

EDDIE'S CORNER



With more than three decades in the industry, Eddie Garcés, vice president of Olympus Medical Equipment Services America, is our resident guru on all facets of service and repair.

Maximize the Utility of Your Repair Dollars

Have you ever purchased something because the price was just “too good to pass up” only to find it quickly broke, wore out or otherwise disappointed you? That jigsaw that dulls after three uses. Or those “50% off” shoes that prove to be too uncomfortable to wear. When you evaluate your purchase based on how much use you actually got out of it, suddenly “too good to pass up” becomes “what a waste of money.”

I have seen similar scenarios with third-party repairs, and many of our customers have experienced this type of disappointment firsthand. Seemingly attractive third-party pricing

and contracts are hard to ignore with today’s pressure to reduce operational costs. The problem, of course, is that the price for a repair is just what you pay for that individual repair process. It doesn’t reflect the additional long-term costs associated with “bargain” repairs.

To understand the true cost of any repair (or the utility of each dollar spent) and the impact on operational efficiency, other factors need to be considered, including:

a) Frequency of repeat repairs: How many times does the scope go back for the same problem? Recurring repair expenses can really add up over time and contribute to overall downtime

Weighing in on Prevention

The old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is certainly true when it comes to repair prevention on your medical equipment. There are three key areas we can look at that can be of great help in your repair reduction strategies:

1 Prescribed Use and Handling: Ensure that everyone on staff who comes in contact with your equipment understands and follows prescribed use and handling protocols. Never force buttons, switches or angu-

lation capabilities during use. Avoid coiling insertion tubes too tightly or transporting equipment and accessories together in the same carrying basins. Store endoscopes in a clean, ventilated, uncluttered cabinet. And check work areas (sinks, drains, countertops) periodically for sharp edges that might damage equipment. In sum, be gentle.

2 Proper Reprocessing: Reprocessing is not only vital to guard patient safety, it can protect the longevity of your equipment as well. Leakage test

for the instrument with the result being cancelled procedures and decreased productivity.

b) Related repairs: Did a substandard repair for one thing cause damage to another component? For example, replacement of the bending section covering with a generic part could compromise the scope’s angulation capabilities, causing the angulation wires to stretch or break.



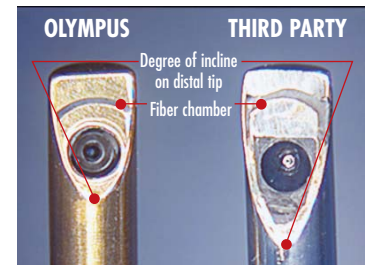
Angulation wire subassembly

c) Clinical performance: Did the repair process alter the performance characteristics of the scope? For instance, an aftermarket insertion tube could make the navigation of the instrument through the intestinal tract much more difficult, or a third-party distal tip on a surgical telescope could impact its atraumatic design and change its angle of view. If clinical performance is impacted, a residual effect could be that the



Insertion tubes

scope’s utilization rate declines as physicians and surgeons opt to wait for more desirable instruments, thus impacting your productivity once again.



d) Device life cycle and patient safety: Will the repair compromise the integrity of the device in clinical applications? Deviations from approved OEM parts, materials and processes may shorten the useful life of the instrument and could pose patient safety risks.

Like many things, cost is multifaceted. Make sure to look at all aspects of your repair expenditures when evaluating the best long-term solution for your facility.

your equipment prior to reprocessing to avoid fluid invasion. Check for proper dilutions of detergent and use only endoscope-compatible liquid chemical germicides that have been tested for proper potencies—this will ensure the efficacy of the detergent and germicide and minimize wear and tear on your equipment.

3 Preventive Maintenance: Regularly check water-tight caps, pistons and visible seals for wear and tear.* Fix minor damage quickly before it esca-

lates into a major repair. These precautions can extend your equipment’s usable life and avoid more costly repairs down the road.

Let’s face it, the best repair is no repair.

** Olympus performs preventive maintenance repairs, as needed and at no charge, for all equipment sent in to any of our service centers.*

Eddie