

Minimising The Environmental Impact Of Wire Rope Lubricants

In a rapidly changing global climate and with every industry under pressure to mitigate environmental damage, even wire rope lubrication can play its part.

Wire ropes need to be well lubricated to withstand increasingly harsh climate conditions, especially in the maritime and mining industries, but the lubricants used on them can negatively affect the environment. Thankfully, products are now available that help to minimise adverse effects.

Llewellyn Owen, National Marketing Manager – South Africa at Lubrication Engineers South Africa, explains that in the maritime sector, having a non-toxic lubricant for wire ropes, moving chains and cable parts is particularly important for preserving marine life.

While environmentally friendly lubricants have long aimed to be biodegradable, the value of products like the Earthwise™ range supplied by Lubrication Engineers (LE) South Africa is immense because of their focus on non-toxicity. LE's Earthwise EAL Wire Rope Grease (3353) is a certified environmentally acceptable lubricant and is recommended for use in applications on or near waterways. It is readily biodegradable, exhibits minimal aquatic toxicity and will not accumulate in the cells of fish and other aquatic life forms.

LE also supplies a wire rope lubricant, Wirelife® Almasol® Coating Grease, for the mining sector. This lubricant is highly tacky, ensuring that it sticks to the rope and doesn't fall onto the ground and affect the earth's surface where it is used.

"In addition to considering the direct environmental impact of the properties of products used in maintenance, industrial operations can reduce their indirect environmental impact by ensuring that the lubrication products they use are of a high quality and keep their equipment running well," says Owen. "Giving equipment a longer lifespan reduces the need to buy new parts and mitigates the impact on landfills, water and the broader environment from the discarding of old equipment and parts."

Efficient lubricant application that preserves equipment longevity, reduces lubricant waste and protects against excessive residual lubricant product falling to the ground can be best achieved by using quality lubrication equipment.

“Wire rope lubrication is an essential part of maintenance in the marine and mining environments, and modern lubrication equipment does a much faster and more effective job than traditional manual methods,” says Owen.

LE launched its Viper wire rope lubricator at the Electra Mining show last year, and has received wide interest in the product, including the sale of its first three units into Angola. The Viper lubricator comes in three different sizes to accommodate different rope thicknesses. As the wire rope is passed through the Viper system, the lubrication is applied to the rope. It provides grease penetration, displaces moisture from the rope’s core, provides total coverage, even for large ropes, and prolongs the lifespan and improves the performance of the ropes. The reduced risks of this system, as opposed to manual greasing, include it being safer for staff to use, using smaller volumes of lubricant and less leakage and mess. All of which has a positive long-term benefit for the environment.

Notes to the Editor:

Lubrication Engineers (LE) South Africa represents the LE brand in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia. LE hold the rights to Southern Africa on the LE brand, recognised internationally as a specialist in lubrication.

Through LE Incorporated, they are a member of a worldwide network of companies spanning Europe, South America, Asia and Africa, while LE Incorporated operates in the USA and covers North America including Canada, Mexico and the USA.