

Ironer Operations: Regular Maintenance Pays Off

With scheduled cleaning/waxing, even high-efficiency laundries can produce great-looking linens



© iStockPhoto

By Ty Acton

There's a lot of pressure on laundry managers and owners to keep ironers running at full speed and still get a high-quality finish. But they also need to keep costs down and keep everyone safe in the process. Some will go out and buy automated equipment such as spreading and feeding machines. Others will train their feed personnel to be faster and more accurate, and others will launch safety programs, which we can all support. But oftentimes, laundries can do better at all of this just by being careful about preventive maintenance. And one of the most important parts of that process is proper ironer cleaning and waxing. I've been in a lot of laundries over the years, and the plants where cleaning and waxing were done well had linens that were done well. When the ironer chests are cleaned and waxed according to a schedule, it will become part of the daily routine and over time, there will be fewer go backs and jams and higher production. If you look at your linens, they will show you how well your ironers are being cleaned and waxed. Here are some of the signs to look for that mean your ironers need more attention paid to cleaning and waxing.

WHY WAX?

The purpose of waxing is to keep the ironer chests lubricated and, as I've said for years, it should be done sparingly but often. Wax can

be a powder, bead, paste or spray. It is placed onto the leading edge of a wax cloth, usually inside a pocket or barrier flap with a Teflon® or silicon coating. When the wax cloth is fed through the ironer, the wax melts to coat and lubricate the ironer chests. This helps get even heating from the chests to the linens and makes feeding from one roll to the next much easier. If waxing isn't done enough, or if it's done without enough wax, areas on the ironer chests will become dry. These dry, dead spots can grab onto the linens. If your linens jam or come out of the ironer with accordion wrinkles, then run a wax cloth to clean and lubricate the chests. A wide variety of wax cloths is available for any type of ironer running any type of linens. But whichever cloth you use, it should be run through the ironer every two hours.

TOO MUCH WAX

Waxing too often or using too much wax also creates problems that will affect the finish quality. Too much wax can saturate the ironer padding. This will distort the shape of the padding and prevent proper chest to roll contact, and will also prevent proper airflow. This will reduce drying efficiency. Or, to put it another way, you'll pay higher costs in energy, wax, padding, downtime and go-backs to meet production goals. Over-waxing will also clog the vacuum system and prevent water vapor from draining. As a result, the moisture collects in the padding, which



Pictured above:
Danny Blandford of
Tingue, Brown & Co.
runs a TingueKleen
Wax Cloth through
a flatwork ironer
with Mike Darnell of
Clean Uniform Co.,
St. Louis MO.

Ironer Upkeep Procedures

Proper cleaning and waxing of flatwork ironers directly impacts finish quality, productivity and worker safety. A regular clean-and-wax procedure may be one of the easiest preventive-maintenance programs to get started and one of the most effective for finish quality, cost-savings and payback. If you're interested in starting such a program, Ty Acton, author of the nearby article on ironer maintenance, offers the following procedure:

Clean and Wax Procedures

Beginning of each Shift

- Turn off vacuum
- Once ironer has reached proper temperature, feed the cleaning cloth.
- Then feed the wax cloth through ironer. After the cloth has been fed, hang it on a rack to cool.
- If the wax cloth is stiff when cool, there is sufficient wax in the cloth for the next use. If the cloth is limp when cool, apply wax.
- Turn on vacuum.

Break #1

- Turn off vacuum.
- Feed the wax cloth through the ironer. Add wax only if cloth is limp—one heaping handful of paste wax or one, eight-ounce cup of powdered wax.
- Turn on vacuum.

Break #2

- Turn off vacuum.
- Feed the wax cloth through the ironer. Add wax only if cloth is limp—one heaping handful of paste wax or one, eight-ounce cup of powdered wax.
- Turn on vacuum.

Break #3

- Turn off vacuum.
- Feed the wax cloth through the ironer. Add wax only if cloth is limp—one heaping handful of paste wax or one, eight-ounce cup of powdered wax.
- Turn on vacuum.

