

BETWEEN MAJOR SERVICES:

# 7 Separator Checks That Prevent Downtime

A practical checklist for dairy plant teams to protect uptime, product quality, and separator performance between scheduled service intervals



## 1 Watch for unusual vibration

A change in vibration is often one of the earliest signs that something is off. Excess vibration may point to imbalance, wear, misalignment, buildup, or other developing mechanical issues.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- New or worsening vibration during startup or operation
- Changes in machine stability
- Intermittent shaking under load

### WHY IT MATTERS

Ignoring vibration can accelerate wear on critical components and increase the risk of a larger mechanical failure.

## 2 Listen for changes in sound

Operators know how a healthy separator should sound. A new noise or a shift in operating sound can indicate internal wear or other mechanical issues.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Grinding, rattling, squealing, or knocking
- Changes in sound during acceleration or discharge
- Any unusual noise compared to normal operation

### WHY IT MATTERS

Sound changes are often an early warning that something needs attention before it turns into downtime.

## 3 Inspect for leaks and seal issues

Leaks should never be treated as minor. Product, oil, or water leakage can signal worn seals, loose connections, or component wear that needs attention.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Oil leaks around housings or fittings
- Product leaks near seals or piping connections
- Water leakage in areas that should remain dry

### WHY IT MATTERS

Leaks can affect performance, sanitation, safety, and overall equipment reliability.

## 4 Monitor bowl discharge and solids handling

If bowl discharge or solids removal is inconsistent, the separator may not be operating as intended. That can reduce efficiency and put added strain on the machine.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Inconsistent discharge cycles
- Unexpected solids buildup
- Product losses tied to discharge performance
- Changes in sludge consistency or volume

### WHY IT MATTERS

Discharge problems can affect separation quality, throughput, and internal wear if left unresolved.

## 6 Review operating temperature and lubrication condition

Temperature and lubrication health provide important insight into separator condition. Heat buildup or lubrication problems can shorten component life quickly.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Rising operating temperatures
- Oil discoloration or contamination
- Lubrication intervals being missed or inconsistent

### WHY IT MATTERS

Poor lubrication and excessive heat are common drivers of premature wear and unexpected failures.

## 5 Pay attention to product quality changes

Separator issues do not always show up first as mechanical symptoms. Sometimes the earliest sign is a shift in product performance.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Changes in clarity, consistency, or separation results
- Unexpected fat losses or reduced recovery
- More variation in finished product quality
- Process instability that appears separator-related

### WHY IT MATTERS

Small equipment issues can quickly become larger quality and yield problems if not addressed early.

## 7 Look for CIP-related wear or buildup

Cleaning practices are essential, but over time they can also reveal underlying issues or contribute to wear if conditions are not well controlled.

### WHAT TO CHECK

- Residue or buildup after cleaning
- Signs of unusual wear after CIP cycles (e.g., seal or gasket damage, surface pitting or etching, discoloration after cleaning, new leaks following CIP)
- Changes in performance following cleaning
- Repeated sanitation-related issues

### WHY IT MATTERS

CIP-related wear, buildup, or process inconsistency can impact efficiency, sanitation confidence, and long-term reliability.

## When to call for service

If your team notices recurring vibration, sound changes, leaks, performance drops, or anything outside normal operating conditions, it may be time to bring in expert support before the issue becomes more serious.

### A SERVICE CALL CAN HELP YOU

- Reduce unplanned downtime
- Protect product quality
- Extend equipment life
- Plan service before a failure forces it



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