

The background of the entire page is a photograph of industrial machinery, likely a tablet press, in a factory or laboratory setting. The equipment is complex, with various pipes, cables, and structural frames. A blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the top half of the image, and a yellow banner is at the bottom. The text is placed on these banners.

Equipment Expertise eBook

Equipment Expertise: Inspecting a Tablet Press

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Introduction

We want to help our customers make the best choices when purchasing used equipment. Over time, we realized most of the questions our sales group receives revolve around the basic inquiry, “What do I look for when inspecting a used piece of equipment?”

With this eBook, we will focus on tablet presses—sharing tips from EquipNet Equipment Specialists who have seen more than their fair share. So without delay, here’s what your engineers, technicians, and procurement professionals should thoroughly inspect before committing to purchasing a used tablet press.

Who We Are

EquipNet is a global leader of surplus asset management solutions. We’re recognized for our proprietary asset management platform, our revolutionary industrial equipment marketplace, and our results-driven project management services. Our diverse roster of clients include Fortune 500 multi-national corporations, leading regional manufacturers, financial institutions, and corporate renewal professionals.

EquipNet solutions deliver maximized financial return while improving our client’s corporate image, adhering to their safety standards, and contributing to their sustainability initiatives.

Turret Inspection:

One of the most critical components of a tablet press is the turret. This crucial component should be the first part of the tablet press that gets your attention.

You should be looking for any signs of:

- Damage
- Wear and tear
- Rust
- Physical deformation

Aside from a basic visual inspection, turrets can also be inspected for measurement (specifically the punch bores – both upper and lower and the die pockets).

Turret Inspection:

This second inspection tip is slightly more labor-intensive and any damage present cannot be detected with the naked eye.

You will need a 'go/no go' tool to measure each bore and pocket to check for slop. A go/no go is a tool that is used to test certain parts of a tablet press (turret and tooling). There are different go/no go's for measuring the punch bores (upper and lower) in a turret. They are also made for measuring the die pockets and the tooling heads.

These tools are used to determine what parts of the machine are 'in spec' and which are 'out of spec' – you will need to check every station on a turret. All of the positions could measure out fine, or as a 'go', and will not need to be bored and bushed to bring them back to spec.

Turret Inspection:

Another good way to check the overall condition of the turret, and the tablet press as a whole, is to open the panels on the bottom of the press, revealing a hand crank for manual operation. This crank, or hand-wheel, is connected to the press's main gear box and will allow you to rotate the press, and visually confirm that it rotates smoothly and without any odd noises or delay. While performing this inspection, if you notice a delay or hear any scraping or grinding noises, then it is possible that the gear box in the press will need to be replaced or rebuilt.

Generally speaking, a visual inspection of the turret should suffice. If the turret appears to be in good condition, with no signs of wear and tear or damage, it usually indicates that the press as a whole was properly maintained throughout its usage.

Pressure Rolls Inspection:

After ensuring that the turret is in great condition, you will next want to inspect the press's pressure rolls – both the pre-compression rolls and the main compression rolls. When performing this visual inspection, you will want to look for any signs of scoring or wear. If there are signs of wear, and the pressure rolls are no longer the same measurements, both sets can be re-ground to a smooth measurement but – only to a certain diameter. If they fall below the minimum diameter they will need to be replaced.

Feed Frame Inspection:

If the turret and the pressure rollers are in good condition, the next component you will want to inspect is the feed frame.

This entails another visual inspection during which you are checking for:

- Any physical deformation
- Rust
- Materials obstructing the feeders

You will want to get as close a look as possible, as one of the most common problems associated with a malfunctioning feed frame is that there are large granules or broken tablets lodged in the feed frame, obstructing the flow of material.

Fill Cam Inspection:

The fill cams, both upper and lower, are important components to a functional tablet press. Unfortunately, due to the nature of their task, they wear away quickly.

Although it is not crucial that the cams be in pristine condition, it is important to note what condition they are in since that fact is usually an indication on how the press was maintained and whether or not it was properly cleaned during its period of usage. Fortunately, even if the cams are in horrible condition, and the rest of the press seems to be in great condition, the cams can be easily replaced.

Hoppers and Chutes Inspection:

The last part of your inspection could easily be your first; however we wanted to list these tips in order of importance.

With regard to the used press's hoppers and chutes, you will want to ensure that both are installed securely and intact, with no signs of cracks or holes. In order to be sure that the hopper and chutes are in good condition and properly installed, you will want to visually check the tablet press for signs of any spillage. The presence of tablet ingredients outside of the hoppers and chutes could indicate a leak somewhere in the system.

With these tips in mind, you will be able to gauge the quality of a used tablet press before putting any money on the table, ultimately enabling you to make the right decision, the first time.

Maintenance Records, Manuals, and the Type of Controls:

After closely inspecting all of the above, you will want to ask the seller of the press for any documentation they have that detail their efforts to provide consistent and regularly scheduled preventative maintenance to the tablet press and all of its individual components.

This is crucial since even the best naked-eye inspection can overlook or simply miss indicators of problems lurking inside the press.

Maintenance Records, Manuals, and the Type of Controls:

You will want to request the OEM's manual for the press. This is less important than the maintenance records, since even if they do not have the manual, you can, in most cases, visit the OEM's website to download the manual. But nonetheless, if the seller still has the original manual that came with the press, it is likely they treated their press with care and used it within the guidelines of the manufacturer.

Lastly, you will want to take note of what type of controls accompany the press. This is mostly a matter of preference, as some tablet presses come with slick, digital, touch screen displays, while others (usually the older models) come with analog controls, complete with seemingly outdated knobs and buttons.

In the market for a pre-owned tablet press? Contact EquipNet today and we can help you find what you are looking for:

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