



# More than good looks

## Keeping your equipment clean gives you a leg up in preventive maintenance

**M**ost breakdowns have an early warning symptom – the wear-and-tear deterioration that goes undetected each day.

Yet many equipment problems are often hidden behind a mask of dirt and grime. You may not see the missing fastener or hairline crack because it is covered with crud. Cleaning allows you to be up close to the equipment, so you can inspect parts and detect problems early enough to take the necessary corrective actions.



### CLEANING'S ESSENTIAL ROLE

Understanding the importance of cleaning equipment means understanding that since most breakdowns are a result of deterioration, most can be detected as a change in condition. To maintain equipment, we have three primary responsibilities: The first, prevention, means acting to avoid something happening. The second, detection, means inspecting and identifying potential problems in an early stage and taking corrective action. Finally, restoration means returning equipment back to optimal conditions.

With these facts in mind, consider the following:

1. Considerable deterioration is caused by wear-causing abrasives such as grit, stones and soil and metal particles. Cleaning gives you the opportunity to remove those abrasives, which minimizes wear and tear.

2. Cleaning also removes the contamination that over-insulates equipment and causes overheating. When cooling fins are clogged or moving parts become caked with mud, asphalt, grease and dirt, they may become overloaded and overheated. By periodically removing this build-up, you can help your equipment breathe.

3. Cleaning needs to be more than a wipe-down. Some of cleaning's major benefits come from the inspection of the components we touch. Therefore, it's important to lift hoods and covers and examine the inside. When you clean, also inspect.

4. Regular cleanings will lead to less grime build up. With a thinner layer of dirt to deal with, you'll find it takes less time to correct any problems.

5. Cleaning allows you to showcase your equipment. Pride in ownership comes easier when the equipment is clean. It is much like the feeling you get when you have washed and waxed your vehicle; it looks good and you feel good.

6. Small routine cleanings make more sense than periodic long ones. Five to ten minutes is easier to find in a day than and one to two hours in a week. Take advantage of short periods of idle time. As a paving foreman told me years ago, "If you can lean ... you can clean." **EW**

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