



LOOKING AFTER YOUR PALLET WRAPPING MACHINE

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Like any other piece of machinery, pallet wrappers benefit from a regular servicing and maintenance schedule that's designed to ensure that they keep working as intended. Since it's often critical to an operation that these machines can be relied on to work smoothly, it's well worth considering enlisting the services of a specialist company to undertake regular servicing – but there are also some routine activities that can be carried by your operatives or onsite engineers to help ensure that the machines are always in tip top condition.

MACHINE MAINTENANCE BEST PRACTISE

A regular service and maintenance contract is essential if you need to be confident that your pallet wrapping machinery always remains fully optimised, and to guard against the inconvenience of breakdowns or outages. However there are things that the operatives can do (or not do!) to assist in the maintenance of the machinery:

DO establish a cleaning regime for the equipment. We recommend the following tasks are performed weekly:

- Clean around the turntable or floor area of the machine, using a soft sweeping brush or vacuum cleaner (whichever is most appropriate and effective) to remove any dust/broken pallet bits/small pieces of stretch film etc from the area. This sort of debris can build up under your machinery and cause issues, not to mention expensive repair bills, down the line if it is not regularly cleaned out.
- Clean the rollers in the machine head using a large industrial wipe or damp cloth. These rollers have a tendency to get dirty, which impedes the performance of the machine. This simple task can make a significant difference to the stretch that the machine produces, making for better load stability and a lower cost per pallet wrapped. It's worth noting that the Atlanta range of pallet wrappers uses a patented, low maintenance, roller design that does not require this step.
- Wipe down all surfaces on the machine.

DO make regular visual checks to see how the pallet wrapper is working as, if the pallet wrapper is not working correctly, it can often be visually apparent to an operative who knows what they are looking for.

- Check the film as it is applied to the pallet. Does it look clear, or has it got tell-tale tiger stripes across the width of the film – indicating that the pre stretch rollers are slipping?
- Check that the roll of film is turning on its spool more slowly than the film is being applied to the pallet – indicating that the pre stretch head is working correctly.
- Try stretching the film after it has been applied to the pallet, as a correctly optimised film should not have any further stretch left in the film. Can you stretch the film further by hand when on the pallet – indicating that it is not correctly optimised? This not only causes load stability issues, but also uses more plastic than it should to wrap the pallet.

DO ensure that the pallet wrap film is loaded correctly onto the machine. Some models of pallet wrapper can be quite complex to load and it is important that operatives are fully trained in film loading techniques. An incorrect passage of the film through the stretch head will significantly affect its stretch performance, and may cause damage or blockages to the machine which are difficult and expensive to rectify.

DON'T use anything except a wipe/cloth or your bare hands on the rollers. Sometimes, if the wrap gets tangled in the rollers, it is tempting to use a knife to help remove it – but pallet wrapper rollers are often very fragile and easily damaged. Once they have been slit by a knife their efficiency is significantly reduced and more often than not they will need to be replaced. One of the reasons that Hazel 4D recommends the Atlanta range of pallet wrapping machines is that they feature a patented roller and pre stretch system design, which virtually eradicates film tangling and facilitates the easy removal of any film debris. For more information on the Atlanta machines range and to see the many other benefits they offer, check them out on our website here: <https://www.hazel4d.com/services/intelligent-load-stability/>

DON'T change the film that you use on your pallet wrapper unless you have had the machine checked and adjusted by a pallet wrap machinery engineer to ensure that the new film is fully optimised. Films perform in very different ways, and at very different stretch levels, and changing film without undertaking all the necessary adjustments will cause issues – either an under optimised film, which will undermine load stability, or an overstretched film, which will cause problems with snapping on the machine.

MOST COMMON CAUSES FOR BREAKDOWN AND OTHER PROBLEMS

- Insufficient cleaning, causing a build-up of debris, is the single most common reason for pallet wrapping machinery breakdown or underperformance – see our section above for a recommended cleaning regime for pallet wrappers
- Incorrect film being used on your pallet wrapper will cause under- or over- film optimisation. You can read more about selecting the best film for your machinery in our article [what type of pallet wrap should I use?](#)

MECHANICAL FAILURE IS OFTEN A RISK...

as pallet wrappers have a lot of moving parts, and these can cause expensive stoppages and delays.

It is therefore strongly recommended that a regular maintenance contract is in place to avoid breakdown from wear and tear of moving parts. For further help or advice on this, why not contact us on 0113 242 6999.



FOUR QUICK WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MACHINES PERFORMANCE

1. Encourage, and check the thoroughness, of your cleaning regime – ensuring that it is always carried out regularly. Ensure that particular attention is paid to carefully cleaning the pre stretch rollers.
2. Ensure that your machinery is using the most appropriate film for the machine and your situation. Film manufacturing technology has advanced significantly over the last few years, and it is no longer the case that a thicker film will deliver the best holding force or load stability. You're likely to be missing out if you haven't looked recently at what can be achieved using thinner high tech films, as these will almost always use less plastic per pallet wrapped, at a lower cost per pallet wrapped, whilst delivering better load stability and holding force. You will need to speak to a specialist pallet wrapping provider about this, and the expert consultants at Hazel 4D would love to talk to you about the dramatic difference an advanced film can make – just call us on 0113 242 6999 or talk to us using the chat function below.
3. Make sure that your operatives are fully trained, proficient and confident in the use of your pallet wrapper – an experienced and trained operator can ensure that the machine is running efficiently and should soon spot if something is not quite right.
4. Consider calling on the assistance of a specialist to run a film audit, which is designed to evaluate how well your machinery is performing. This can create some very quick, and big, wins.

FAQS

How often should I service my pallet wrapper?

This depends a little on how many pallets you wrap, however we would recommend a service on a quarterly basis for companies wrapping 50 or more pallets per day per wrapper, for lower usage than this, 4 or 6 monthly would be acceptable.

Do different types of pallet wrapper need different levels of service?

Your pallet wrapping machine provider is best placed to answer this, however as a rule of thumb a quarterly service is good practice.

Which parts of a pallet wrapper are most prone to wear and tear?

The moving parts are most prone to wear and tear. Service engineers will always check and replace if required the drive belts, support wheels and rollers as part of a service.



How much should I expect to pay for pallet wrapping service and maintenance?

This depends on the level of service required and the number of machines, however you can expect to pay £500 – £1200 per year for an inclusive service contract.

How much training should my operatives need to carry out basic pallet wrapping maintenance?

Your machinery installer can give sufficient on site training for operatives to be both proficient in the use of and basic maintenance of your pallet wrapping machines.

SUMMARY

There can be no doubt that regular maintenance of your pallet wrapping machinery should be regarded as an essential part of your operational process, and this guide should support you in developing an appropriate maintenance programme for your pallet wrappers. As with most maintenance programmes, most of the steps are simple and common sense – but without them the performance and reliability of your pallet wrapping machines will plummet. Like most other machines with moving parts, pallet wrappers get maximum benefit from a regular maintenance and service contract from a specialist company – and here at Hazel 4D we can help and provide advice on this.