

Having the
right parts
for your cranes



Five tips to help you prepare with spares

One of the biggest challenges industrial and manufacturing facilities face on a regular basis is equipment maintenance and the potential issues that can arise when a piece of vital equipment goes down. For most of these facilities, cranes are a critical component of their operations, so downtime and low productivity are not acceptable. One significant, unplanned maintenance issue could slow production or even bring it to a halt.

That's why most maintenance managers understand the importance of having the right part for their crane at the right time. When an unplanned failure occurs, it often becomes a race against time to identify the issue and equip the technician with the part needed to resolve it. The longer it takes for the part to arrive onsite, the greater the potential for a negative impact on production.

Here are five tips to help you prepare for these situations by having the right parts available when you need them the most.



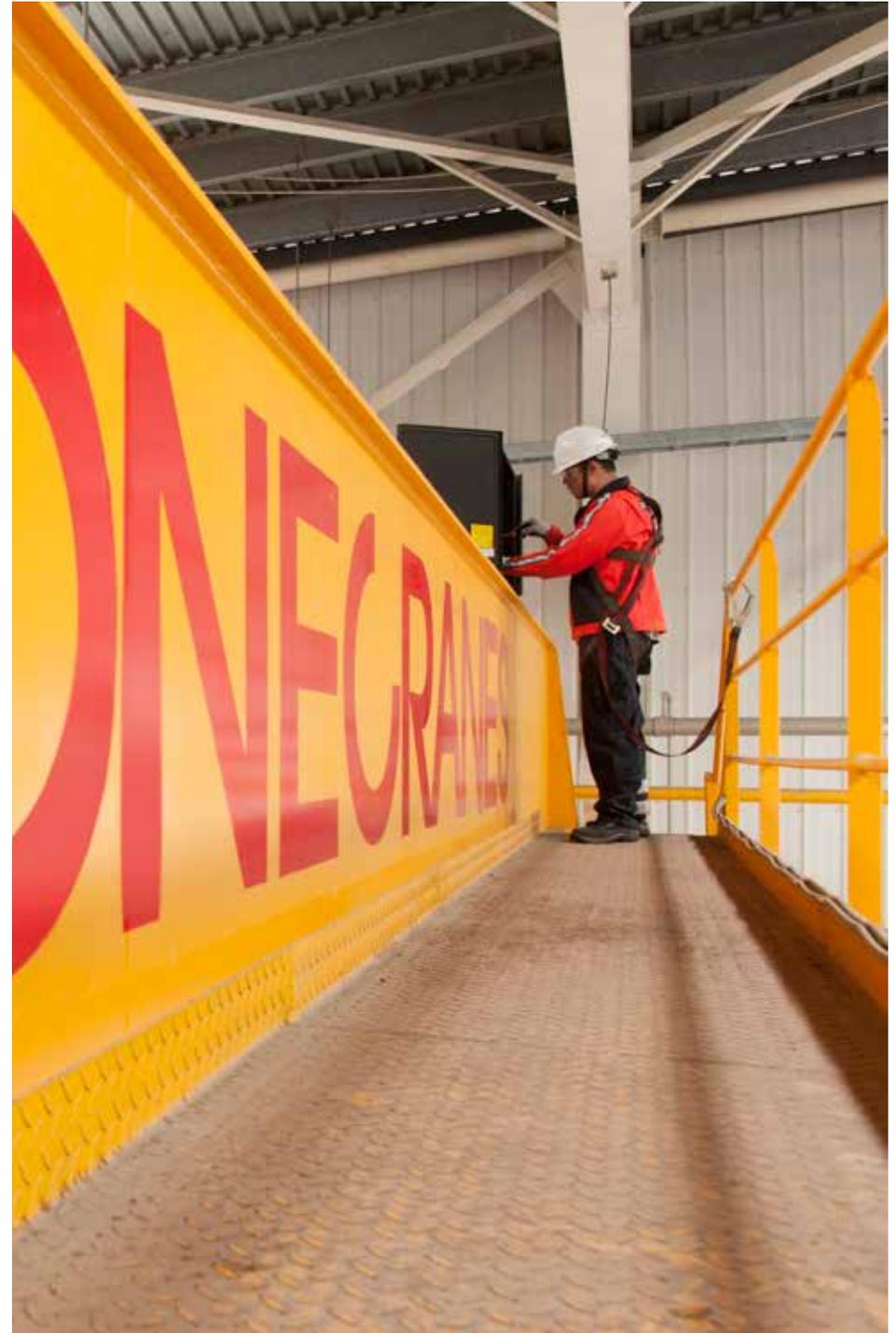
1. Establish an effective preventive maintenance program

An effective preventive maintenance program can help address potential maintenance and safety issues before they become critical and threaten employee safety, productivity and revenue. It also can help you manage your parts more efficiently.

