

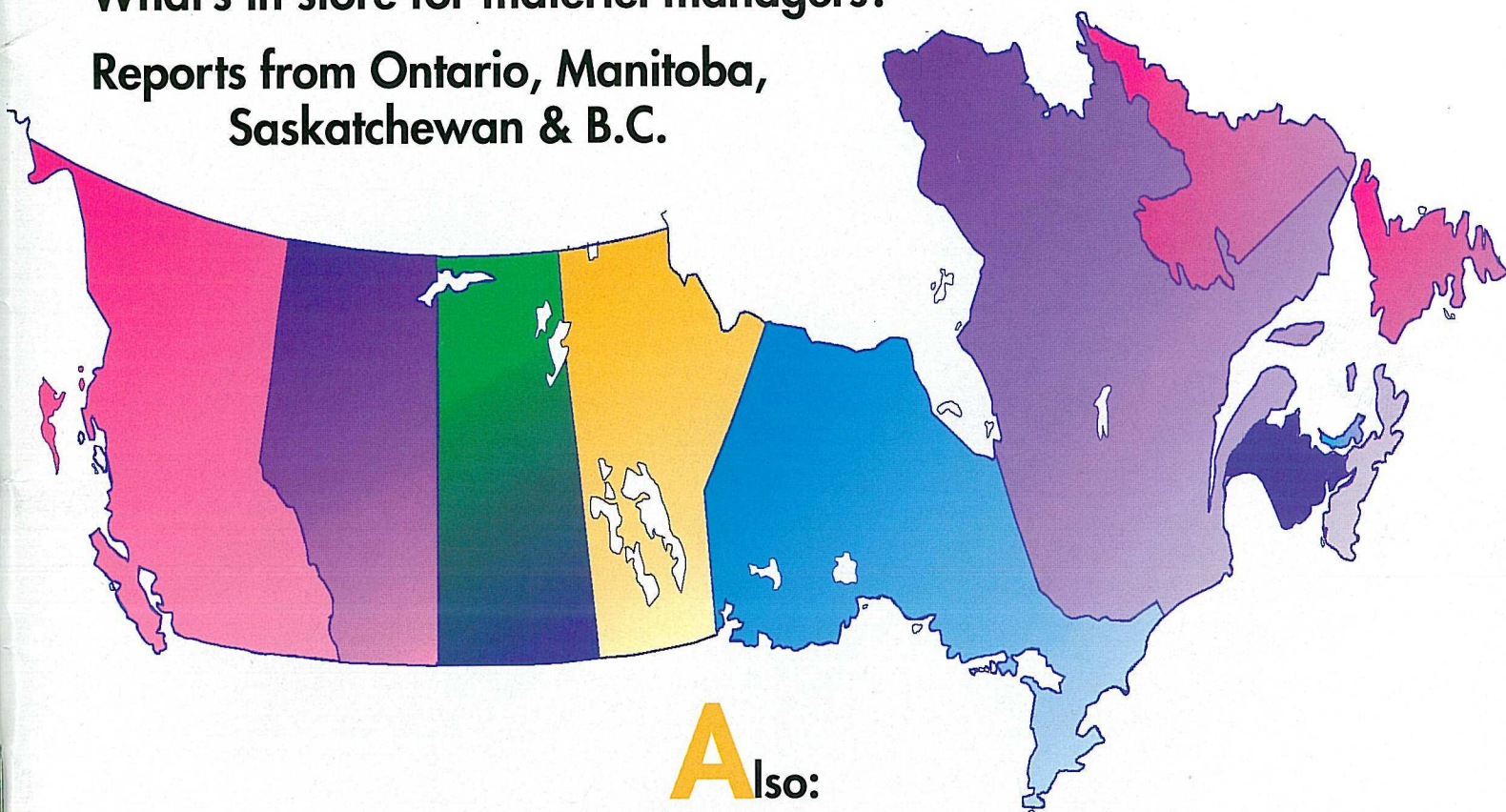
# FOCUS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE  
CANADIAN HEALTHCARE MATERIEL  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

## REGIONAL HEALTH CARE

What's in store for materiel managers?

