Tech Tips 10 Tips for a Healthy Compressed Air System

(Brought to you by ECompressedAir)

1. Read & Follow Your Air Compressor's Manual

Nothing stops an air compressor faster than an owner who doesn't read the owner's manual. There's going to be some simple tips in there for you that will help you to get a nice long life out of your air compressor - simple stuff for you to do that you would never have thought to do unless you read it. Besides, no one knows your compressor better than the manufacturer.

2. Check the Oil Level Regularly

If you're running a compressor that uses oil you should be checking it on a daily basis to make sure that your machine is topped off. Then, every 500-1000 hours (only true of some recip compressors, most synthetics say you can get away with yearly change-out) of use you should be changing this oil to ensure maximum functioning of your air compressor.

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3. Drain Traps for Water and Oil Removal

Water and oil removal systems like filters, dryers, tanks, and separators are only efficient if the contaminants are removed from the system. Make sure these contaminant removal devices have proper functioning drains. Press the test button if the drain has one, or better yet, take the time to watch it fill and dump on its own. Open the bypass (your drain does have a bypass, right?) and check for condensate stuck behind a blocked line upstream of the drain.

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4. Inspect & Clean the Air Filter

A dirty air filter makes your air compressor work harder, consume more electrical energy, and runs the risk of contaminating the compressor, particularly if it ruptures. Check your filters regularly and change them if you notice a heavy build up of dust and dirt. Change every three to six months or so if you use it infrequently.

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5. Change the Separator Element

The separator element prevents the excessive use of oil, but it has to be replaced periodically. Keep your compressor in top condition by replacing the separator element every 1,000 hours of operation. Remember, every 2 PSI of separator pressure drop can increase your compressor energy costs by 1%. Changing separator elements is very inexpensive by comparison.

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6. Stop, Look & Listen

Stop, Look & Listen for any unusual noise, overheating, vibrations or belt slippage and correct before damage of a serious nature develops. Familiarize yourself with proper instrument and gage readings. Check daily for abnormal readings before major damage occurs. Keep a daily record of key readings such as oil pressure, oil temperature, motor amps, and discharge pressure.

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7. Check for Leaks Throughout

Leaks in compressed air systems often account for 25% or more of the compressed air generated. Check entire system for air leakage around fittings, connections, and gaskets, using an ultrasonic leak detector. Common areas to check are piping and flexible joint packings, control lines, control line fittings, clamps and connectors, valves, air pressure safety relief valves, and pressure gauge connections.

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8. Proper Compressor Temperature
Should be within manufacturer's limits. Refer to the air compressors manual to make sure you are operating within the proper temperature range. Many of the tips from above can affect temperature if they are not checked regularly.

9. Compressor Cleanliness
Maintain in a clean condition; a compressor should never leak oil. When you're checking your compressor, remove any dust from the motor, pump and cooling fin area. This will help to keep the pump and motor running cooler and prolong the life of your compressor.

10. Keep Extra Filters and Parts on Hand
One of the main keys to maintaining an efficient compressed air system has been and still is Preventive Maintenance.

- Purchase your maintenance supplies prior to the scheduled date
- Be sure to check all the devices that need maintaining before you purchase your supplies
- Don't let system failure be your signal that is time to do maintenance
- Plan your preventative maintenance when it is convenient for you-or it will plan itself when it is not convenient for you!