

Proper lubricant selection

Tech tip

Lubricant selection depends on a combination of factors: the type of housing, operating temperature, operating speed and any particular requirement of that bearing type. In all cases, the best guide for proper selection of a lubricant is the recommendation of the vehicle's manufacturer.

There are two lubricant types - grease and oil. There are certain guidelines to follow when selecting the right lube for the job. For example, open bearings are only lubricated with a film of oil or light grease to protect them from corrosion before use. They must also be lubricated while running. Sealed and shielded bearings are grease packed from the factory and are sealed for life.

The lubrication used in ball and other bearing types is usually a sodium or lithium based grease or oil.

As a general rule, bearings run the coolest and with the least amount of friction when a minimum amount of the lightest-bodied lubricant that will keep the bearing surfaces apart is used. Use a heavier lubricant only if:

- Operating conditions require it
- The load is too heavy for the lube
- It is specifically called for in the application

Heavy penetration grease will normally increase friction.

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