

## **Tool Tip: Lubricating Your Impact Wrench**



Water contamination and debris buildup are by far the biggest threats to your prized air impact wrench and other air tools. The common misconception is that if you regularly drain the air tank in your compressor, you are protecting your air tool from water damage, but this only prevents rust in the tank.

Condensation in the air line and water contamination in your impact wrench can have terrible effects on the performance and life of the tool. The good news is that it doesn't take much time or effort to keep your impact wrench lubricated, and with regular maintenance you will be amazed how much more efficient the tool can be with a little proper T-L-C.

The motor in your air tool has machine polished surfaces much like the cylinders in your car's engine. Water, dirt, rust and other contaminants quickly destroys these surfaces causing premature wear to your motor, reducing performance and the overall life of your air tool. Ingersoll Rand's own Lead Designer and Engineering Systems Administrator Ed Eardley recommends draining and purging your entire air system from the compressor to the tools weekly, as the first step to address wear and tear on your tool.

Another easy solution is to never connect a worn or dirty hose coupler to your tool. Couplers are thrown around and dragged on the floor. Connecting couplers gummed up with brake dust, dirt, grease or saw dust is the easiest way to transfer these contaminants directly into your motor. Using an air hose reel suspended from your shop ceiling will keep your hose and couplers off the floor and out of the muck.

How often should you lubricate your impact wrench? Ingersoll Rand technical trainer Gary Potterpin has an answer for that: "Feed them like you feed yourself, once in the morning, once in the afternoon and once at night before you leave work," said Potterpin. "The lubrication at night helps prevent condensation, which causes rust."

Also, in most modern motors there is a gap between the air rotor and the motor itself. In this case, Lubrication will not only reduce friction and prevent water condensation, it will also prevent air loss.

Here are a few tips for keeping your impact wrench properly lubricated:

- Lubricate the mechanism on both ends of the tool
  - o Most air tools have multiple grease fittings; if you aren't sure where they are, check your manual or ask your dealer
- Only use cleaners and grease that have been recommended by the manufacturer

o Check your manual for the recommended types of lubricant. Don't have your manual? You can download IR Tech Literature at <http://http://manualarchive.ingersollrandproducts.com>

o Here are Ingersoll Rand's:  
115-LBK1 for Metallic Housings  
105-LBK1 for Composite Housings

- Install and maintain an in-line combination Air Filter/ Lubricator / Regulator system. This system will efficiently clean and lubricate the air traveling through your air delivery system. (Note: this lubricator primarily lubricates your lines, fittings and hoses and is not a substitute for daily oiling of your air tools).

- o For a vast majority do this once about every eight hours of use

- o Need a filter regulator? Check out what IR has to offer at <http://www.ingersollrandproducts.com/IS/Category.aspx-item-30878>

- With composite impacts (like our MAX family of air tools) use a needle grease gun on the body of the tool. Where can I get one? Try IR's P25-228 for hydraulic-type fittings or R000A2-228 for flush-type fittings. See your tool's manual for the type of fitting!

- Most aluminum bodied impacts feature a pressure feed lubrication system, with a fitting located on the back of the tool

- o This is a mechanical system that forces oil from a separate reservoir into the crankcase to lubricate the internal components

- It is important that you lubricate your impact wrench at regular intervals

- Clean and store your impact wrench after every use

- o Keep your impact wrench in a dry, enclosed space while not in use

Sure it takes a little work to keep up a finely tuned machine, but it is an important step in keeping your tools running efficiently and keeping them free of water contamination. An impact wrench that has not been lubricated properly will operate with a lower power output, and if it is continually used when starved of grease, the internal components will wear down and the tool will not last nearly as long as it could.

Effective maintenance of your air tools can prevent lockup and stalling, significantly increases tool life, maintain peak performance over the life of your tool.

Think your impact wrench is starting to show its age? Try a lubrication regimen and see what happens, you might be surprised. Effective greasing in some cases can take tools that were previously thought to be worn down and not working, and make them work like new again. A little maintenance can go a long way.

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