Reports from Ontario, Manitoba,  
Saskatchewan & B.C.



**A**lso:

Strategic Plans for Materiel  
Management Information

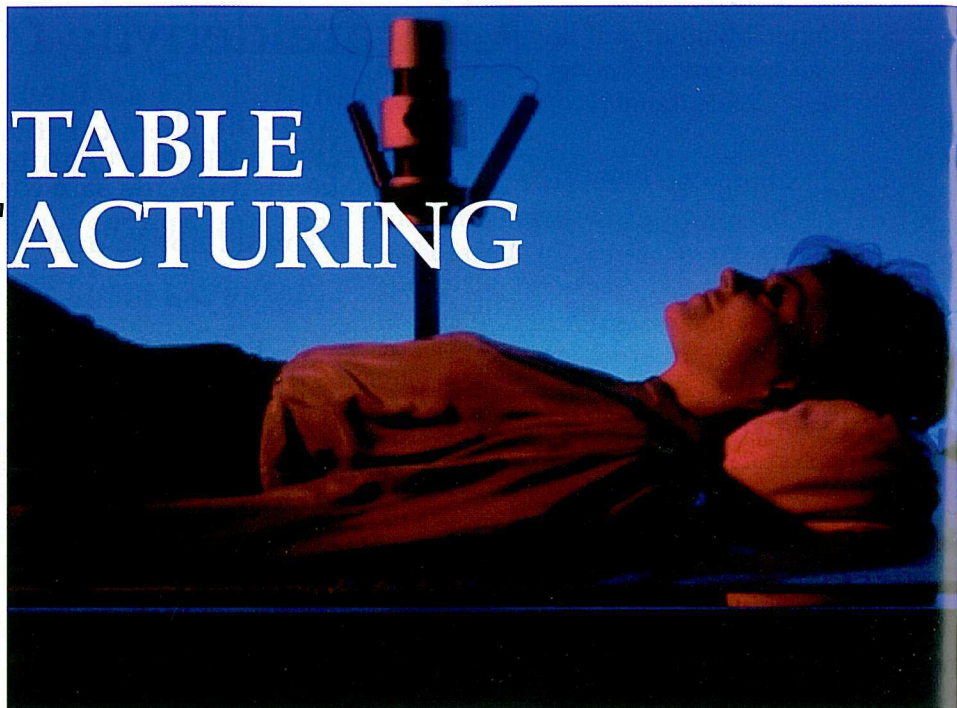
Surgical Table Remanufacturing





# SURGICAL TABLE REMANUFACTURING

**A high quality  
and cost-effective  
option**



The health care sector has been slow to recognize the tremendous savings in remanufacturing their existing equipment. For years, the military, commercial airlines and industry in general have recognized the virtues of having their existing equipment rebuilt and upgraded to new standards. Imagine the savings, that we as taxpayers receive, when the military rebuilds 20 fighter planes rather than replacing them with brand new models.

Astute materiel managers are realizing that surgical table remanufacturing can save them a tremendous amount of money, while providing high-quality answers to their surgical table problems. Recently, Jim Ennis, director of materiel management at Vancouver General Hospital, had six surgical tables remanufactured,

saving his facility over \$100,000. Savings like this, in the health care sector, are not often found.

Surgical table remanufacturing has proven to be an excellent alternative to purchasing new equipment. Materiel managers, seeking a way to meet budget restrictions, have long since considered remanufacturing their surgical tables as an excellent alternative to the high cost of new equipment.

The surgical table is one of the operating room's most expensive pieces of equipment. A new surgery table, currently costs anywhere from \$22,000 to \$70,000. Replacing existing tables with new often proves to be a very costly capital outlay. In many cases costing many thousands of dollars. Remanufacturing is a very extensive process that goes far beyond merely repairing or refurbishing.

A remanufactured surgery table is one that has been completely disassembled, and remanufactured from top to bottom. The end result is a surgery table with the same performance, safety, appearance and reliability that new equipment gives.

