

Preseason Maintenance Checklist

Your operator's manual should be your primary reference source when servicing your mower. Always consult your operator's manual for required maintenance, service intervals and fluid specifications.

Following the guidelines for proper maintenance will not only make your John Deere equipment last longer, but operating a clean, fully maintained machine will reduce the stress of your chores.

Remove the mower deck first and get it out of your way. It will make servicing the rest of the machine much easier.

1_____Change the engine oil and filter. Change oil only after running the engine for several minutes. Running the engine allows the oil to gather up and suspend all the particles that settle at the bottom of the oil pan. Pulling the plug on a cold engine will not flush these particles out.

2_____Change the fuel filter. Many mowers have fuel shut offs to keep the fuel from running out all over the floor. Avoid this hazard and use the fuel shut off. Be sure to consult your operator's manual when changing the filter on a diesel.

3_____Change or clean the air cleaner. If in doubt about the condition of the filter, replace it. Don't risk the damage a dirty air filter can do.

4_____Replace the spark plugs, points and condenser if equipped.

5_____Change the transmission oil and filter as per recommended in the operators manual.

6_____Remove and sharpen the blades. Use extreme caution when handling the blades. Sharpening mower blades can be an art. Modern mowing machines use blades of many different designs and some can be a challenge to sharpen properly. Have your blades sharpened by your dealer. Purchase a spare set so you can remove the blades and have another set ready to put back on while you have the worn ones sharpened. (Don't reinstall the blades until you have completed step 13)

7_____Clean the grass build up from the top and bottom. Some people have found that coating the underside of their mower deck with slip plate (or equivalent spray on graphite) keeps grass from building up. A build up of unwanted grass can restrict air flow hampering maximum performance.

8_____Check all bearings by spinning the pulleys and listening for a growl. Make sure they spin freely but have no play or sloppiness. Noisy, stiff or loose idlers and spindles are signs of trouble. Replace any bad bearings now and save yourself the aggravation later.

9_____Check mower deck drive belts for cracks and wear and replace any that are bad. Consider purchasing two so when a belt fails, you can replace your belt with one you have on hand and finish the job.

10_____Make sure the belt tensioning system is working freely on all belts. The tensioning systems for belts that are spring loaded often freeze up over time. This is especially common on mower decks, where wet grass causes items to rust quicker.

11_____Check the transmission drive belts cracks and wear. Thoroughly check this belt. If it needs replacing, now is a great time since you already have the mower deck removed.

12_____Grease all fittings. Consult your operator's manual for locations.

13_____Reinstall the blades and reattach the mower deck.

14_____Check the air pressure in the tires. Uneven air pressure can cause the mower to cut unlevelled. Do not skip this step and make sure it is done before you level the mower.

15_____Level the mower deck. The deck must be level from side to side. The deck must also be approximately 1/4 inch lower in the front for best performance.

16_____Clean battery terminals using proper chemicals and procedures. Consult your operator's manual if you are not familiar with proper battery maintenance.

17_____Check the condition of the battery and charge or replace if necessary. Again, mishandling of batteries can cause serious injury, consult your operator's manual if you are not familiar with proper battery maintenance.

18_____Test run the tractor and mower making sure all operations function as they should. Don't overlook the safety items. Here are some things to look for.

- *Brakes. Check the brakes for proper operation.

- *Steering. Check the steering for proper operation. Make sure it does not steer to hard. (Lack of lubrication) or to loose (worn parts).

- *PTO. The mower deck should turn on immediately and should stop spinning within a couple seconds of being turned off.

- *Operators presence. With the mower running lift yourself off the seat to make sure the mower shuts off or the tractor engine shuts down.

- *Throttle and choke controls. Check for proper operation. Stiff choke or throttle controls can sometimes be freed up by spraying the outer conduit with penetrating oil. If the cable is plastic coated penetrating oil will unfortunately not help.

- *Clutch. If so equipped test the operation of the clutch. If the clutch slips or grabs to quickly you may have to consult your dealer.

- *Neutral. On hydrostat models make sure the mower does not creep in neutral. If foot operated make sure the pedals come back up and the machine stops quickly when your foot is removed from the pedal.

- *Headlights. If your headlights are not working you'll be glad you fixed them now.

- *Take a moment and make sure all shields are present and properly installed.

*In general fix any problems now so when its time to mow, your mower is ready to go!

19_____Take pride in your investment and clean the entire machine.