

Routine Mill Maintenance Schedule

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Introduction by Editor

The following mill maintenance schedule was presented as part of Dr. Lovett's workshop on "The Challenges of Mill Maintenance" presented at the 1999 SPOOM Conference. The schedule is being shared as part of SPOOM's continued efforts to preserve old mills that are currently in operation. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it certainly gives the mill owner a place to start. Other maintenance information will be provided in the future. Any questions about mill maintenance can be addressed to Dr. Lovett, who serves on the SPOOM Board of Directors.

To be performed regularly (daily, weekly, or monthly):

Lubrication of bearings and wearing surfaces:

- Babbitt bearings – apply a little oil frequently (some have compression grease cups).
- Wooden bearings/cogs – Crisco shortening works well.
- Watch for excessive heat and/or squealing. Don't over-tighten bearing caps, but check cap screws/bolts regularly for looseness.

Housekeeping:

- Daily cleaning routine (sweeping/mopping floors, cob-web removal, vacuuming, dusting, cleaning bins/boxes).
- Storage of supplies (bags, etc.) in rodent-proof areas.
- Checking cleanliness of machinery and equipment.
- Rodent control measures (poison, traps, or cats).

Belting:

- Check belt tension when running (not too tight, but no slippage).
- Dress belts if necessary.
- Check splices and fraying.
- Check travel.

Gears

- Check lubrication and wear.
- Check mesh and alignment.
- Check keys and set screws.

Pulleys:

- Check alignment and tightness on shafts.

- Watch for wobble.
- Check wooden pulleys for loose pieces which could fly off.
- Check split pulleys for slippage or looseness of bolts—use emery or tar paper on shafts.
- Check for looseness of balance weights (this may produce knocking sounds).

Building:

The underpinnings, supports, and siding should be checked periodically for rot and insect damage. Have a pest control service treat wooden parts routinely as a preventative measure. The roof should be inspected for potential leaks and repairs made promptly. Birds and other animals enter the mill through holes—so eaves and windows need to be inspected periodically, as should masonry. Any dampness should be addressed promptly.

Additional information regarding machinery/millstone maintenance, tools/supplies/suppliers will appear in future issues of *Old Mill News*.