



Lube Oil Flushing Safety Talk

Lube oil flushing is a process of cleaning hydraulic fluids at a turbulent rate of flow with high increments of pressure. As a result, specific hazards may be encountered, including mechanical failure, unexpected releases of pressure, and spills. This safety talk lists general safe work practices and best practices specific to this task that can be used to reduce the risk of injury and incident.

General Safe Work Practices

- Employees performing lube oil flushing tasks need to be properly trained.
- A task-specific job safety analysis (JSA) should include detailed flushing steps, identify the potential hazards for each step, and the accompanying mitigation actions.
- Safety data sheets for the chemicals being used should be readily available.
- Prior to the start of work, a physical barrier should be established to communicate hazards and prevent personnel from entering the work area.

Best Practices During Lube Oil Flushing

- All equipment should be inspected before flushing begins.
- All piping components should be properly bolted.
- Hose connections should be complete with restraints or whip checks.
- All hose connections should be equipped with drip pans to contain unexpected spills.
- Pumps should be staged in containments to prevent spills should they fail or hoses part.
- Employees should seek assistance in routing hoses to prevent muscle strains and injury.
- Hoses should be routed in a safe manner to help decrease the chance of slips, trips, and falls.
- Safety shutdown systems on equipment should not be altered and remain in place during flushing operations.
- Equipment should be continually monitored to ensure it is functioning properly.
- Eliminating power to pumps prior to removing hoses can assist in avoiding high-pressure release.
- Eyewash stations and chemical showers should be available in case employees come into contact with fluids being flushed.
- Proper PPE such as safety glasses, face shield, hard hat, steel toe boots, and hearing protection should be worn at a minimum.

Summary

Lube oil flushing is a maintenance process used to prolong equipment life, but it can result in worker injury or harm the environment if proper precautions are not taken. Adhering to safe work practices can greatly increase an individual's personal safety and protect the environment from harm. Taking a methodical approach can yield a favorable outcome when performing a lube oil flush.

