Congratulations. You now own an operable partition. Hopefully the one you purchased is designed to be as maintenance free as possible (see previous blog here).

All operable partitions (moveable walls, air-walls, operable walls etc.), whether manually or electrically operated, from all manufacturer’s have similar characteristics and features such as flat panel surfaces covered with an aesthetically pleasing covering, track & trollies, panel perimeter acoustic seals, some form of final closure plus accessories such as pocket doors, pass doors, writing surfaces etc. An operable partition is an expensive dynamic building component that is often subject to significant operator abuse and wear and therefore has to be maintained in order to keep it in optimum working condition. What can you as the owner/operator do to protect your investment and ensure that your wall is as maintenance free as possible?

**The Best Option**

The absolute best decision that you can make as it pertains to maintaining your partition is to sign a service and maintenance contract with your local Moderco distributor. For an agreed upon fixed fee, he will:

- Provide you with a detailed plan of your operable partitions identifying each with a number. By doing so and providing Moderco with the plan this will simplify future communications.
- Provide you with specific information about each partition including manufacturer (if not Moderco), size and type, information about seals, coverings, accessories etc.
- Provide you with inspection dates, results of all inspections including any unsafe conditions, action taken, general condition of partitions, recommendations for any additional capital expenses, steps that should be undertaken by owner personnel plus other pertinent information as well as train new personnel in proper operation of the partition and accessories. Subject to certain conditions the distributor will provide you with a 3 month warranty on all new parts provided and a 6 month warranty on all work performed.

The above is not a guarantee against failure or damage but is simply an important asset in the effective
management of your facility. As it is with cars, planned maintenance will extend the life of your partitions, prevent unexpected repairs and reduce downtimes.

**The Next Best Option**

Other than working with an operable partition professional it is suggested that you establish a regular internal inspection & maintenance program that should include, as a minimum, the following:

**Inspection Process**

Every 6 months carefully inspect the operable partitions noting damaged or malfunctioning components. In particular check:

- Track, Trollies, Intersections, Stacking areas, Support systems.
- Panel perimeter acoustical seals
- Panel skins and coverings
- Accessories including pass doors, pocket doors, writing surfaces, fixed wall jambs

Moderco can provide you with a check list of items & features that you should inspect. Please call 1 800 363-3150.

**Inspection, Maintenance & Repairs that can be accomplished by owner’s personnel.**

- **Clean or replace panel surfaces:** The most common coverings are the manufacturer’s standard vinyl, carpet or fabrics. Since covering materials & their compositions vary it would be best to identify the surface stain, contact the manufacturer and request a suggested cleaning method and cleanser. Aluminum trim can be cleaned with a solution of mild soap and water.
- **Recover:** If panels have to be recovered it is suggested that you contact your Moderco distributor in order to determine what type of adhesive was used and to purchase materials that are compatible to the application. Most often however having a professional strip the panels and do the recover is the least costly and most advantageous time wise so we suggest you contact the Moderco distributor for all recover needs.
- **Clean & Lubricate Track:** Clean the track running surface with a rag dampened with mineral spirits. Then apply a “light” coat of a petroleum jelly along entire length. If unsure of what lubricants to use contact the Moderco distributor. Check trolleys for unusual wear. (It is not all track types that need to be lubricated)
- **Check for acoustic leaks:** The fastest way to locate sound leaks in the panel system is to put the
wall in place. Turn on all lights on one side and then go to the other and see where you can see light. These are the locations where sound leakage is occurring. Refer to your operating instructions and ensure that the wall is set up properly, that all seals & closures are in place, that pass doors and pocket doors are in place etc. Conduct the light test again. If there is little improvement call your Moderco distributor for assistance. Remember though that if there are only a few light leaks check the laboratory tested STC of the partition. It may be working acoustically as best it can if a low STC partition was purchased. Also ensure that there is an acoustical bulkhead above the partition so that the sound you hear is not traveling over the top.

Maintenance and repair that will require a Moderco distributor

- **Check panel skins** for damage such as breakage or indentations. Contact manufacturer for suggested ways to repair or replace skins.
- **Inspect the panel perimeter trim and acoustical seals**. Top seals are fixed sweeps that are in constant contact with the track or retractable by means of a removable handle. Base seals are always retractable by means of a lever or handle or automatically by manually moving each panel. In either case, if any seals are not operating properly, it is best to call the local Moderco distributor as special tools and knowledge is required to make repairs. Many seals have internal skin mechanisms that can be harmful if not released properly. In some cases panel faces must be removed to adjust mechanisms within the panel cavity.
- **“Ice cream coning”**. Look at panels. If they are together at the top but separated at the base in the shape of an “upside down ice cream cone”, this indicates that the trolleys are working themselves loose from the panels resulting in a possibly dangerous condition. This condition could also indicate that the track needs to be releveled. In either case contact your Moderco distributor for remedial action.
- **Trolley Replacement**. Do not attempt to repair or replace defective trolleys. This requires specific knowledge about attachment and as well as special tools to facilitate repairs. The panels are extremely heavy and removing or adjusting trolleys can be dangerous. Do not lubricate trolleys until you check with Moderco. Certain types of lubricants or grease will not improve movement and in fact may make movement more difficult.
- **Miscellaneous Needs**. Checking hinges and hinge pins, checking track alignment, repairing soffit, adjusting pass doors, adjusting final closure methods, pocket door issues, latches & jambs is best left to the Moderco distributor.
The bottom line is that, regardless of whether you have a maintenance contract with someone, have a contractor in to facilitate repairs as required or do the maintenance in house, it is important to be proactive in the care of your operable partition. Doing so will extend the useful life of the partition and decrease the expense of long term repairs. Contact Moderco 1-800 363-3150 for the name of the nearest qualified maintenance/repair contractor in your area.

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