

Proper bearing cleaning

Tech tip

Proper bearing cleaning can mean the difference between good performance and bearing failure. While you must always remember to handle any bearing with extreme care, you also must follow specific procedures when cleaning the bearing. If cleaning is done incorrectly, the bearing, shaft or housing may become damaged, creating a more costly repair job.

To begin the cleaning process for your bearings, soak the bearings in a metal basket suspended in a clean container or tank holding a recommended solvent, overnight if possible. If a basket is not available, suspend the bearings with a wire or place them on a metal plate at the bottom of the container. Do not rest the bearings directly on the bottom of the bucket. (They may not clean as efficiently due to sediment on the bottom of the container.)

After dirt and grease are removed, rinse the bearings in another clean bucket of solvent (fig. 1). The bearings should then be thoroughly dried. The safest method is natural air-drying. Compressed air, which is free from condensed moisture, may be used to blow out the bearings, but only after all dirt and chips have been removed (fig. 2). If compressed air is used, do not allow bearings to spin and always wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from injury.



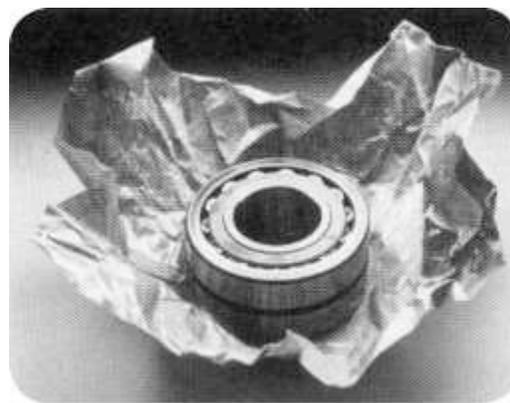
After cleaning, inspect the bearing thoroughly for nicks, leftover dirt and damage. Inspected bearings, which are considered “good” may be used again. However, if re-assembly cannot be done immediately, they should be protected.

Proper bearing cleaning – cont.

Dip the cleaned bearings in a protective lubricant or coat all surfaces with a light grease (fig. 3). Rotate each bearing to work the grease thoroughly in and around the roller and on the races. Then wrap the bearings in waterproof paper and place each in a clean box or carton (fig. 4). If cartons are not available, just wrap them in waterproof paper. Mark the outside of each package to identify the bearing enclosed.



(fig. 3)



(fig. 4)