

At season's end

Proper post-season maintenance is key to optimum performance next season. BY RANDY STRAIT

CONTAINMENT SNOW **PUSHERS** are among the most common attachments found on small equipment such as skid steers and tractors. When winter winds down and the snow diminishes, most look forward to giving their pushers a break. But before parking the winter workhorse, take time for post-season maintenance. It's the easiest way to avoid a pile-up when the snow starts flying next season.

The maintenance checklist is much less time-consuming and labor-intensive than one might expect.

Clean it up

The first, and perhaps simplest, step in a post-season maintenance plan is to give the pusher a good cleaning. A good power wash removes salt and debris and helps prevent corrosion and rusting.

After cleaning, allow the pusher to dry for a few hours, then apply a standard penetrant oil to pivot points, fasteners and nuts and bolts. Depending on the pusher, the cutting edges and the springs will need extra attention; they're more prone to wear and rusting. Be sure penetrant oil is applied liberally to these areas.

Inspect, repair and replace

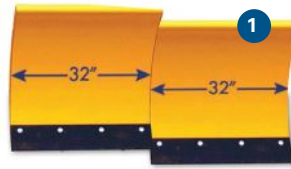
When the pusher is clean and dry, a thorough visual inspection should be conducted. All pushers have the same, standard areas to check, but there are differences, depending on the model.

Every pusher has either a rubber or steel cutting edge that should be

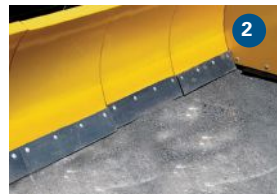
inspected and replaced if necessary. Rubber edges tend to wear faster than steel, so there's a higher likelihood of more frequent replacement needed on rubber-edge pushers. Regardless of what type, replacement does come at a cost. Sectional moldboard models alleviate both the time and expense of replacement. Rather than replacing a large, single cutting edge on a one-piece moldboard several feet wide, just the damaged section needs to be replaced.

Additionally, owners of sectional moldboard pushers should quickly inspect the mounting blocks. Mounting blocks are designed to handle a lot of pressure and abuse, protecting the operator, the tractor and other carrier equipment. As a result, they will occasionally need a quick replacement. With proper operation and care on the part of the operator, mounting blocks can last five years or more.

All pushers have wear shoes that should be inspected at the season's end, and replaced if severely worn. Those who own pushers with a standard hitch design may find their shoes wear faster and unevenly, requiring more frequent replacement. However, newer "drop-and-go" hitch designs ensure even wear on both shoes for longer life and fewer replacements. These designs also permit the shoes to "float" rather than drag



1 Sectional moldboard models alleviate the time and expense of replacement of a large, single cutting edge on one-piece moldboards several feet wide.



2 Every pusher has a cutting edge that should be inspected and replaced if necessary. Rubber edges tend to wear about five times faster than steel.



3 Mounting blocks handle a lot of pressure and abuse, protecting both the operator and carrier equipment.

during operation, further extending life. Though it's less likely that a replacement will be needed,

owners of "drop-and-go" pushers do still need to check the shoes at season's end.

Finally, be sure to inspect all areas for loose or missing parts. Tighten or replace any pins, nuts or bolts.

Simple storage

It's perfectly fine to keep pushers outside during the off-season. Again, be sure to spray penetrating oil onto rust-prone areas as an added safeguard.

Though pushers are virtually low-maintenance in the off-season, it's a good idea to inspect periodically — especially after a rainfall — to be sure rust isn't rearing its ugly head.

Post-season maintenance is the best way to extend the life of a snow pusher and guarantee years of reliable performance. Taking care of maintenance now ensures pushers are ready for next snow season. The flurries can come anytime. Be ready to push through Old Man Winter's first arrival. **LM**

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