Tapered Roller Bearing Damage

Recognizing causes and types of bearing damage can help you prevent further damage resulting in improved bearing life and performance.

**Fatigue Spalling**

**Geometric stress concentration (GSC):** Misalignment, system deflections and heavy loading.

**Point surface origin (PSO):** Debris and raised metal exceeding the lubricant film thickness.

**Inclusion origin:** Oxides or other hard inclusions in bearing steel.

**Deformation**

**Bearing cone (inner race) large rib face deformation:** Metal flow from excessive heat generation.

**Deformation**

**Handling Damage**

**Total bearing lock-up:** Rollers skew and slide sideways.

**Roller spaced nicking:** Raised metal on races from contact with roller edges.

**Roller nicking and denting:** Rough handling or installation damage.

**Bearing cup (outer race) face denting:** Indentations from hardened driver.
Cage Damage

- **Cage deformation:** Improperly installed or dropped bearing.
- **Rollers binding and skewing:** Cage ring compressed or interfered with during installation or service.

Excessive End Play Damage

- **Cage pocket wear:** Heavy contact between rollers and cage pocket surfaces caused by bearing operating too loosely.
- **Scalloping:** Uneven localized wear resulting from excessive end play.

Excessive Preload or Overload Damage

- **Bearing cone (inner race) bore polishing:** Contact wear and creeping on shaft caused by lack of lubrication and cone bore contraction from excessively tight setting (preload).
- **Full race width fatigue spalling:** Caused by heavy loads creating a thin lubricant film and elevated temperatures.

*Damage caused by excessive preload can appear similar to damage caused by inadequate lubrication.*

Scoring

- **Roller end scoring:** Metal-to-metal contact from breakdown of lubricant film.
- **Bearing cone (inner race) large rib face scoring:** ‘Welding’ and heat damage from metal-to-metal contact.

Improper Fit Damage

- **Bearing cone (inner race) bore damage:** Fractured cone due to out-of-round or oversized shaft.
Peeling

Micro-spalling: due to thin lubricant film from high loads and low RPM or elevated temperatures.

Foreign Material Damage

Bearing cup (outer race) spinning: Loose cup fit in a rotating wheel hub.

Abrasives wear: Fine abrasive particle contamination.

Bruising: Debris from other fatigued parts, inadequate sealing or poor maintenance.

Grooving: Large particle contamination embedding into soft cage material.

Improper Fit Damage

False Brinelling

Wear caused by vibration or relative axial movement between rollers and races.

Electric Current Damage

Electric arc pitting: Burns created by improper electric grounding while bearing is stationary.

Fluting: Series of axial burns caused by electric current passing through the bearing while rotating.
Corrosion/Etching Damage

**Staining:** Surface stain with no significant corrosion from moisture.

**Etching:** Rusting with pitting and corrosion from moisture.

**Line spalling:** Roller spaced spalling from bearings operating after etching damage.

True Brinelling

Damage from shock or impact.

Misalignment Damage

**Irregular roller path** from deflection, inaccurate machining or wear of bearing seats.

High Spots In Cup Seats

**Localized spalling** on the bearing cup (outer race) from stress riser created by split housing pinch point.

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**WARNING**

*Failure to observe the following warnings could create a risk of death or serious injury.*

Never spin a bearing with compressed air. The components may be forcefully expelled. Proper maintenance and handling practices are critical. Always follow installation instructions and maintain proper lubrication. A bearing/component should not be put into service if its shelf life has been exceeded.

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**CAUTION**

*Failure to follow these cautions may result in property damage.*

Use of improper bearing fits may cause damage to equipment. Do not use damaged bearings.

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