

Hand Sprayers & Backpacks are your Company's lifeblood. Keys to a better life.

Most PMPs use some type of manual hand sprayers: B&G or similar hand sprayer and/or one of the many backpack sprayers on the market. Are you doing everything possible to ensure you and your employees are getting the maximum results and value from your hand sprayer investment? Here are some suggestions.

Start with the right equipment.

For a hand sprayer, use a high-quality stainless steel sprayer, such as the industry standard B&G. For a backpack, select a quality product that can stand up to long hours, harsh chemicals and rough treatment. Pay particular attention to the pump mechanism and the spray wand. Many home store backpacks do not meet these criteria and have the additional drawback of lack of replacement parts.

Train your technicians in correct operating procedures.

Check It Out ó Have your technicians do a quick check of their equipment before leaving their starting point (home or office). This can be as simple as a quick visual inspection then pressurizing the unit and a quick spray to ensure proper operation. If you don't want to discharge the product, have your techs team up and spray into each other's sprayer. My philosophy is if you are going to have a problem, have it somewhere you can do something about it, rather than out in the field.

Take it Easy ó Make sure technicians are not over-pressurizing sprayers. Over-pressurizing will cause parts to fail, lead to downtime, missed appointments and increased repair expenses. If your backpack isn't spraying, don't pump it up more. You will break it. It is easy to turn a \$3.00 o-ring replacement into a \$50 repair. I like the following analogy for this situation. I went to France. The waiter didn't understand English, so I yelled louder. Don't overpressure sprayers!

Take the Pressure Off ó You will get longer life and fewer problems from your manual spray equipment if your technicians relieve the pressure in their unit. Certainly the pressure should be released at the end of the day, and optimally at the end of each stop. Leaving your sprayer under pressure for extended periods will reduce the life of components such as hoses, gaskets, o-rings, etc. We find that backpack sprayers in particular can achieve much longer life by practicing this simple action. Just like your body, which needs recreation or relaxation to relieve the stress of the workday, your sprayer needs relief or something will blow. Relieving pressure will also reduce the risk of wands bursting in freezing temperatures.

It's a Spray Wand not a Crowbar ó Our repair shop sees many spray wands and tips that are damaged from opening cabinet doors, being dragged on the ground and other inappropriate uses.

Tip Cleaning ó Follow manufacturer directions for cleaning tips. This usually includes using a soft bristle brush and mild cleaner. Wire brushes, pins, pocketknives, etc. will destroy tips.

Freezing ó From our Department of the Totally Obvious, do not expose your sprayer to freezing temperatures. It will cost you money. PCOs in moderate climates, where freezing is not a regular occurrence, need to be particularly sensitive to this issue.

Check that Filter ó Make sure technicians are checking and cleaning filters to prevent clogged tips and debris that can damage sprayers. You will probably need to show them where the filter is located.

Keep It Clean ó Chemical and debris build up in sprayers. Eventually this debris will cause problems. Rinse sprayers out with clean water. Run clean water through hoses, wands and tips. You may be surprised at what you find in the unit. Aside from chemical buildup, our repair techs most commonly find labels and caps from pesticide bottles.

Report It - Make sure technicians are comfortable reporting problems. Too many times we see techs working with equipment that needs service. Instead of asking for help, they push the equipment past the breaking point, turning a small repair into a major rebuild.

Be Prepared – Don't Wait for Problems

Preventative Maintenance = Money in the Bank. Don't wait for your sprayer to fail and cause you to lose productive time. Perform the required preventative maintenance (PM). Keep moving parts properly lubricated. The main challenge to good PM is that it requires finding and reading the owner's manual.

Emergency Repair Kit ó Some parts, such as o-rings, check valves and gaskets can be easily replaced in the field. Prepare a small emergency repair kit for each technician so that they can perform a simple repair and continue their route.

Eyes Open ó Despite the best training, technicians don't always follow Company procedures. Conduct ride-alongs to observe employees equipment use in the field. Conduct truck inspections to ensure equipment is properly maintained.

Proper storage ó Make sure trucks are set up to provide a secure place for your sprayer. We often see damage caused by sprayers bouncing around, or being placed where they are stepped on or damaged by other equipment.

Tracking ó Track equipment failures to see which parts are failing, which replacement parts need to be stocked or which equipment is not appropriate for your service program. Track failures by technician to identify training opportunities.

Summary

Hand sprayers and backpacks are critical to your Company's success. Invest the time to train employees and properly maintain your equipment. Follow up to ensure it gets done. This will keep employees productive and on schedule, your customers happy and repair expenses to a minimum.

For more information: info@qspray.com
www.qspray.com
www.SprayEquipmentBlog.com
<http://twitter.com/andrewgreess>