While regularly scheduled preventive maintenance will help minimize the frequency and cost of unplanned downtime, it also helps you better plan for the parts you will need when downtime does occur.

Routine maintenance and inspections that follow manufacturers' recommendations will help you develop a schedule for when certain parts will be needed based on upcoming required maintenance. Given that routine inspections can often detect failures before they occur or develop, you might also extend the amount of time you have to secure the part you need.

While most companies have some sort of preventive maintenance program, the key is making sure that these programs work hand-in-hand with parts organizations and service departments by sharing information and developing a line of communication that improves parts management.



2. Adopt a proactive, informed approach to spare parts inventory

Many companies keep a very limited number of spare parts in inventory, if any. And often, the purchasing process tied to these parts is based more on intuition than maintenance data. Adopting a proactive approach to spare parts inventory based on statistics and best practices will help you determine the parts you are likely to need before you need them.

One effective way to develop a proactive approach to spare parts inventory is to work closely with your local crane service organization or your crane provider. Many of these third-party providers are equipped to analyze and assess your needs and help you determine which parts and how many you should have on hand in local stock levels.

If working closely with a third-party provider is not an option, the best step you can take is to use the data you have in optimizing parts purchasing and management. For instance, if you have an effective preventive maintenance program, this would include any historical maintenance data, as well as routine maintenance schedules. It is beneficial to be aware of any spare part expiration dates and which parts need to be replaced on a regular basis.



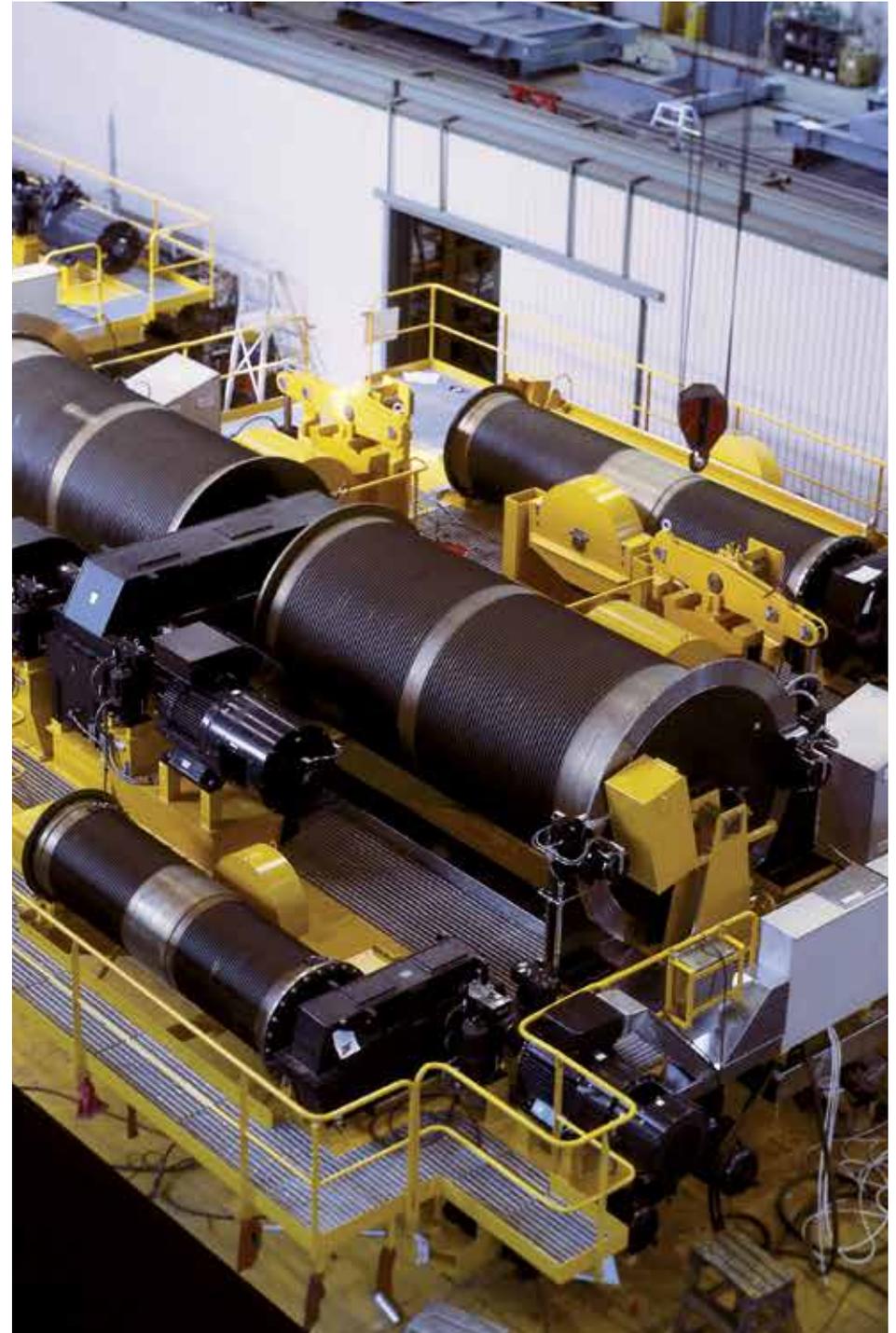
3. Understand how parts perform within the equipment

