockets. To give you an idea of how important this is, a one foot thick jacket of cast iron wrapped around the outside of your chest will give you the same heat resisting effect that you get from a film of water only 0.2 inches thick or from a gas film of less than 0.001 of an inch thick. In other words, condensation holds back heat 60 times more than cast iron and air gases have 1200 times the heat resistance of cast iron. Where the steam does not make contact

with the chest, crack the pit cocks on the ends of the chest to allow air or water pockets to escape.

Energy
Part of proper use of energy is the electrical portion of the ironer. Don't jury-rig. You don't (shouldn't) do it at home, so don't do it with a $100,000 + piece of equipment. Check your connections, wiring, breakers, etc.

Lubrication
On any ironer there are dozens of lubrication points. While it may seem that this could be a full-time job, the effort will pay off. Lubrication is not difficult if done properly. One lubrication manufacturer once told me that the secret to long-running machinery is to lubricate frequently, yet moderately. Unfortunately, most mechanics lubricate machinery only when they think about it and only what they can see. Oftentimes, to make up for tardiness, one will shoot grease on a spot until it covers the ground below. This practice will likely do more harm than good.

The function of lubrication is to cut down friction in order to save wear on parts. Spasmodic lubrication allows these parts to wear when the mechanic is not thinking about them. Over-lubrication can force seals out so that when they are taken care of the grease flows right on the floor. Set up a lubrication schedule and be certain that your mechanic knows the hows, whens, and where. Remember: it only takes two pumps of a grease gun to do the job.

Feed Ribbons
Feed ribbons must travel in their guides and the drive roll must be covered to prevent slippage. Keep the ribbons only as tight as needed to make them run at the same speed. To check this, stop the ironer and draw a line across the ribbons. The ironer should stay straight when the ironer is started. Be sure that the feed board is not warped. Any of the above problems can cause uneven feeds into the ironer and result in jam-ups and poor quality.

Roll Coverings
A properly padded roll fits snugly into the chest using the maximum contact surface in the concave. When a roll is underpadded, the contact heating surface is reduced. If overpadded, the roll cannot seat all the way and heat contact is wasted. A slightly oversized roll will improve ironing if the pad has enough initial resiliency and there is sufficient heat to reduce friction wear.
The best method to measure a padded roll is to wrap a piece of adding machine paper around the roll, mark it, remove it, measure it, and compare your results with the requirements as given by the equipment manufacturer. It may seem arcane, but it will give you the most accurate measurement.
Generally, covers have a long life if well-maintained and used properly. Keep covers clean. If allowed to become clogged or covered with non-porous material, they can no longer absorb, nor release the moisture from the work. Covers should also be lubricated, but, remember the rule: frequently, yet moderately.

A cover cannot withstand the heat friction while running without the protection of the linen. A cover can wear out eight times faster when work is not going through, so it is important to have feeders alternate the feed lanes as well as relieving roll pressure when the ironer is not in use.

Pressure
Pressure is a vital factor in ironing efficiency because even the best padded roll has a natural tendency to climb out of the chest. Even the smallest air gap will lower the heat level considerably. When there is no pressure the roll does not rest properly in the chest and the work never touches the heated surface of the roll.

The time to replace padding is when at full pressure the roll does not fit snugly into the concave of the chest - not at some arbitrarily chosen time interval.

Follow these suggestions in order to obtain maximum efficiency from your ironer. If you should have further questions, contact your local Tingue, Brown representative.

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Tingue, Brown Boasts Four (Yes, 4!) NAILM Men-of-the-Year

At the annual banquet on Wednesday evening, April 21, 1993, Tingue, Brown will have four representatives honored as Allied Tradesmen of the Year by the National Association of Institutional Linen Management (NAILM). The Alabama, Iowa, North Carolina, and San Diego chapters of NAILM named Ty Acton, Sr., Ron Ellis, Creig Richards, and Howard Davis, respectively, as their Tradesmen of the Year.

Tingue, Brown & Company has been an associate NAILM member since 1941. Two years ago, for its 50th year anniversary of NAILM assocation,

Tingue, Brown was honored as a Masters Club member of NAILM. The dedication of people like Ty, Ron, Creig, and Howard to the field of institutional linen management and to the NAILM theme of "Supporting Education Through Association" is what makes the association work.

Please join us in congratulating and thanking these four, fine men for their diligent efforts towards the betterment of institutional linen management.

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The Corner Collection of Quarterly Quotables

"Angels fly because they take themselves lightly."
- G.K. Chesterton

"The heights that great men reached were not by sudden flight,
But while his companions slept, he was toiling through the night."
- from Chester Morrison
Tingue, Brown & Co., Saddle Brook, NJ

"Man must sit in chair with mouth open for very long time before roast duck fly in."
- Chinese Proverb

"God made only a few perfect heads; the rest He put hair on."
- Ty "Big Daddy" Acton, Sr.
Tingue, Brown & Co., Birmingham, AL

Send your favorite "Quotable" to: Tingue, Brown & Co., 7333 W. Harrison Street, Forest Park, Illinois, 60130, Attn: David Tingue

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Frequent OSHA Violations Point Up Problem Areas

(The following is excerpted from a Jan. 1993 "Textile Rental" magazine article by Clyde Blaco.)
With stepped-up enforcement activities, OSHA has been keeping employers on their toes. Field inspections in the last fiscal year uncovered a large number of violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Citations merit serious concern for employers. They point out possible unsafe conditions for employees, and they carry penalties of up to $70,000 per violation and possible prison terms for convicted offenders.

Of the 19 most frequently cited violations, 36% are for hazard communication infractions. For the laundry industry, 11 of the top 19 have bearing. A majority of the violations cited in these 11 sections involve paperwork and employee training/information, such as posting OSHA notices in work areas. Violations can be prevented through employee training and discipline to ensure compliance with company safety practices. Operations managers should review their safety programs now to avoid becoming statistics in OSHA's next fiscal year.

Beware of citations in the following categories:

1. Hazard communications/general industry
2. Lockout/tagout
3. Mechanical power transmission equipment
4. Recordkeeping
5. OSHA notice
6. Machine guarding
7. Employee exposuure/medical records access
8. Respiratory protection
9. Abrasive wheel guarding
10. Flammable and combustible liquids
11. General duty clause

For reprints of this article in its entirety, contact the Textile Rental Services Association in Hallandale, Florida at 305-457-7555.

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