



LUBE TIP: HANDLING & STORING GREASE

BEST PRACTICES

Here are a few helpful hints for properly storing and handling grease:

1. Rotate your inventory

What is a grease? A grease is a solid or semi-solid formed when a thickening agent is dispersed in the base oil. Separation can occur just by having the lubricant sitting in the drum, so make sure to always rotate your inventory - "first-in-first-out".

2. Store at a suitable temperature

Keeping the grease at a suitable, moderate temperature is essential to proper storage. Exposing it to extreme heat or cold could cause the chemical additives in the grease to degrade. Although it's best to store grease in a heated room, if the room is overly warm, product delivered to a cold location can form condensation (contamination). It's OK to store it in a cool area, but if it's too cold, it won't flow properly. In cold weather if the product requires heating, never use a torch. Instead, relocate it to a heated room or use a band heater, properly positioned around the drum and never heat above 200 °C.

3. Be mindful of contamination

Contamination is major cause of bearing failure. Never assume the product in a drum is "clean", as drums can become contaminated in storage, depending on where and how they are stored. Even though a drum is sealed and does not leak lubricant through the bung, a rigid container still draws in air when the temperature drops and expels air as the temperature rises. So for very critical product or equipment, always sample a new drum of product before you use it.

When storing indoors:

- Containers should be located in a clean and dry location, away from any potential contamination, including dust and humidity.
- Containers that have been opened should be tightly capped or covered when not in use.
- If storing drums on their sides, position bungs horizontally at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions to help reduce the risk of the seals drying out and the drawing in of moisture caused by breathing.

When storing outdoors:

- Supply some sort of cover or tarp over the drums to protect from rain or snow
- Tilt the drums, making sure to position cover ports horizontal to the tilt at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions so moisture doesn't gather around the bungs
- Track grease usage closely and replace inventories on a "just-in-time" basis to keep exposure to adverse outdoor conditions to a minimum.

4. Avoid mixing products

There are several different thickening agents that can be used to make grease (aluminum, sodium, calcium, lithium, clay, polyuria, etc.). Some greases with different thickening agents can be safely mixed with no negative effects. Many other combinations will cause the lubricant to fail with potentially disastrous results.

- Always avoid dispensing grease through equipment that was previously used with a different lubricant.
- Make sure all drums are clearly labelled using methods that are legible and will not wear out over time (especially if stored outdoors), to ensure proper product identification and avoid misapplication.
- Label dispensing equipment such as grease guns, to match the lubricant to be used.



- Apply the same identification process to the machines being lubricated (e.g. colour coded) to ensure the proper lube is applied to the corresponding machine.
- In cases where mixing lubes is unavoidable, before you mix, check with your lubricant supplier to verify the lubricants are compatible.
- If dispensing equipment must be used for multiple lubricants, make sure you properly clean/flush the equipment in between uses.



***A clear grease gun lets you see the lubricant inside**

5. Safety is key

- Movement of drums from point to point can be dangerous – always use a hand dolly or fork lift with drum clamps
- The danger of fire in an oil-house is always present - “No Smoking” signs should be posted and hand fire extinguishers strategically placed.
- Automatic fire extinguisher systems are a good idea for oil storage rooms.
- Low flash products, such as solvents should be stored in a separate room.

Should you have any questions about best practices for handling and storing grease, give us a call. Our lube solutions experts at FLO Components are just a phone call away at 1.800.668.5458.

**For Total Lube Solutions,
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