When determining which crane parts to keep on hand, it is important to understand how those parts contribute to crane operation and performance.

For instance, some companies, such as those in the steel industry, often prefer to make certain spare parts themselves rather than purchase them. This is an acceptable approach as long as you understand the behavior of the part and follow the specs established by the original parts provider so that the part is designed to perform and last as long as it should. If you do not have the capacity or expertise to engineer parts, you can work with certain third-party providers who engineer the parts to spec and then test them.

Many crane parts are designed to work together as components of assemblies. If one of those parts needs to be replaced, it is recommended that all the parts of the assembly be replaced. For example, if one of the bearings in a gearbox breaks, all bearings in the box should be replaced, as well as the seal.

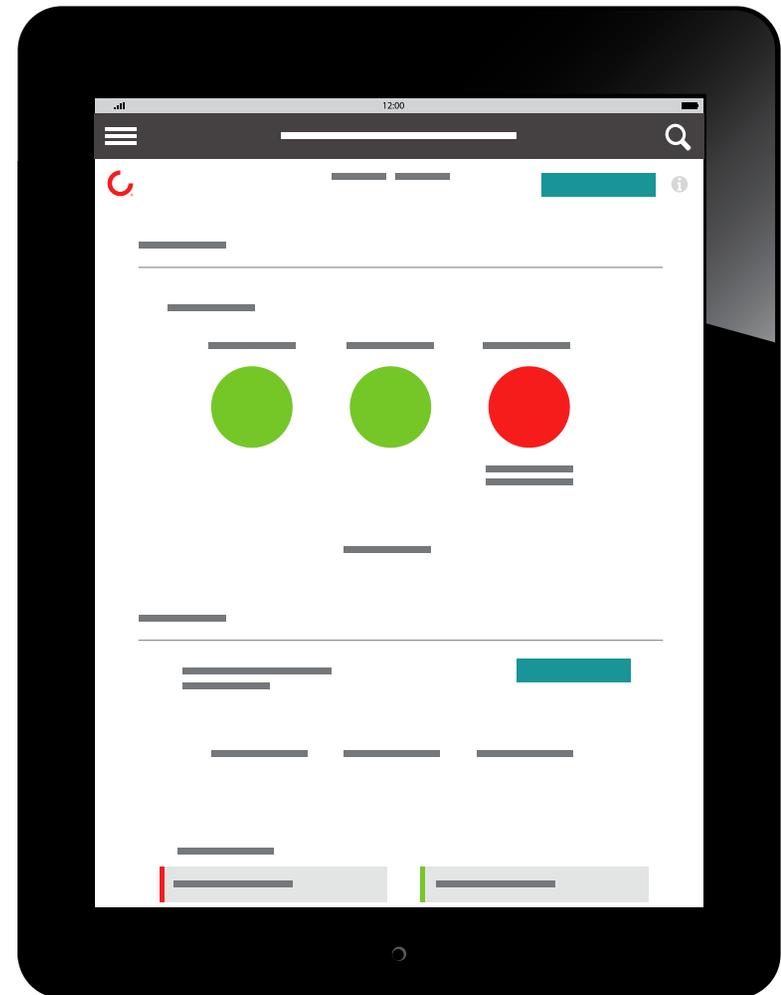
Many crane providers sell spare parts assemblies, and they can provide guidelines on which components should be replaced/purchased as parts of an assembly. This practice can also reduce overall installation time.



4. Utilize a good maintenance management software

Good maintenance management software supported by technology-enabled technicians can provide visibility into your parts needs. The technology can benefit maintenance managers and enable dynamic sharing of service information, including equipment and parts details, reports, service histories and inspection results.

Remote maintenance management technology enables technicians to think and plan ahead to help improve scheduling and planning of service calls. Utilizing the technology, a technician can typically review maintenance history and inspection reports, manuals and crane usage history, as well as input inspection data, submit quotes, order parts and schedule service calls remotely in real time. This capability means increased efficiency in the field and can reduce downtime associated with the parts ordering process.





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