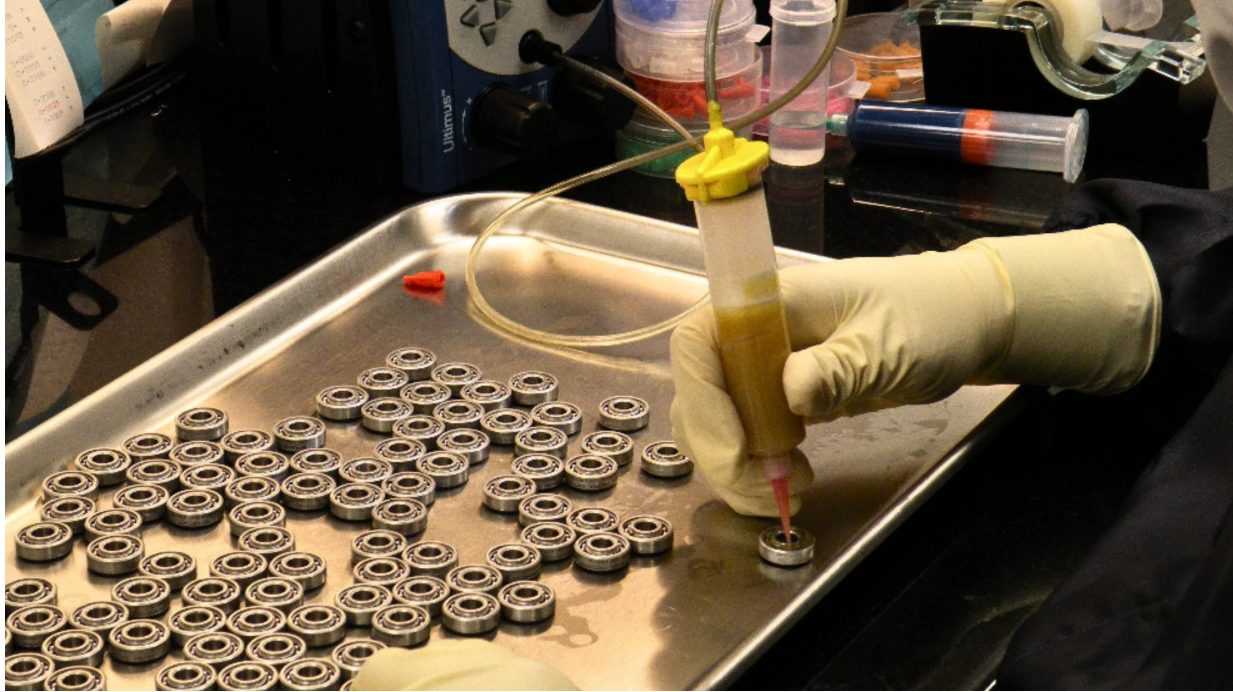


# Re-Lubrication vs. Lubricated-for-Life Bearings: Trade-offs

Samantha Scroggins | July 30, 2026



Lubrication plays a critical role in bearing performance, operating life, and long-term equipment reliability. Whether a bearing is serviced through re-lubrication or specified with a lubricated-for-life solution depends on the application, operating environment, maintenance objectives, and lubricant requirements.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Different equipment, operating conditions, and performance expectations require different lubrication strategies to achieve reliable, consistent operation throughout a bearing's service life.

For more than 40 years, IBSCO has specialized in bearing lubrication and re-lubrication services. Backed by more than 80 years of combined team experience, our ISO 14644-1:2015 Class 6 certified cleanroom, factory-authorized manufacturer approvals, and access to more than 800 lubricants help customers prepare bearings for demanding OEM and MRO applications across aerospace, medical, industrial manufacturing, and other precision-driven industries.

## Understanding Bearing Lubrication Strategies

Bearing lubrication strategies are selected based on how the equipment operates and the performance requirements of the application.

Some bearings are specified with lubricants intended to support long operating intervals, while others benefit from re-lubrication using application-specific grease or oil before installation or during maintenance activities. Selecting the appropriate approach depends on factors such as operating conditions, lubricant

specifications, contamination control, and maintenance requirements rather than a single universal solution.

## **Why Lubrication Matters**

Proper lubrication helps bearings operate efficiently by reducing friction, managing heat, protecting against corrosion, and supporting smooth, consistent operation.

Lubricant selection also influences long-term reliability, particularly in applications operating under demanding environmental conditions or requiring specialized performance characteristics. Choosing the appropriate lubricant and applying it with controlled handling procedures helps maintain bearing integrity throughout storage, installation, and operation.

## **Key Factors That Influence Lubrication Decisions**

Several considerations help determine the most appropriate lubrication approach for a specific application.

### **Operating Environment**

Temperature, moisture, contamination exposure, and operating conditions all influence lubricant selection. Bearings operating in highly controlled environments often require handling procedures that minimize particulate contamination throughout the lubrication process.

### **Lubricant Requirements**

Different applications require different lubricant characteristics. IBSCO supports customers with more than 800 lubricants, including oils, greases, synthetics, food-grade lubricants, dry film solutions, protective coatings, electrically conductive greases, corrosion solutions, and Lube-for-Life lubricants to match specific operating requirements.

### **Bearing Configuration**

IBSCO provides re-lubrication services for miniature bearings, ball bearings, roller bearings, airframe control bearings, rod ends, needle bearings, cam followers, thin section bearings, and many additional bearing types. The company's capabilities include both removable and non-removable bearing designs across a wide range of applications.

### **Precision Fill Requirements**

Some applications require highly controlled lubricant quantities. IBSCO provides exact fill amounts down to 1 milligram, helping customers meet application-specific lubrication requirements with consistent processing procedures.

## **Why Controlled Lubrication Matters**

The lubrication process involves much more than applying grease or oil.

Cleaning, inspection, lubricant selection, fill quantity, contamination control, packaging, and documentation all contribute to preparing bearings for demanding operating environments. IBSCO performs these processes within an ISO 14644-1:2015 Class 6 certified cleanroom with Class 5 bench-level capabilities and MIL-DTL-197 bench-level capability, helping reduce contamination while supporting rigorous quality

requirements.

## **Why Customers Partner with IBSCO**

IBSCO provides lubrication solutions designed to support OEM production, MRO operations, and highly regulated industries where precision, cleanliness, and documentation are essential.

### **Advanced Lubrication Capabilities**

IBSCO maintains more than 800 lubricants in stock, including oils, greases, synthetics, food-grade lubricants, dry film solutions, protective coatings, corrosion solutions, electrically conductive greases, and Lube-for-Life lubricants. Exact fill quantities down to 1 milligram allow bearings to be prepared for precise application requirements.

### **Cleanroom Processing**

All lubrication services are performed using controlled cleaning, inspection, lubrication, and packaging procedures within an ISO Class 6 cleanroom supported by Class 5 bench capabilities. These processes help maintain cleanliness while supporting documentation and product traceability for demanding applications.

### **OEM and MRO Support**

IBSCO supports both OEM production and maintenance operations with factory-certified lubrication services for manufacturers including NMB, NHBB, Myonic, and RBC. Additional services include ultrasonic cleaning, custom labeling, specialized packaging, kitting, and next-day service for qualifying requirements.

Looking for a lubrication solution that aligns with your equipment requirements and operating environment?

Connect with the IBSCO team to discuss lubricant specifications, cleanroom processing, documentation requirements, and application objectives.

## **Source**

<https://www.ibsco.com/re-lubrication-vs-lubricated-for-life-bearings-trade-offs/>