Important Notes:

- Keep wax and cleaning cloths clean.
- Never throw wax directly into the ironer.
- Do not use a sheet or other textile item as a wax cloth or cleaning cloth

Author's note: While proper care has been taken in the preparation of this article, no liability for injury or damage resulting from its use can be accepted. Recipients are advised to confirm in advance of need that the information is current, applicable and suitable to their circumstances.

Don Nauta – Tingue, Brown & Co. since 1979



Knowhow In Action

Your Tingue rep is a fully trained master of finishing equipment operation, maintenance and installation with access to thousands of proven products and a base of corporate knowledge and experience spanning more than 110 years. Driven by a commitment to personal service, your Tingue rep knows how to keep your plant running and your finishing equipment in action.



Generations of Innovation for Laundries Worldwide
Call to order 800.329.3864
www.Tingue.com

The Tingue Family of Companies



Call now for a free ironer energy saving audit in your plant.



TBR-Associates.com



TalleyMachinery.com



TingueBrownCo.com



MODLaundry.com

will wear the springs and pads faster, and also hinder overall performance. If your linens come out of the ironer damp or if you see rust on the springs, check the vacuum system and remove any wax deposits. If the pad's color gets dark or if you see crusty patches, or if the linens feel rough and dry, make sure operators are using the right amount of wax.

DAILY CLEANING

Even when ironers are running perfectly, they still collect lint, dust, dirt and wax every time a napkin, sheet or other flatwork item is fed through the ironer.

Most of it will build up as a grime in the chests. If your linens show staining on the leading edge or in the corners where the textile item is thickest, you probably have a dirty chest. This dirt must be removed, or it will reappear on the finished flatwork as a stain, and it will have to be ragged out prematurely. Feed an ironer cleaning cloth through the ironer periodically to remove the grime and keep it from building up. The latest cleaning cloths have an abrasive at the leading edge that loosens the gritty grime from the chests and a softer pad or felt weave that removes it in one pass. Different types of cleaning cloths are available for any type of ironer or linen. Running the proper cleaning cloth through the ironer at the start of each day is enough to get a full day of quality finishing, but if cleaning has only been done once in a while, don't worry. There's a new, heavier duty type of cleaning cloth called a continuous belt cleaner. Use that to get rid of the accumulated debris; then you can start with a regular clean-and-wax schedule. This can all be done without having to scrape the chests by hand. Nobody wants that job!

GET STARTED!

A properly cleaned and waxed flatwork ironer enables linens to feed easily, removes moisture evenly and presents pressed linens ready for folding, packaging and delivery to the customer. It will reduce accordion wrinkles, creases, spotting and moist corners for fewer

go-backs, and will allow operators to achieve outstanding quality at high productivity rates. It will extend linen life and reduce the extra handling and refeeding that can cause worker safety problems. As preventive maintenance programs go, a regular clean-and-wax procedure may be one of the easiest to start and one of the most effective when talking about its impact on quality, cost-savings and customer satisfaction—and that's the real payback. **TS**

Ty Acton is national sales manager for Tingue, Brown & Co., a supplier of laundry products, parts, carts and expert services founded in 1902. Contact him at 800.829.3864 or tacton@tingue.com or www.TingueBrownCo.com.

Paramount Uniform has grown 22% with the help of Positek RFID



Pictured left to right Larry Wilson, Service Director; Mickey Harlow, President; Dave Kopinski, Plant and Route Server Manager.

“Recently, thanks to our Positek RFID System, we were awarded the largest account in the history of our company. It was made possible by Positek RFID's commitment to provide us a 100% Bundle Guarantee Program for our clients and the capability to process large volumes of garments at a low cost. We couldn't be happier with the results and the significant growth our company has experienced with the team at Positek RFID!”

— Mickey Harlow, Paramount Uniform

www.paramountuniform.com



**We don't just sell products.
We sell solutions.
Don't settle for less.**

over
10,000,000
UHF tags
sold

www.positekrfid.com

1210 Stanbridge Street • Norristown, PA 19401 • 610-275-2905 • Fax: 610-275-9703