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Preventive Maintenance for your Air Conditioning

INTRODUCTION Every year The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Co. (HSB) investigates numerous air conditioning (A/C) unit failures. The primary reason for the majority of these failures is poor preventive maintenance prior to start-up.

To help you achieve the reliable and uninterrupted service you expect from your A/C unit during the coming cooling season, we are offering the following recommendations.

CRANKCASE One of the most critical controls in the A/C unit is the crankcase heater. Preferably, the heater should be left energized while the equipment is idle. The energized heater will minimize refrigerant migration to the compressor and dilution of the crankcase oil. In all cases, it is vital that the crankcase heater be energized at least 8 hours before starting the A/C unit.

CONDENSER The unit's condenser should be cleaned at a minimum of once each year. If the condenser is located in a high dust and dirt area, it should be scheduled for more frequent cleaning. A clean condenser will prevent high head pressure which can shorten the life of the unit.

ELECTRICAL

- The motor magnetic starters should be inspected prior to start-up,
- The contacts may be deteriorated as the result of cycling of the compressor.
- All terminal connections should be checked and tightened, and all pitted contacts should be replaced.
- The overload protection on the unit should also be examined for proper sizing.

MECHANICAL Because the operating and safety controls are the heart of the unit, they should be checked to see that they are properly calibrated and in working order. Like all electrical and mechanical equipment, these controls wear out and must be replaced.

The oil in the unit should be tested prior to starting the unit. The results of the analysis will let you know if the oil will hold up for the coming season. If there is any question about the oil quality, the oil should be replaced.

MOISTURE

The A/C system should be equipped with a moisture indicator. This device will detect the presence of moisture within the system. If moisture is present, filter dryers should be installed or changed to remove this moisture. More importantly, the source of the moisture should be determined and preventive action taken to correct the condition.

COST

- Even when machinery insurance is available, the deductible may still account for a considerable out-of-pocket expense.
- Because we are talking about A/C units, we are usually talking about hot weather breakdowns.
- Having insurance may be of little comfort when your unit is down, the temperature is in the high nineties, and your location is sweltering.
- In addition, if you have tenants or are trying to run a business, you don't need the added headaches of irate customers because your system is down from minor maintenance oversights.

HSB HELP

- A/C logs are available through your local HSB inspector. This information will help you schedule maintenance for your unit.
- All of the work outlined above can be handled at one pre season inspection by a good A/C service contractor. Your HSB inspector will assist you in finding a local concern who will look after your A/C unit requirements.
- Please give us a call! We are ready to assist you in taking care of your A/C unit needs.

Our advice is intended to complement the equipment manufacturers' recommendations - not replace them. If you have doubts about any particular procedure, contact your equipment service representative.