

MELROSE TAKES IMPERIAL VIEW ON MAINTENANCE

Cranes and Lifting checks in with Luke Holland, fleet manager for Melrose Cranes to find out more about the importance of maintenance of cranes and safety standards.

LUKE HOLLAND, FLEET MANAGER FOR

Melrose Cranes has been in and around cranes for eight years, spending most of his time “on the tools” as a mechanic, so he knows cranes.

“As the fleet manager, I’m responsible for the repairs and maintenance of all of our cranes, trucks, trailers and light personnel vehicles. This extends to maintenance and break-downs of our cranes which are the big-ticket items,” Holland said.

The Melrose Cranes fleet has more than 40 cranes ranging from 3t mini crawlers up to 450t all-terrain cranes. It consists of various articulated cranes, all terrain cranes, rough terrain and crawler cranes, making it a comprehensive and versatile fleet.

“Availability of machines is paramount to the business,” said Holland.

“It would be great if I could manage the maintenance and repairs on Sundays or public holidays, when the cranes aren’t booked for jobs, but that’s not the nature of what we do,” he said.

“Maintenance of cranes is a giant revolving door, and the biggest challenge is time. Down time is a killer for us and that would be the same for anyone in the crane industry – down time hurts the most. It’s about trying to ensure our fleet is maintained properly and available to work fault free,” he said.

Different cranes require different types of maintenance plans and according to Holland, a maintenance plan depends on how the crane is used and the way it is configured.

“Generally speaking, our maintenance intervals are at 500 hours, depending on

how busy the crane is. This will equate to a service roughly twice a year with a quarterly check, as an interim measure, to ensure everything is up to scratch. We have to ensure that every crane meets CraneSafe requirements, Australian Standards, site requirements and our own expectations,” he said.

Melrose Cranes has been utilising Imperial Oils for its grease and lubricant requirements.

“We started with Imperial Oils soon after I joined the business,” said Holland. “Within the first six months of starting, I could see that the cost of grease and the time it was taking to apply, was too high. I found that Imperial Oils was distributing the same spray equipment we were using and after a couple of phone calls with Brad Langford it was

apparent the cost of grease and the equipment to spray the grease, was substantially cheaper through him.”

There are also considerable time savings with the Imperial Oils systems and products.

“The grease we were using was difficult to apply and it wasn’t going far in terms of coverage of the booms, so we weren’t getting bang for our buck,” he said.

“We tried Imperial’s products and saw it was quick and simple to apply, and we got great coverage on our booms, so the savings extended beyond just the materials to do the job. Imperial specialise in their products and services, and we take advantage of that.”

The service from Imperial is also designed to make life easier for Holland.



Luke Holland, Melrose Cranes fleet manager and crane technician, Matt Hall.

“The cost of using Imperial products over the whole life of the crane is far less compared to other products I was using, and the service provided by Brad makes ordering simple.”

“I ring, text or email Brad, and the next day, I get notification that there’s grease in the post. This role can be very demanding of my time, so I look for simplicity when dealing with suppliers. I enjoy the ease with which I can place orders and deal with Imperial,” he said.

Imperial Oils also supply other products for the Melrose Crane maintenance program.

“We also use Imperial products for our ropes and slew rings, amongst other things. We keep a stock of pressure pack-based spray grease, which I hand out to the operators and they manage some greasing as part of their regular maintenance,” said Holland.

Imperial products used by Melrose Cranes include:

Panolin Orcon TEF2, which is a fully synthetic boom grease that contains Teflon and is available in 12 x 400g shuttle cartridges. It is non-toxic, fully synthetic, and provides excellent resistance to water. It is also easy to apply.

Lube-A-Rope Aerosol is a wire rope lubricant in an aerosol can, which can be applied on all cranes or equipment containing wire ropes/chains. It is available in 12g x 454g shuttle cartridges. It’s a thin lubricant containing Moly that protects equipment against dust, dirt and water, which often increases friction, which ultimately leads to wire rope failure/fatigue. This lubricant also penetrates to the core of the wire rope and will not “fly off” meaning it clings on and keeps working long after initial application.

MATO Lube-Shuttle Grease Spray Unit is the air-operated grease spray gun specifically designed for applying boom grease via the shuttle cartridge.

The need to grease booms can depend on the performance of the crane combined with a visual observation.

“If the crane is need of boom grease, the operators will typically let me know. However, they do the greasing themselves. They lay the boom down, get up the ladder and start spraying,” said Holland.

“If we haven’t greased a boom in eight to ten weeks, we’d be wanting to grease it but if we’ve got a crane that is spending a lot of time with the boom sections

extended, the time between grease applications might be shorter. Intervals may be longer for a crane that spends a lot of time with the boom sections retracted,” he said.

Maintenance is a core discipline for Melrose Cranes.

“If I need something to maintain a machine, I never get resistance from the managing director, Gregg Melrose,” said Holland.

“He knows what needs to be done, and once we have come up with an economical solution, we simply move forward with repairs.

“We’ve recently spent thousands on equipment for our workshop to better maintain our trucks and trailers. Although we are a crane company, our support equipment is extremely important, too. If it doesn’t work, neither does the crane,” he said.

“We spend a lot of money on maintenance. It is one of the biggest expenses of our business. Maintaining the fleet is a high priority for Gregg because he knows the nuts and bolts are what holds a crane together. If we don’t maintain them, they won’t perform, and it is their performance that the company relies on,” said Holland. ●



Imperial’s products are quick and simple to apply, and provide good coverage on booms.