Bearing Lubricant Shelf Life

Numerous factors can extend or reduce a bearings’ shelf life. The lubricants that are in the bearings that we supply are high-quality lubricants that are typically qualified to certain military lubrication specifications. However typically these have no reference to "shelf life."

Lubricant manufacturers who might make recommendations on shelf life will make those recommendations based on shelf life related only to the storage life of the lubricant in the original container. Once the lubricant has been applied to a bearing or other device, factors which the manufacturer can neither predict nor control will govern lubricant life. Therefore the onus falls upon the end user to establish a different policy regarding either storage or operating life.

Our own established control procedures dictate at 3 year intervals, or prior to dispatch, a review of packaging and lubrication is conducted. This is a scheduled time for internal review and does not presuppose that the lubricant has aged beyond its usefulness. Our policy here is that lubrication is "on-condition" unless the bearing manufacturer’s label specifically has the words "Shelf Life", "Use By", "Use Before" or similar wording.

In other words, the bearing and packaging should be evaluated by inspecting the package integrity and the visual appearance of the grease or oil for hardening, caking, discoloration, separation, etc. If the package is unbroken and the bearing lubrication appears normal, that review date of that part is extended accordingly.

It should be noted that bearings that we have in stock are inventoried in a controlled environment in sealed containers. In the event the lubrication is ever questionable, we would send the bearing out for re-lubrication.

For bearings you have that you feel do need re-lubrication, even if you didn’t buy them from us, please contact us. We would be happy to help you with your requirement.

We hope this helped in answering your question. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of additional service.