

Post-Harvest Checklist

By May or June of next year, too much time has passed to remember all the details of the prior year's harvest. From an operational standpoint, June is generally too late to be starting the process of preparing for harvest.

The goals of building this checklist is to help prepare and be a bit more strategic. With over a decade of combined service experience in our shop, 48 of it in one guy, we have seen it all. A lot of this list has nothing to do with what Tanktemp does...

Any high-level planning should happen some time other than during harvest. The objective is to eliminate points of failure in the workflow. In the panic, emergencies, long hours and lack of sleep, just thinking can be difficult during crush. Everyone has trouble remembering exact details six months after the fact, so plan now... Make notes of what didn't work this harvest and plan to correct it.

The Checklist

Right after harvest (By May or June, too much time has passed to remember all the details of the prior harvest.)

- Conduct harvest post-mortem
- Equipment inventory - note any equipment that's lost, broken or otherwise in need of replacement
- Schedule repairs and maintenance. Winterize your chiller.
- Run heater equipment

Winter

- Budget for and purchase any new, big-ticket, crush and lab equipment
- Schedule upfits and big projects
- Installs and plumbing project are great here. Projects aren't rushed and are ready for when you need them.
- Check glycol brix in chiller. Prepare for cold stabilization.
- Visually inspect the units, looking specifically for leaks; and shutdown equipment not in use.

Spring

- Preliminary orders. A lot of big orders can take months to build.
- Order non-perishable fermentation supplies (oak, fining agents, rice hulls)
- Schedule repairs and maintenance. Test run everything. Make sure your glycol levels are right. Solenoid valves and pumps are running and the tank jackets are working right
- Replace refractometers (at least every two to three years).
- Check glycol brix in chiller and full pre-season maintenance of unit. (Some compressors and parts can be 6-8 weeks out especially on larger units)

Summer

- Scale recertification (if needed)
- Begin harvest safety training for new and temporary employees
- Rent additional forklift for harvest (if needed)
- Replace pH and NH₄⁺ probes in lab
- Replace analytical enzymes for winery lab
- Schedule repairs and maintenance. Test run everything
- Check all scales, hoists, forklifts, as well as all crush pad equipment, to verify function and cleanliness
- Scheduled replacement for press bladders and peristaltic pump tubes (if needed)
- Order enzymes, yeast and malolactic bacteria inoculants
- Throw out last year's leftover rice hulls, oak chips (if more than six months old)
- Restock winery laboratory supplies
- Restock cleaning and sanitation supplies
- Annual maintenance for all forklifts (lift-trucks)
- Check glycol brix in chiller and full pre-season maintenance of unit. (Some compressors and parts can be 6-8 weeks out especially on larger units)

One month before harvest

- Plan for back-up hot water pressure washer or steam generator
- Plan for back-up forklift (may have to be scheduled weeks in advance)
- Disassemble, clean and verify function of all crush equipment that will come into contact with grapes (crush line, sumps, pumps and presses)
- Check and adjust SO₂ for all wines that will remain in-barrel during harvest
- Run test chiller to temp under load, check full system. Like a race car you want it ready for race days
- Every service tech is normally booked up this time of year, be prepared for that

One week before harvest

- Clean and sanitize harvest bins
- Top all barrels
- Clean and sanitize fermenters and press
- Run test chiller to temp, check full system. Like a race car you want it ready for race days.
- Every service tech is normally booked up this time of year, be prepared for that.

One day before harvest

- Sanitize the entire crush line from receiving hopper to fermenter
- This is not the time to turn everything on for the first time...
- Every service tech is normally booked up this time of year, be prepared for that.