John Deere recommends relief grinding the reels before spin-grinding to:

• Reduce the blade contact area, resulting in less friction, thus requiring less horsepower to drive the reel;
• Ensure longer wear life;
• Cut time required to backlap;
• Reduce pulling and tearing of the grass as the unit becomes dull from use;
• Provide an area for backlapping compound to be trapped to backlap reels more effectively;
• Remove metal from the trailing edge of the blade forming an angle (the relief angle) to reduce the contact area of the cutting edge; and
• Allow the operator to true a reel (make it round), when backlapping, if a blade is .001 inch to .002 inch too high.

**Backlapping** - Backlapping is used to sharpen the cutting edges when grinding is not necessary. Backlapping, as compared to grinding, removes a very small amount of metal and requires less time.

The backlapping procedure is accomplished by spinning the reel backwards while applying special abrasive compounds to the reel. Usually, coarse compounds are used initially, followed by a finer abrasive for final honing.

John Deere recommends backlapping after spin grinding to remove burrs and rough edges left from the spin grinding procedure. Backlapping produces a honed edge that will cut the grass evenly and leave the tops of the grass with clean, straight edges.

The cutting unit should be inspected, backlapped, adjusted and checked daily for a uniform cut along the complete length of the bedknife. The adjustment should allow the reel to turn freely without dragging against the bedknife. Metal-to-metal contact will generate heat, causing the reel to expand, intensify the dragging and produce more heat. This vicious cycle will quickly "shut-down" the mower.

**Reel and bedknife sharpening** - Sharpening is necessary when the grass is not being cut cleanly due to dull bedknife and/or reel blade edges, or when turf streaking is apparent, caused by the bedknife and reel not cutting the full width of the blade due to nicks, bends or uneven wear.

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