



MAINTENANCE TIPS

Planning for the weekend

Making the most of maintenance opportunities

By Mark Eystad

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One of the most frequent complaints from maintenance organizations is that there is never enough time to properly perform preventive maintenance. Effective Maintenance Planning is a world-class activity that dramatically cuts maintenance costs, improving the effectiveness of all operations. Studies have found that planned work costs less than half of unplanned work.

In the meat and poultry industry, most maintenance departments have limited windows of opportunity. Gen-

erally, only the sanitation shift and, at best, a two-day weekend are available to perform preventive maintenance, rebuild equipment and complete project work. This makes it important to properly plan the limited available time. Orchestrating a successful weekend plan requires the scheduler to have all the proper information including:

1. Which mechanics will be available to work during the weekend;
2. What Preventive Maintenance Work Orders (PM's) are scheduled for the weekend;

3. What Corrective Maintenance Work Orders (CM's) are scheduled for the weekend;
4. If there are any special projects (large CM's); and
5. Ensuring all the parts will be available for the work being planned.

Orchestrating success

Knowing not only how many mechanics are working the weekend (available man hours), but also which mechanics are working the weekend is very important. Maintenance schedulers need to also know if the proper skill sets are available for the work being scheduled. For example, there is no need to schedule a major PM rebuild on an eviscerator if the best eviscerator technician will be on vacation. This becomes even more critical if OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) technicians are scheduled to assist in the rebuild. Clearly, having a formal system of verifying who is scheduled for the weekend and what their individual skill sets are is imperative.

Having a complete account of the PMs and CMs being scheduled for the weekend is the next component of proper weekend scheduling. A properly installed CMMS (Computerized Maintenance Management System) or EAM (Enterprise Asset Management) system will also generate a report providing the estimated time for completion of the PM's, as well as which mechanics are assigned to the scheduled work. If no current estimated times are supplied to the CMMS, these must be created. It is important to remember these are initially only estimates. While accuracy is vital, the actual time will be reported to the scheduler who can begin to dial in the estimated times to develop even more accurate plans in the future. Scheduled CM's will also require an estimated time for completion, as will the special projects assigned to the maintenance department for the weekend.

The final input into the weekend plan is verifying all the parts required to complete the scheduled work will be available. This, again, requires the CMMS be properly set up and includes

a parts list for the PM Work Orders. Additionally, careful review of the scheduled CM Work Orders and any project work must be completed to ensure all parts will be available.

Plant projects, generally categorized as CM's, can come from several different sources. Whether the source is the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture or the production, safety or quality departments, there must be a procedure for processing work requests. If there is no procedure for handling the work requests, the maintenance department will get inundated with work requests for every idea. One method to accomplish this is to funnel those requests through a plant manager or plant superintendent to ensure just one person understands what each production shift is requesting from the maintenance department. Additionally, food-safety related and USDA-mandated work requests should be scheduled ahead of other work requests. These work requests then would be handed off to the maintenance manager to allow them to ask questions if the work requests are unclear.

Following orders

Once the maintenance department accepts the work requests, it is their responsibility to get the requests pro-

cessed, parts ordered and the work scheduled. This is also why there must be deadlines for work requests for the weekend. Having a pile of work requests handed to the maintenance manager at 3:00 p.m. on a Friday will only create added costs and is a recipe for failure.

Inputs of available manpower resources and material must be matched to the required activities requested of the maintenance department and the availability of the equipment must be considered. For example, the plan may indicate there is not enough maintenance man hours available to complete all the work scheduled. This is when maintenance management and plant management must sit down to decide if contractors need to be brought in to assist or whether some of the work requested can be postponed. Finally, after the weekend plan is completed, usually Monday morning, there must be a review of how well the department performed. Any items not completed must be rescheduled.

Once this weekend planning cycle becomes ingrained into the culture of the maintenance department, the next step is to begin looking for "windows of opportunity" throughout the week when work can be completed. One way

to begin this process is to have the next weekend's PM's & CM's available for the mechanics by Monday or Tuesday rather than waiting until Saturday morning to hand them out. This way if a production shift gets dropped or goes home early during the week, creating a window of availability for the equipment, the mechanics are prepared to PM it. Often in further-processing environments, various pieces of equipment may sit idle one or two shifts throughout the week, again creating windows of opportunity. Almost immediately, more work begins to get accomplished during the week so mechanics can either begin to have more weekends off or they can begin to take on more project work, reducing outside contractor costs. This is when all the work of planning begins to pay for itself. Obviously, replacing the informal process of notes on a yellow legal pad with formal structured processes utilizing standard forms and methods will build a world-class maintenance department. **M&P**

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