

Avoid Unplanned Downtime with Preemptive Screen Media Maintenance

The term “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” applies to a lot of things, but not necessarily to the mining and aggregates industries. So much valuable material is processed every hour that letting anything break without preparation can be a recipe for a costly headache.

It’s not uncommon for producers to wait until screen media panels break to change them out, but that might not be in your best interest.

Here are some tips for keeping costs low from our experts who have seen a thing or two.

Don’t Just Let it Go

So, why not wait until the screen media breaks before changing it out? Doing so surely allows you to get every bit of life out of the panel. But it can lead to issues larger than the cost of replacing a screen media section and the associated unscheduled downtime if not caught quickly.

Contaminated material piles are the most obvious problem that result from broken screen media left unchecked. The longer no one notices the broken panel, the more material falls through that isn’t supposed to. This either necessitates reprocessing the contaminated pile or could mean complaints and potential claims from the customer if the material is sent out with the problem unnoticed.

Another less obvious issue is the increased wear to the screen box structure that can result from a broken panel. That broken media can cause a concentrated flow of material to fall straight through the opening. This can mean wear to the machine structure if the equipment continues to operate for extended periods.

Lastly, unscheduled downtime is obviously costly, but it’s also a stressful rush to repair the problem and start production back up. This hurried environment can be detrimental to both employee morale and jobsite safety because workers rushing to finish the job without proper precautions can lead to higher risk of injury.

The Value of Staying Proactive

Keeping a close eye on screen media is the best way to make sure you can either replace the panel before it breaks or be ready to change it out as soon as it fails. The typical wear life of a panel is about 2 to 4 months, but can vary from 2 weeks to 2 years depending on conditions.

Check screen media for critical signs of wear every couple of weeks at first, then more frequently towards the end of the expected lifespan. Look at wire diameter and whether wires are developing a flat top, especially in high wear zones like the feed end and center area of the deck.

When possible, large operations should try to change screen media during scheduled shutdowns. The benefits of this approach come from being able to complete multiple tasks at once and spread out the cost of lost production, the ability to plan labor resources and avoid overtime, and, of course, eliminate unexpected downtime. If the data is available, try to schedule the shutdown a few weeks before the expected screen media failure to maximize the life of the panel without risking it breaking unexpectedly.

A site-wide shutdown may not be feasible for smaller operations. This makes frequent inspections even more important so crews don't miss the moment the screen media fails. Otherwise the operation will have to deal with out-of-spec production and delays from unscheduled maintenance.

Having an idea of when screen media will fail also allows an operation to order replacements ahead of time. The worst case scenario is when media fails without a back-up on site.

Partnerships and Proper Training

Aside from tonnages and abrasive material, improper installation is a major factor affecting screen media lifespan. Work with your [local MAJOR dealer](#) to schedule a seminar. They will be able to give practical tips for estimated wear life and other ways to improve screening profitability. The partnership can mean less downtime and the comfort of following expert advice.

Visit www.majorflexmat.com to learn more.