

Knowing where your hoists are being used will help you predict the level of service that will need to be performed when it comes back to your shop. If your customer is a painter, a sandblaster or a window washer may help you determine what equipment is appropriate to send them, as well as how much service it will need later. Let's face it, some surface coatings are not applied just to the building.

You have spent hours servicing a hoist and it has passed all the safety checks and it is now ready to rent. You put your finished hoist into the rent ready line and let dispatch know that they have more equipment to rent. The very next day you are pleased to see that your hard work has paid off and the hoist has gone on rent.

Two weeks later your hoist comes back in to your shop and it is obvious where it just came from. All of the labels are covered in the latest polyurethane coating. The hoist is no longer the color of aluminum. It has been treated to a makeover in the finest colors of the Golden Gate Bridge, a nice rust colored orange mixture. You know that the paint covering your hoist was designed to stay on the bridge for 10-20 years in an environment complete with an army of punishing conditions like salt-water spray. You will not even get a year to remove all of this paint, it has to go on rent in two days.

Rent the Right Equipment

Minimizing the amount of work you have to perform after a rental is decided before the rental ever leaves your shop. You must know the specific trade of any potential customer in determining what equipment you will rent them. It is also important to know what processes they may have to employ to get their work done.

In most instances your customer is renting your equipment simply to get where they need to go to do their work. With this being the case, many of them are not overly concerned with the appearance of the hoist as you may be. Many of your customers understand that, with daily inspections, housekeeping and simple protective precautions, the hoist you rented to them may come back to you dirty, but still safe to operate. Knowing that customers understand this, some shops have equipment that is never clean enough to pass as new. These shops have serviced and safe equipment, which may look older than its age. They rent this equipment to customers who cannot completely control the materials they use in their daily jobs.

Many of us have heard it said that you cannot judge a book by its cover, the same is true with hoists. Just like a book, a hoist must be opened to determine how good it is. Airborne debris and particles always seem to find a way into places you might never guess they could. Therefore even if you decide to keep equipment in a condition that looks rough, you still need to service it inside and out.

Covering Up

If your company has made a decision that the cleanest hoists available is necessary to your image, then prevention is the key to keeping your equipment looking good. You can prevent your hoists from getting completely covered several different ways.

Your company could decide that you will simply not rent to painters and sandblasters. You may not get a lot of business this way, but maybe you would have clean hoists.

You could rent to painters and sandblasters, knowing that you will have to clean your hoists when they come back. Since you have to spend time and money cleaning these hoists, you decide to charge your customer extra when the rental comes back to your shop for cleaning. The extra charges will not help your business much unless it is customary in your area to charge for cleaning.

Some shops have tried spray on waxes to minimize cleanups later. This makes the hoist sticky and attracts dirt. Customers don't always appreciate the sticky wax on their clothes and hands.

Special graffiti barriers have been applied to hoists, many times without much success. Even when these compounds do work at preventing paint from sticking and making removal easier, they get everywhere. These compounds are typically sprayed on and enter areas of the hoist that you did not want them to and can interfere with normal traction.

The simplest method ever found appears to be the lowly hoist cover. A simple canvas bag with holes for wire rope to pass through and some access for hoist operation is an effective barrier for many types of airborne materials.

Getting the customer to use your covers

So you decided that the hoist cover is the least expensive and most effective way to keep your hoists clean, but the customer will not use them. Now What?

Some dealers have explained the simple facts to their customers and been able to gain compliance. Extra cleaning is not covered in the basic rental contract and can cost you big. The dealer can propose several options:

1. You rent equipment that is not clean and there will not be any cleaning charges.
2. You use the supplied covers or there will be extra charges for cleaning.
3. All rentals are subject to T & M charges upon return.
4. The dealer can raise their rates to cover the costs of extra work.

Removing the Paint

Over the years many methods have been used to remove paint and other debris from hoists. The most common of these methods is still scraping and grinding.

It is important to routinely clean your equipment such as hoists for several reasons. The number one reason is image. Customers given clean equipment tend to take better care of it. Clean equipment also gives the customer confidence in the equipment and the company that they are renting.

Removing paint and other debris is necessary for thorough inspection. Stripping all of the built up layers of debris allows a mechanic to better inspect the integrity of the structural components of a hoist. Inspections for cracks and damage must be done on a regular basis. Removing the paint, which may cover hidden damages, is crucial to these inspections.

Flat bladed scrapers can easily remove spoiled labels and paint in many areas of hoist. This is a slow process at best. A faster process for cleaning involves using a drill motor or angle grinder fitted with a wire brush or special bristle discs.

Never use any acids or sandblasting, to remove paint and debris, as prolonged use could weaken structural parts. Though these methods may work faster, they may produce unwanted results.

Did You Know?

- Power Climber has hoist covers for its current model hoists. They are inexpensive and effective at controlling airborne debris when used properly.
- Drill motors that use air power usually have a faster rpm than electric drills and make cleaning easier.
- Cleaning a hoist that went on rent in immaculate condition is one of the top complaints of many mechanics.
- Not charging for cleaning is right behind cleaning it again.

Tips and Tricks

- Some mechanics have found a 3M Roloc™ Bristle Disc to be quite effective in cleaning paint, labels and debris from their hoists. This product can be fit into an angle grinder or a drill motor with a special adapter.

For questions or comments, contact Customer Service at 1-800-560-CLIMB (2546) or customerservice@safeworks.com.