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Cleaning of Heavy-Duty Air Filter Elements

Baldwin heavy-duty air filters will withstand washing. However, as a matter of policy Baldwin Filters, like other filter manufacturers, having no control over the washing process can not and does not recommend the washing of air filters and does not warrant filters which have been washed.

Since some vehicle owners and maintenance supervisors, concerned with lowering their operating costs, clean and reuse their heavy-duty air filter elements. Here are some factors to consider before you decide whether cleaning or washing of heavy-duty air filter elements is appropriate for your vehicle or fleet:

- Used heavy-duty air filter elements, after the most thorough cleaning, usually have 85 percent of the life when new; each subsequent cleaning yields progressively reduced dust capacity.
- Re-use of cleaned heavy-duty air filter elements, because of their shortened service life, increase the likelihood of improper air filter servicing. Each time the air intake system is serviced, it is exposed to the chance of mis-service.
- Cleaning must be done with care to avoid damaging the heavy-duty air filter element, which may cause dust leaks. Careful inspection of the cleaned filter is of crucial importance.
- Air filter element manufacturers do not warrant products once they have been cleaned.

If you desire to clean your heavy-duty air filter elements for re-use, here are two methods most commonly used:

1. It is best to use a commercial heavy-duty air filter element washing service whose operators are trained in proper washing techniques and inspection precautions. Some commercial air filter element washing services do warranty the elements they wash; select a service that does, and make sure their warranty covers repair of engine damage resulting from a defective washed element.

2. If a commercial washing service is not available, the most effective cleaning method is to soak the element in water which contains a non-sudsing detergent. Prevent dirty water from making contact with the clean side of the filter. After soaking, as previously described, rinse the element from the "clean" side to the "dirty" side to dislodge the dirt, with water pressure not exceeding 40 PSI without a nozzle. A pressure nozzle must not be used, as it may damage the filter element. After washing, the filter must be completely dry before it is placed back into service. It will dry by itself in one or two days' time, or less if special convection dryers are available for this purpose. Warm air must be circulated, with temperature less than 160°F. Do not use a light bulb to dry the element.

Inspection of the cleaned element is critically important. Inspect for holes and tears in the pleats by looking through the element toward a bright light. Any obvious damage will cause light to show through. Check for torn, loose, or partially-compressed gaskets, and for dented metal parts. If you install a replacement gasket, make sure it is of proper dimensions (cross section and diameter) and of proper durometer (resistance to compression).

Make sure the element identification part number is still visible. Mark the date of washing on the element end cover.

Filters that have passed final inspection should be placed in a sealed box and stored in a clean, dry place. For easy identification, mark the date the filter was cleaned on the outside of the storage box.

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**If you have further questions,
please contact our
Service Engineering Team at (800) 822-5394.**