



# Strategies for Incorporating 5-S into Your Lube Room

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A lube room is often a dark, dirty, forgotten area inside a plant. However, it shouldn't be this way, especially considering how important it is in keeping machines moving. After all, without proper lubrication, equipment would not rotate.

By giving your machines clean, cool and dry lubricants, you can increase uptime and revenue. Keeping your lube room clean and organized also will help with

lubricant management. When everything has its place and is clearly marked, you can identify what you have and what you need.

One way to achieve this is by incorporating 5-S into your lubricant storage and handling. The 5-S system is a Japanese-based set of principles designed to eliminate waste and foster a workplace culture of efficiency. The five S's stand for sort, straighten, shine, standardize and sustain.

## Sort

The first step in incorporating 5-S into your lube room is to remove all unnecessary items. Determine what is deadweight in each area and stack it in one location. This would include things like spent filters, used oil buckets, oily rags, expired lubricants, old funnels, empty drums, broken or worn-out transfer containers, etc. All items in this area should be tagged for later discussion.

The team then can decide whether to discard, store or keep these items. If in doubt, throw it out.

## Straighten

After removing everything from the lube room, it's time to set it all in order. Create and label a place for everything. Arrange lubricants in a manner that minimizes travel and waste while also providing optimal ergonomics. Bulk lubricant storage areas should be clearly labeled, easy to access and positioned to allow for the first-in/first-out (FIFO) methodology. Organize each work area and cabinet, making it visually obvious when something is out of place. You should be able to see everything needed for an area or cabinet with a quick look. Be patient and persistent. This process can take some time before you feel comfortable with how it looks and operates.

## Shine

This step is all about cleaning the lube room and making it like new

again. Now that the room has only what's needed and everything is in the right spot, you can clean intensely. This involves wiping down surfaces and transfer equipment, sweeping and vacuuming the floor, degreasing, cleaning the inside and outside of cabinets, and mopping the floor. Go above and beyond the normal cleaning. Clean out oil-containment drains, repair sections of the floor, paint, improve the lighting, replace worn cabinets and parts, remove or update outdated postings, fix any leaks, etc. I like to say, "Clean it like you own it." Take pride in your cleaning so the result makes you feel good, like you accomplished something. Brag about it and show your team how good it looks. By keeping the lube room and the things stored inside it clean, you will help prevent the lubricants from becoming contaminated before they enter the machinery.

## Standardize

Once the lube room is clean and organized, take pictures and laminate



them for display. This will remind others of the cleanliness level expected in each area. Anything less than what's shown in the picture is unacceptable. By keeping a benchmark picture on each cabinet or workstation, you also will know exactly what and where things are inside the cabinet. When labeling, use color codes for stored lubricants, transfer equipment and machines to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination.



## Global Training Calendar

### February

#### MACHINERY LUBRICATION I

Cairo, Egypt • February 3 – 6, 2020

#### OIL ANALYSIS II

Daegu, South Korea • February 10 – 13, 2020

#### OIL ANALYSIS II

São Paulo, Brazil • February 10 – 12, 2020

#### MACHINERY LUBRICATION I

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#### INDUSTRIAL LUBRICATION FUNDAMENTALS

Georgetown, Guyana • February 11 – 13, 2020

#### MACHINERY LUBRICATION I

La Paz, Bolivia • February 11 – 13, 2020

#### OIL ANALYSIS REPORT INTERPRETATION WORKSHOP

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#### MACHINERY LUBRICATION I

Cartagena, Colombia • February 18 – 20, 2020

#### OIL ANALYSIS II / PRACTICAL INDUSTRIAL LUBRICATION

Lima, Peru • February 24 – 28, 2020

#### OIL ANALYSIS II

Jakarta, Indonesia • February 24 – 27, 2020

#### MACHINE LUBRICATION II

Kingston, Jamaica • February 25 – 27, 2020

#### MACHINERY LUBRICATION I

Tampico, Mexico • February 25 – 27, 2020



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## Sustain

To sustain your lube room in its optimal condition, it will be essential to conduct periodic audits. By creating and posting a cleaning schedule, you can hold workers accountable using a simple completion sign-off sheet. With the benchmark picture on the wall, there is no excuse for error. These pictures also help when conducting audits and explaining the results to the team. The audit results and improvement opportunities should be displayed in the area as well. Hold meetings to show pictures of your progress and celebrate as a team to build your culture.

Finally, before implementing this 5-S process into your lube room, your organization or team should designate a lube champion. This individual should have Six Sigma training and know the end goal. He or she will be responsible for managing the team throughout the process, developing standards for each area and then working to sustain those standards through regular audits. *ML*

# 45%

of lubrication professionals say their plant has not made any improvements to its lube room in the past five years, based on a recent survey at MachineryLubrication.com

## About the Author

David Dise is an associate technical consultant for Noria Corporation. He has been certified as a Level II Machine Lubricant Analyst (MLA II) and a Level I Machinery Lubrication Technician (MLT I) by the International Council for Machinery Lubrication (ICML). Contact David at [ddise@noria.com](mailto:ddise@noria.com) to learn how Noria can help you incorporate 5-S into your lube room.

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