

Magazine Article
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Focus On Bearings

Top 3 reasons why bearings fail

The number one reason why most bearings fail is contamination, according to the bearing experts at QM Bearings. After contamination, improper installation and lubrication are the next leading causes for shortlived bearings.

In most cases, contamination is caused by failure of the bearing seals. The good news is there's something you can do to reduce the failure rate. Take a little time to familiarize yourself with the seal options offered by the manufacturer. Think of seals as bearing insurance. Trying to save money on seal options not only shortens the life of a bearing so you don't get your money's worth, but it also increases your facility's downtime.

"Each bearing application is different and needs a unique solution," says Cory Shaw, vice-president and general manager at QM Bearings. "If you only have a couple of seal choices from a manufacturer, you have to ask yourself if you're really getting the best solution for your application or just whatever the supplier has available."

For example, QM Bearings offers 10 seal and cover choices for most of its Blue Brute bearings. These include double- and triple-lip seals made of nitrile, Viton or Teflon, as well as mechanical labyrinth seals. Openend covers, closed-end covers and other options also are available. "I've seen more problems caused by over-lubrication than not enough lubrication," adds Mark Flaherty, Canada national sales manager at QM Bearings. "Most people are surprised by how little grease is really needed."

"It's such a common problem that we've added pressure relief valves on most of our bearings," notes Larry Elder, Australia sales manager. "Or, customers can order self-purging seals, making it impossible to overgrease a bearing."

With an understanding of why bearings fail, you're in a better position to buy bearings to meet your needs and make the most of your budget.