

# Preventive Maintenance is Important



by James Barnes

All of you operators have heard this before but it bears repeating; preventive maintenance (P.M.) is important. If you don't have some kind of P.M. plan at your facility, please consider initiating one. There are several different types of P.M. plans available online. You can download software, forms, schedules and templates to help you get started. There are systems that automatically print out work orders for you each time a scheduled job is due. If, however, you don't like computers, you can still set up a P.M. plan. Your P.M. plan can be as simple, or as complex, as you wish. There is nothing wrong with a simple plan if it works for you and your plant.

If you presently don't have a plan, I'd suggest the following; dust off those equipment manuals and see what the manufacturer recommends for frequency of scheduled maintenance. If, for example, your clarifier gearbox should have the oil changed twice a year, get yourself a calendar, designate it your P.M. calendar only, and pick two months, six months apart. Preferably warm months! Next, get yourself a card file and mark one card: CLARIFIER. Write on this card the work that needs to be done, what type of oil is needed and anything else pertaining to the clarifier. Leave room to record the dates that each task is completed. If you do this with every piece of equipment in your plant, you'll have a P.M. plan that will work. Just check your P.M. calendar the first of each month and see what needs to be done.

So far I've only mentioned the wastewater plant. Don't forget the collection system, including pump stations, and when considering the necessary maintenance on your pump stations, don't forget the pressurized lines. Cleaning a dirty force main is one maintenance job that can provide instant savings. A cleaned line can result in a more efficient pump, giving you a longer service life and a reduction in your electric bill.

There are many good reasons to set up and execute a P.M. plan. One reason is that you will be able to do more maintenance work when you want to. There are no guarantees, but if you perform regular P.M. on equipment when it's warm and sunny, it should decrease your chances of working on that same equipment when it's cold and snowing. Also, when you're properly executing a good P.M. plan, you'll be documenting the fact that you've correctly maintained the equipment.

Then, when the time comes that you need an expensive new piece of machinery, you'll have the data to prove to your board that equipment failure was not due to lack of proper maintenance. Lastly, it's your job to maintain your plant. Most wastewater plants consist of several expensive components that if properly maintained will provide years of service. Carrying out P.M. measures will most likely prolong those service years and prevent problems from occurring.

Whether you establish a card file system or you have the best P.M. software plan money can buy, neither is going to change the oil in those gearboxes for you. The computer P.M. systems work well if the proper data has been installed, but the tasks actually need to be accomplished for the system to be effective. We all need to be careful that we don't become complacent in performing the many duties associated with operating a wastewater plant, especially P.M. duties. ♠



**Mark Your Calendars**  
31st Annual Technical Conference  
May 24-27, 2010  
Turning Stone Resort  
Verona, NY