

Willard Says.....

Why a speedometer?
Why not a velocity meter?

Speed Kills

We all drive vehicles and we are all deluged with the slogan, "Speed Kills."

Most of us get into our cars and take off almost automatically. Buckle seat belt—check. Engine starts and runs—check. Automatic alarms are silent—check. Fuel level good—check. Immediate path is clear—check. Cross traffic noted and accommodated—check. We enter and move down the street with little thought of how we got there.

Our many years of driving experience enables us to sense—hear, see and feel—that our relatively slow speed is appropriate for conditions.

When we reach the open road, however, our sensory inputs serve less well as our speed increases. At highway speeds we cannot have complete confidence that the rate we are going is correct for the place and conditions. How fast does the law say we can go? How fast can we go without being stopped? How fast do we want to go?

Wrong-speed penalties range from going too slow and arriving late at our destination, getting rear-ended, having an accident or being arrested for going too fast. Such penalties dictate that we know how fast we are going.

And how do we find out how fast we are going? Of course! We look at the speedometer on the dashboard. And we continue to refer to it and adjust our speed or we set the cruise control.

And now you may ask, "What does all this stuff about driving have to do with dredges?"

Quite a lot I think.

The need for a speedometer in a car or a velocity meter—a type of speedometer—on a dredge are quite similar. Failure to use either meter usually results in penalties that can be quite severe. We have already mentioned some of the penalties that may result from inattention to speed on the roadway.

Let us consider how ignorance of speed (pipeline velocity) penalizes a dredger. Note that I said **penalizes**, no weasel words such as might or may or could. There is no question in this matter: The lack of a velocity meter DOES cost dredgers money.

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“Speed—high velocity—Kills” dredgers in the following ways:

- Operator has no clue as to the velocity!
- Makes maximum production impossible!
- Increases the rate of wear on the dredge pump!
- Wastes energy!
- Flow into the process plant fluctuates widely!
- Full utilization of a long discharge pipe is not possible!
- Pump drive motor overload is common!
- Makes it mandatory to pump excess water!
- Prevents maximum efficiency!
- Cannot use a velocity cruise control system!

“Speed—low velocity—Kills” dredgers in the following ways!

- Discharge pipeline plugs!
- Suction pipe plugs!
- Puny production rates!

For less than \$4,000 the problems noted above can be avoided. The cost can be recovered in only a few weeks or sometimes days. Having paid for itself in short order, increased profits are yours to keep.

Would you buy a vehicle that does not have a speedometer? Why on earth would you continue to operate a dredge without a velocity meter and let it pick your pocket every day?

Contact willard@willardsays.com with questions, comment or criticism.