Spring is in the air, and even if you are in a northern state you’ve probably been out washing by now. Did you tune-up your machine last fall when you stowed it or this spring when you got it out? If you are in a warmer state, do you do a tune-up annually or oftener?

Yes, you know your equipment and can usually tell if it’s not running right. But isn’t it worth the checking if you might catch a developing problem before it blossoms into a machine breakdown?

In addition, consider this: Suppose a customer or employee is injured due to a machine malfunction. It seems likely that if you get sued, being able to produce a dated checklist showing that the machine was examined thoroughly would help to establish your concern for safety.

The generic checklist you’ll find here is not intended to be used as-is. You should use it for whatever help it can be to make up your own. You can make up different versions for different machines, or you can make up an all-purpose list and use only the applicable parts for each piece of equipment.

Our sample checklist is divided into two major sections: physical inspections and running checks.

Notes
Here are some notes regarding the checklist. First and foremost is to heed the warning not to attempt something for which you haven’t been trained. Where do you get trained? If you bought your equipment from a distributor, this can be an opportunity to let the distributor show his or her value to you by providing competent maintenance training.

You may not be equipped for some of the indicated checking, such as fuel pressure (oil or gas), engine rpm, or electrical amp draw. Your distributor should be suitably equipped and able to do such checks rather quickly.

It’s easiest to construct your customized checklist(s), if you keep in mind that a pressure washer can be thought of as having several subsystems, such as water system, chemical system, electrical system, and heating system.

Each of those subsystems can be thought of as having a starting point and an ending point. For example, the water system starts at the inlet and ends at the spray nozzle. The heating fuel system starts at the fuel tank and ends at the burner. Construct your checklist to correspond with the end-to-end layout of each subsystem.

If your machine’s discharge pressure or temperature should slowly decline, it can drop quite a bit before you will notice. One piece of test equipment you should own is a quick-coupled pressure gauge, or a temperature-and-pressure gauge set if you use hot water.

A seemingly innocent source of pressure decline is nozzle wear. Your pump can only put horsepower into the water to the extent that the nozzle restricts the water flow. As a nozzle wears, it restricts the water flow less, and the pump puts correspondingly less horsepower into the water flow. The more the nozzle wears, the lower your production rate. If your pressure is down, before you do anything else, swap in a new nozzle and see if the reading returns to normal.

Another basic item is a tire air gauge. Keeping pneumatic tires fully aired-up can make a big difference in how hard it is to push or pull a machine over dirt or gravel.

A final note regarding oil-fired hot water machines, even plastic fuel tanks accumulate moisture because of condensation. Use a drum pump to pull a sample from the bottom of the tank.
## Sample Tune-Up Checklist
(Not all items apply to a given machine.)

### I. Physical Inspection

**Water System**
- 1. __ External water filter or screen
- 2. __ Garden hose washer in inlet hose connection
- 3. __ Float valve: adjustment and condition
- 4. __ Float tank: clean?
- 5. __ Suction screen
- 6. __ Any other screens in water system. (Some machines have a screen in the high pressure portion.)
- 7. __ Suction hose
- 8. __ Pump crankcase oil level and condition
- 9. __ Pump and unloader: evidence of leaks?
- 10. __ Scale in outlet opening?
- 11. __ Chemical system: tubing, strainer/check valve
- 12. __ High pressure hose, gun, wand, nozzles

**Burner System (Oil-Fired)**
- 1. __ Sample of fuel from bottom of fuel tank
- 2. __ Fuel filter condition
- 3. __ Burner fan, electrodes, fuel nozzle, air cone clean?
- 4. __ Coll: soot?
- 5. __ Spray pattern clean and steady
- 6. __ Output pressure
- 7. __ Steam mode pressure
- 8. __ Oil burner fuel pressure
- 9. __ Oil burner air intake: clean? setting?
- 10. __ Gas burner: pilot ignition
- 11. __ Gas burner: pilot flame height
- 12. __ Gas pressure at burner
- 13. __ Steam mode output temperature
- 14. __ Thermostat/temp. control operation
- 15. __ Chemical system operation
- 16. __ Chemical injector operation
- 17. __ Engine rpm
- 18. __ Electrical: ___ amps at ___ volts
- 19. __ Indicator lights and meters
- 20. __ Shutdown timer
- 21. __ Relief valve setting (may be factory set)
- 22. __ Any fluid leaks:
  - gun
  - wand
  - high pressure hoses (including internal)
  - couplers
  - pump head
  - unloader
  - relief valve
  - pressure switch, flow switch, or vac switch

This checklist is a reminder list, not how-to instructions. Do not perform any checks, maintenance, or repairs for which you have not been trained!

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