

HOW TO AVOID THE MOST COMMON AND MOST COSTLY CONVEYOR MAINTENANCE MISTAKES


pacproinc
Packaging Progressions, Inc.

Lack of regular inspections

If you have a belt conveyor, check the floor area underneath the conveyor while it's operating for dust-like shavings. When you see them, it's a sign that the belt is out of alignment, isn't tracking properly, is wearing unnecessarily, and will eventually be damaged. You can always be aware of squeaks. They aren't normal; they're signals that something needs attention. Regular inspections also serve to help familiarize employees stationed at conveyors to better understand the equipment they are using and to take ownership of its care.

Missing maintenance records

A maintenance log should be kept on or near the system, with information on what maintenance has been performed and the date, along with anything that should be watched. This log will be very useful where there are several shifts, or in the event of a change in personnel. Most importantly, it helps document the history of the equipment.

Failing to take the temperature of motors and reducers

A temperature spike indicates that something is causing an overload. In some cases, a conveyor is being used for materials for which it was not designed or an inappropriate conveyor has been pressed into service. Having to replace a burned out motor during a production period means down time.

Not adhering to OSHA standards

The most frequent violations are missing safety guards that have not been reinstalled after maintenance - make this a priority!

Inadequate maintenance coverage

To reduce overhead expenses, fewer maintenance personnel are on the job. Many times, when a maintenance person goes on vacation, there is no one to cover their position. All of this increases the odds for conveyor breakdowns. A cost effective solution is having an experienced conveyor service person make periodic inspections and be available when in-house coverage isn't available.

Inadequate parts inventory

Certain parts may not be readily available when there's a breakdown. Certain key components such as motors, couplings for line shafts, bearings, and photo eyes should be kept on hand.

Not learning from repeated breakdowns

An ongoing pattern of breakdowns is a message something is wrong. Often, production demands require quick fixes to get the line moving. Yet having to replace a coupling on a line shaft conveyor, for example, should be an alert that there is a problem that needs to be investigated and resolved.

Ignoring red flags

Frayed belts, lacing coming apart, forklift "hits" misplacing conveyor legs taking the conveyor out of alignment and causing wear, replacing photo-electric eyes with one pulled from another location, air-line leaks, puddles of oil on the floor, etc. Adjusting to a now inefficient and dysfunctional operation and waiting for an actual breakdown is a costly mistake to make.

Failing to care for the controls

As systems have become more technologically sophisticated, ignoring their maintenance can be disastrous. For example, not having a proper surge protector to guard against damaging lightning strikes. Or switching scanners without recognizing that each one is programmed for a particular divert.

Using a conveyor in ways it wasn't intended

A need arises and a conveyor system is pressed into service without considering its capabilities. A common example is placing larger, heavier cartons on a narrow conveyor. This results in stress and wear on the entire conveyor, and eventually a breakdown occurs. Or making changes to an air line that affect the slug release, causing the entire system to function improperly.

Avoiding those difficult places

There are always difficult places to get to, sometimes up high, or around in back, and most of the time there's too little room to maneuver. It's these places that are rarely (sometimes never) lubricated. This is where you also find loose chains and sprocket set screws, causing extra strain on the system.

Failing to train employees properly

Only a well trained employee knows how the conveyors work, how to avoid their misuse, and how to spot maintenance issues - becoming the first line of defense for minimizing problems and reducing costs.

610-489-8601

Fax 610-489-8691

sales@pacproinc.com

www.pacproinc.com