9.2.11 Case Studies

Combustion Efficiency of a Natural Gas Boiler (OIT 2001)

A study of combustion efficiency of a 300 hp natural-gas-fired heating boiler was completed. Flue gas measurements were taken and found a temperature of 400°F and a percentage of oxygen of 6.2%. An efficient, well-tuned boiler of this type and size should have a percent oxygen reading of about 2% – corresponding to about 10% excess air. This extra oxygen in the flue gas translates into excess air (and its heat) traveling out of the boiler system – a waste of energy.

The calculated savings from bringing this boiler to the recommended oxygen/excess air level was about $730 per year. The cost to implement this action included the purchase of an inexpensive combustion analyzer costing $500. Thus, the cost savings of $730 would pay for the implementation cost of $500 in about 8 months. Added to these savings is the ability to tune other boilers at the site with this same analyzer.

9.2.12 Boiler Checklist, Sample Boiler Maintenance Log, and Water Quality Test

Description	Comments	Maintenance Frequency			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
Boiler use/sequencing	Turn off/sequence unnecessary boilers	X			
Overall visual inspection	Complete overall visual inspection to be sure all equipment is operating and safety systems are in place	X			
Follow manufacturer's recommended procedures in lubricating all components	Compare temperatures with tests performed after annual cleaning	X			
Check steam pressure	Is variation in steam pressure as expected under different loads? Wet steam may be produced if the pressure drops too fast	X			
Check unstable water level	Unstable levels can be a sign of contaminates in feedwater, overloading of boiler, equipment malfunction	X			
Check burner	Check for proper control and cleanliness	X			
Check motor condition	Check for proper function temperatures	X			
Check air temperatures in boiler room	Temperatures should not exceed or drop below design limits	X			
Boiler blowdown	Verify the bottom, surface and water column blow downs are occurring and are effective	X			

Boiler Checklist (contd)

Description	Comments	Maintenance Frequency			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
Boiler logs	Keep daily logs on: • Type and amount of fuel used • Flue gas temperature • Makeup water volume • Steam pressure, temperature, and amount generated Look for variations as a method of fault detection	X			
Check oil filter assemblies	Check and clean/replace oil filters and strainers	X			
Inspect oil heaters	Check to ensure that oil is at proper temperature prior to burning	X			
Check boiler water treatment	Confirm water treatment system is functioning properly	X			
Check flue gas temperatures and composition	Measure flue gas composition and temperatures at selected firing positions – recommended O_2% and CO_2% Fuel — O_2% — CO_2% Natural gas — 1.5 — 10 No. 2 fuel oil — 2.0 — 11.5 No. 6 fuel oil — 2.5 — 12.5 Note: percentages may vary due to fuel composition variations		X		
Check all relief valves	Check for leaks		X		
Check water level control	Stop feedwater pump and allow control to stop fuel flow to burner. Do not allow water level to drop below recommended level.		X		
Check pilot and burner assemblies	Clean pilot and burner following manufacturer's guidelines. Examine for mineral or corrosion buildup.		X		
Check boiler operating characteristics	Stop fuel flow and observe flame failure. Start boiler and observe characteristics of flame.		X		
Inspect system for water/ steam leaks and leakage opportunities	Look for: leaks, defective valves and traps, corroded piping, condition of insulation		X		
Inspect all linkages on combustion air dampers and fuel valves	Check for proper setting and tightness		X		
Inspect boiler for air leaks	Check damper seals		X		
Check blowdown and water treatment procedures	Determine if blowdown is adequate to prevent solids buildup			X	
Flue gases	Measure and compare last month's readings flue gas composition over entire firing range			X	

Boiler Checklist (contd)

Description	Comments	Maintenance Frequency			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
Combustion air supply	Check combustion air inlet to boiler room and boiler to make sure openings are adequate and clean			X	
Check fuel system	Check pressure gauge, pumps, filters and transfer lines. Clean filters as required.			X	
Check belts and packing glands	Check belts for proper tension. Check packing glands for compression leakage.			X	
Check for air leaks	Check for air leaks around access openings and flame scanner assembly.			X	
Check all blower belts	Check for tightness and minimum slippage.			X	
Check all gaskets	Check gaskets for tight sealing, replace if do not provide tight seal			X	
Inspect boiler insulation	Inspect all boiler insulation and casings for hot spots			X	
Steam control valves	Calibrate steam control valves as specified by manufacturer			X	
Pressure reducing/regulating	Check for proper operation valves			X	
Perform water quality test	Check water quality for proper chemical balance			X	
Clean water side surfaces	Follow manufacturer's recommendation on cleaning and preparing water side surfaces				X
Clean fire side	Follow manufacturer's recommendation on cleaning and preparing fire side surfaces				X
Inspect and repair refractories on fire side	Use recommended material and procedures				X
Relief valve	Remove and recondition or replace				X
Feedwater system	Clean and recondition feedwater pumps. Clean condensate receivers and deaeration system				X
Fuel system	Clean and recondition system pumps, filters, pilot, oil preheaters, oil storage tanks, etc.				X
Electrical systems	Clean all electrical terminals. Check electronic controls and replace any defective parts.				X
Hydraulic and pneumatic valves	Check operation and repair as necessary				X
Flue gases	Make adjustments to give optimal flue gas composition. Record composition, firing position, and temperature.				X
Eddy current test	As required, conduct eddy current test to assess tube wall thickness				X