Top 5 Beach Cleaner Cost & Maintenance Questions You Should be Asking

A primary consideration for most beach cleaner purchasers is how much the machine will cost—not only in the initial purchase, but also over time. A beach cleaner's ability to function optimally with minimal maintenance hours and costs is key to getting the job done for less. In order to help you know the right questions to ask, we've laid out the top five beach cleaner cost and maintenance questions to ask manufacturers. Feel free to comment and add other ones you feel are important!

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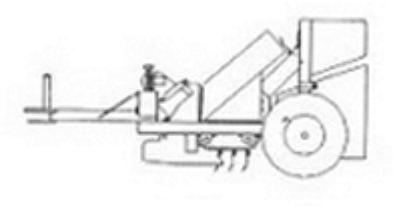
1. How many major moving parts are on the machine?



Simple Beach Cleaner Design

In general, many moving parts = many potential problems. The moving parts on beach cleaners are the components that wear out first and can be costly/time-consuming to repair. By assessing their quantity and quality, you can get a pretty good idea of how often the machine will need repairs. A good area to inquire about is the conveyor/screening system, because most major moving parts can be found there.

Ask the manufacturer of each beach cleaner about common maintenance practices, part-replacement frequency, and the costs of major moving items, like chains and screens.

2. How much of a role does vibration play in the beach cleaner's operation?

We typically equate vibration with punching your beach cleaner repeatedly where it hurts. Beach cleaners that vibrate their screens or conveyor assemblies—typically to separate sand from debris—exponentially increase the wear of the moving parts on the conveyor/screening system. The chains, especially, tend to wear much faster in beach cleaners that employ a vibrating conveyor due to increased friction from sand and metal-on-metal. This problem is exacerbated when debris, like stone, gets caught in the conveyor chains, screens, or flights, for it will literally end up vibrating holes into the components. In order to prevent such problems, you should choose a beach cleaner that does not heavily rely on vibration to get the job done.

3. What kind of corrosion protection do you offer on your machines?

Beach cleaners are exposed to some of nature's most corrosive elements including sand, water, and salt. It is imperative that they are manufactured to resist these corrosive elements. There are two components to consider:

First and foremost, the frame must be corrosion-resistant. Stainless steel is good, protective paint helps, but hot-dip galvanization is best. Check out the American Galvanization Association's **description of hot dip galvanizing** for more detailed information. Some beach cleaner manufacturers refer to their machines as galvanized, but this term can include paint or spray-on zinc coatings, which do not provide nearly as much corrosion protection as fully hot-dip-galvanized machines. This is because they only cover the outside of the frame.

Secondly, be sure not to overlook the fastening components used on the machine; such as bolts, washers, and nuts. These components should be stainless steel, as pre-mature rusting of these elements will cause larger

connected components to wear more quickly.

4. How do the beach cleaners process the sand?

Follow this general rule: Machines that perform more overall work will wear faster. More specifically, beach cleaning machines that lift more weight will wear faster. If the machine relies on sifting sand through a screen, it's lifting and processing tons of beach sand through its screen per cleaning. The added weight stresses the conveyor system, while the increased friction of processing tons of sand wears screens, chains, and other moving parts.

Therefore, it is no surprise that most sifting beach cleaners need to replace their screens every year. Due to this expendability and expectation, most screens are not stainless steel or built for the long-haul, so they can be an expected cost of operation.

Tine-raking beach cleaners stress the machine less while removing comparable amounts of debris, because their tines comb through the sand, instead of lifting the top layer of beach onto the conveyor belt. This primarily causes the tines to wear (stainless steel ones typically last aprx. 4 yrs.) instead of the entire conveyor mechanism.

While this principle should not necessarily be the basis for buying a beach cleaner, it is strong consideration when assessing the cost of maintenance.

5. What is covered by Warranty?

Despite striving for the ideal balance of the above-mentioned constructional elements, all beach cleaners, and machines for that matter, wear and require maintenance/parts every now and then. You need to know what parts are covered by warranty and for how long. Many manufacturers won't cover the moving parts that tend to wear first, because they are expected to wear. Additionally, parts orders tend to be a large part of the beach cleaning machine business, so some manufacturers may skimp on covering moving parts with warrantees in order to get more money from parts orders later on. Make sure the beach cleaner you purchase covers the majority of these items for at least a year. This can help you save thousands of dollars in maintenance costs.