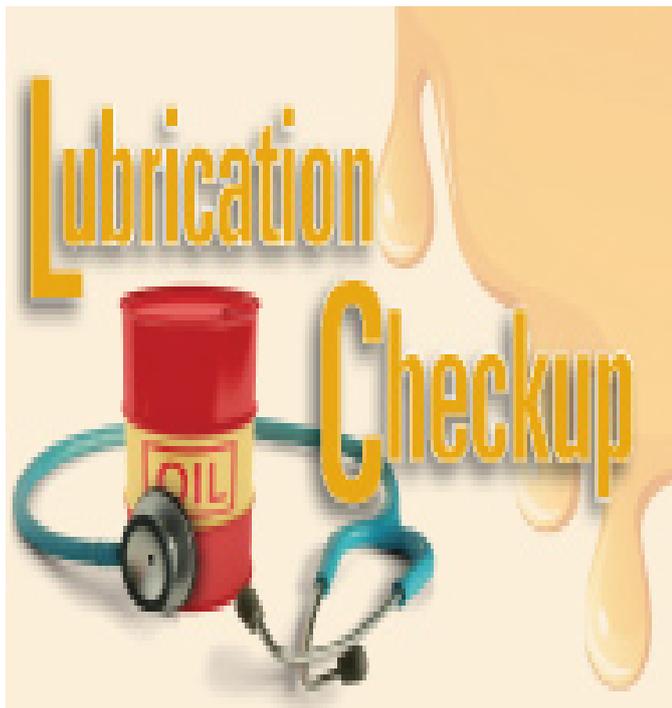


## Lubrication Checkup: What Hurts?

Written by Ken Bannister, Contributing Editor  
Sunday, 01 February 2009 00:00

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There are a number of undisputable truths every capacity assurance professional must learn if they are, in fact, to assure an acceptable level of equipment reliability, uptime and availability. One of those truths states:

Approximately 70% of mechanical failures are directly or indirectly attributable to poor or ineffective lubrication practices.

Simply put, "we kill bearings," albeit with the best of intentions! The problem with lubrication is that it is almost always thought of and practiced in the simplest of all terms. Old adages like "oil is oil, so any oil will do," or "a little lube is good, so a lot is better" may have run true when we were predominantly an agrarian society in the late 1800s to early 1900s—but that's certainly not the case in today's world.

The supposedly simple act of greasing a bearing seems so intuitive, yet hardly anyone I question is able to tell me what pressure his/her grease gun is able to deliver, or how much lubricant it dispenses per stroke. Most grease gun operators are actually unaware that virtually every grease gun is manufactured to a different specification! That's a real problem given the fact that so many PM task instructions merely state, "lubricate as necessary." Since we can calculate the amount of lubricant necessary for differing conditions of bearing use, there should be no excuse for killing machinery through over- or under-lubrication.

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With so much of our plant equipment reliability based on effective lubrication practices, it behooves us to closely examine our lubrication strategies. The best part of effective lubrication is that we not only put in place an instant reliability and energy management program—we can do it for virtually no capital outlay!

Going forward, I invite you to participate in this unique, interactive "Lubrication Checkup" forum. Please e-mail [doctorlube@atpnetwork.com](mailto:doctorlube@atpnetwork.com) with your lubrication management questions, tips and concerns. I look forward to discussing them in future installments of this column.

**MT**

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*Dr. Lube, aka Ken Bannister, specializes in helping companies throughout industry implement practical and successful lubrication management programs. The noted author of the best-selling book *Lubrication for Industry* and of the 28th edition *Machinery's Handbook* section on *Lubrication*, he also is, among other things, a contributing editor to both *Maintenance Technology* and *Lubrication Management & Technology* magazines*