



BEARING SPECIFIC TOPICS

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BEARING BRIEFS

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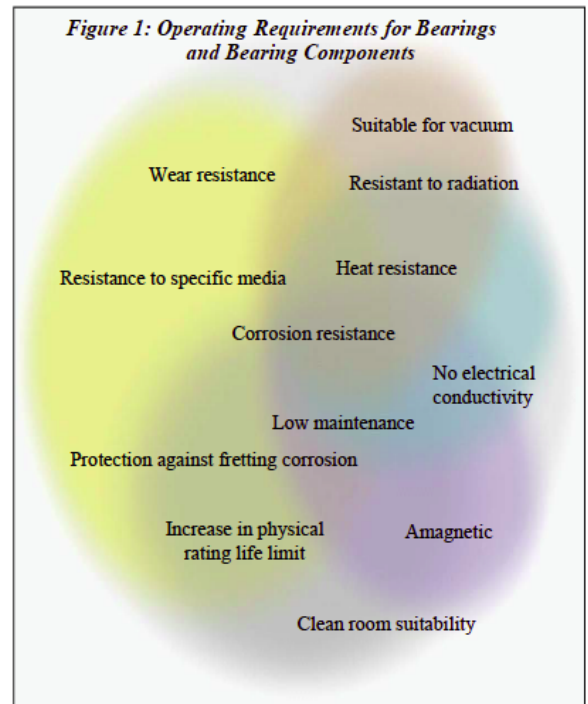
Special Coatings & Materials to Enhance Bearing Performance

Have you ever wondered why manufacturers have been able to extend the warranties or service intervals for their products? Or how an automaker can offer an unlimited powertrain warranty? Often this is because of recent advances in material science that have allowed that very essential component - the bearing - to last longer and perform better than ever before, even in environments that were, until recently, quite inhospitable to bearings.

Generally, seals are marked with either an OEM part number or a stock number. This number will tell you exactly which replacement seal is right for the application. If the part number is legible, refer to the seal manufacturer's interchange for a replacement. If an identification number can't be found, match the old seal's size with a manufacturer's size and type guide.

With the availability of higher quality bearing steel, new alloys and platings, heat treatments and microstructure control for improved service life, bearings are going into more places than ever before, while providing superior solutions and improved performance under the most demanding conditions.

Figure 1 shows the wide variety of characteristics needed by bearings in various applications. They can operate in high-tech environments or very demanding applications found in steel and paper mills. Whatever the application, there will likely be a material or plating designed specifically to allow the bearing to provide the equipment life required.



Obviously, due to the many operating conditions listed, the list of available materials is quite extensive. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, the following chart provides detail on only three key operating requirements: protection from corrosion, protection from wear and electrical conductivity protection.

Protection from corrosion and fretting corrosion

Coating types	Purpose / Advantage	Typical Applications	Typical Bearing Types
Zinc with metal alloy	Corrosion protection	Paper processing, rolling mills, automotive applications and outdoor equipment	Insert bearings, tapered roller bearings
Zinc and chrome (non ferrous materials)	Corrosion protection	Various accessories, primarily for automotive engineering	Insert bearings, tensioners
Zinc phosphate (ZnP)	Fretting corrosion Corrosion protection	Rail vehicles	Tapered roller bearing, cages sleeves, wheel bearings
Thin dense chrome (TDC)	Fretting corrosion Corrosion protection	Vibrating screen bearings, applications involving exposure to seawater	Spherical roller bearings, spindle bearings
Nickel plating	Corrosion protection	Food industry	Pillow blocks, track rollers

Protection from wear, friction and skidding

Coating types	Purpose / Advantage	Typical Applications	Typical Bearing Types
Black iron oxide	Running-in behavior oil film retention	Wind power, rail applications	Cylindrical roller bearings
Manganese phosphate (MnP)	Sliding and running in behavior	Mixer gears	Spherical roller bearings (Steel cage), adaptor sleeves
Thin dense chrome (TDC)	Wear resistance	Oscillating equipment and at risk lubrication conditions	Linear monorail systems
PTFE (Polytetrafluorethylene)	Frictional behavior	Bearings for cement mills, ship engine, suction roll	Spherical plain bearings, spherical roller bearings
PVD (physical vapor deposition)	Multi-purpose as various materials can be applied for each characteristic	Paper processing, rolling mills, automotive applications, wind, mining and outdoor equipment	Deep groove ball bearings, track rollers

Conductivity prevention

Coating types	Purpose / Advantage	Typical Applications	Typical Bearing Types
Ceramic coating of aluminum oxide	Current insulation	Electric motors, traction motors, axle box	Deep groove ball bearings, cylindrical roller bearings tapered roller bearings
Hybrid bearings using ceramic rolling elements	Current insulation	Electric motors, welding	Deep groove ball bearings

Again, the above list is not meant to be comprehensive, but a sampling of what is being used to make bearings last longer. Many materials are proprietary to specific manufacturers and their production processes. The bottom line in the evaluation of any application is the cost benefit – the improved life, and the increased vproduction time, worth the added cost of the special material.