



Failure-prone hydraulic units are no match for a trained and certified lubrication team

Weyerhaeuser Longview Plant | Paper & Forest Products, Forest Management | United States



The Challenge

With a steadily rising number of hydraulic unit failures (bearings, valves, pumps, etc.), downtime was becoming increasingly interruptive and costly. Oil analysis showed high levels of lubricant contamination, with ISOs in the 21/19/16 range not uncommon. Management sought expertise to improve machine reliability with a new oil maintenance program.

The Solution

Several crew members acquired training and MLT-I certification so they could better recognize and prioritize key parameters and procedures whose modification would produce greatest ROI. After mapping and cataloging all lubrication-related components for 32 hydraulic units (ranging from 100 to 1000-gallon capacity), the team focused primarily on different types of oil filtration and the use of pressure differential gauges to enable more proactive maintenance planning (e.g., conducting condition-based rather than time-based filter changes).

The Results

Saved \$40K/year by eliminating time-based hydraulic filter changes, and saved \$9.7K/year with reduced oil leaks and failures. As oil samples became cleaner (one bad actor rallied to ISO 16/14/11), the crew observed significant improvement in hydraulic and bearing reliability. MLT-I certification instilled players with pride, especially as management acknowledged their credibility by assigning larger lubrication projects. They were also able to help other facilities achieve similar results by replicating best practices.

“ ICML certification provides a challenging path to educate and build confidence, to understand what to focus on for reliability and cost reduction.” -- Robert Crawford, MLT-I, MLA-II, Maintenance Leader