

## **Eight Tips for Lowering Owning and Operating Costs for Skid Steers, CTLs**

When it comes to owning and operating costs, keeping machines properly maintained at peak operating efficiency means more money in the bank. Proactive maintenance reduces total cost of ownership and prolongs the life of the machine, saving owners and operators time and money. Here are eight tips for lowering owning and operating costs for skid steers and CTLs.

- 1. Maintain.** It's important for contractors to follow daily service checks and the hourly intervals provided in the machine's operator's manual. Taking the time to routinely perform these service checks and daily walk-arounds before beginning a day of operation could prevent costly problems in the future. Taking the time to walk around the unit will give operators the chance to notice a flat tire, or if something is lodged or frozen in the tracks that needs to be dislodged before operation.
- 2. Turns.** For those operators who work primarily on finished or hard surfaces, like concrete or pavement, it's important to utilize gradual turns versus counter rotating. Gradual turns will help prolong the life of tracks and tires.

If you work on those surfaces, it's recommended that you stick with a skid steer loader rather than a CTL. Operating a CTL on improved surfaces will lead to greater track wear and replacement, which is more expensive to replace than a skid steer tire.

- 3. Throttle.** Tier 4 technologies work more efficiently when operated at a mid to high throttle range. Operating at a minimum of half throttle keeps the engine temperatures up, allowing operators to use less fuel.
- 4. Debris.** If working in a high debris application, it is important for operators to clean or flush out the engine compartment periodically to avoid build up, which could lead to engine problems.

CASE machines come standard with a debris seal kit to help prevent build up in the engine and chassis. Also available are aspirator kits, which help limit the ingestion of debris into the engine during operation.

- 5. Features.** If you're working in rugged applications where stress/wear to the skid steer is likely, you could lower your total cost of ownership by utilizing specialty features. These features include heavy-duty front lights and rear door, a demolition front door and front cylinder guards.

Standard on large frame CASE CTLs, hose guards protect hoses that run to the tracks and are susceptible to getting hit by rocks and other debris.

6. **Telematics.** Although commonly thought of for larger equipment, telematics provides a host of benefits to smaller pieces of machinery. Telematics makes it easier for owners to keep track of the machine, which helps locate equipment that may be in need, prevent/curtail unauthorized use, and even assist in recovering stolen equipment. Owners are also able to track accumulated hours on the machine, which provides more efficient maintenance scheduling for optimal job uptime.
7. **Hydraulics.** By equipping your machine with high flow hydraulics, you're able to make your machine more profitable by giving it a larger range of applications it can handle. If your machine doesn't have high flow hydraulics, you will have to contract out anything that requires high flow attachments (such as cold planers), or you'll have to use a larger piece of equipment.
8. **Tracks.** With CTLs, it's important for operators, on a daily basis, to take a look at the tracks and clear any debris from around the sprocket. Anything that may be stuck between the chassis and the tracks could add additional wear, so efficient maintenance will ultimately prolong the life of the tracks. This is particularly important in northern climates, where frozen material stuck to the track can cause significant track damage.

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