Surgical tables are excellent candidates for remanufacturing. Technology for most operating room tables has not changed dramatically in the past 30 years. New features or capabilities such as electrical upgrades, imaging upgrades and many others can easily and very cost-effectively be added to older tables during the remanufacturing process.

## REMANUFACTURING CONSIDERATIONS

The main reason why old surgical tables are replaced include OR



*Ideally you will want to keep an eye on the condition of each table, so that you can catch problems before they compromise operating room performance and patient safety.*

down time due to table breakdowns, frequency and cost to repair, lack of manufacturer support and service, changing clinical requirements and new capabilities or technology.

As previously mentioned, most new capabilities can be added during the remanufacturing process. Remanufacturing the surgical table to its original condition and performance eliminates endless nickel-and-dime repairs and OR downtime.

Having a surgical table remanufactured usually costs about one-third of the cost of buying a brand-new table. As an example, Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, had ten of its existing OR tables remanufactured in 1990. The cost of remanufacturing the ten tables was \$90,000 (or \$9,000 per table). The cost of purchasing new tables would have been \$280,000 (or approximately \$28,000 per table). Mount Sinai's savings amounted to \$190,000.

If you are adding operating rooms and need additional tables, you may want to consider purchasing remanufactured tables instead of new tables. A remanufactured table can be bought for approximately one-half of the cost of buying the equivalent table new, yet the performance, reliability and life expectancy of the two tables is virtually identical. The Michigan Health Center of Detroit, Michigan, saved more than \$100,000 when it replaced five very old tables with remanufactured tables, instead of buying new ones.

When Should a Surgical Table be Remanufactured?

An inspection and an evaluation from a qualified remanufacturer is the best way to determine the condition of your surgical tables and what servicing if any they require. Your maintenance or bio-medical engineering Department can perform a simple inspection to look for basic signs of wear. Common signs of a table being ready for remanufacturing are: table top drifting down under the patient's weight load or if the table top is unstable and difficult to perform intricate surgery on. Other signs of trouble include broken controls and indicators, peeling chrome-plating, oil leaks, hydraulic or electrical problems, floorlocks that stick or slip, stiff and irregular mainlift movement and worn or noisy gears. Your maintenance and engineering staff generally know when it no longer pays to continue to repair a table. This is the time to look for a qualified remanufacturer.

### **CHOOSING A REMANUFACTURER**

There are a number of firms today offering repair or refurbishing, however, there are only a few that offer remanufacturing. It is important to understand the differences between a repair vs. refurbishing and refurbishing vs. remanufacturing. A number of issues you should analyze when making your decision to have your surgical table remanufactured are as follows:

- How long has the company been in business? How many surgical tables have they remanufactured? How many hos-

pitals or surgical centers have they served? How many are repeat customers? Does the company have an established track-record of longevity and proven success?

- For whom have they remanufactured surgical tables? Look for referrals of major hospitals in your area. Call these clients and ask whether they are happy with the service they received. Get several references and follow-up with phone calls.
- Is the company registered with the FDA?
- Do they stand behind their work? Look for a minimum unconditional two-year warranty covering all parts and labour. If something isn't right with your table the remanufacturer should correct the defect at their expense.
- How diverse is the service? What types of tables do they remanufacture? Surgical tables only? Or urological, orthopedic, examination and obstetrical? Which manufacturers? Which models? Obviously if your existing inventory of tables is a mixed group of different makes and models, the more diverse the remanufacturers skills are the better.
- Does the remanufacturer have a substantial inventory of surgical table parts and accessories? Including armboards, supports, restraint straps, stirrups, conductive cushions, legholders and removable x-ray permeable tops? Keep in mind that if the remanufacturer does not have the parts on hand, they likely can't remanufacture your table in a timely manner.
- Will the remanufacturer give you a loaner you can use while your table is away? This is critical — if the remanufacturer does not supply a loaner, can you afford the resulting down-



time. Insist that your remanufacturer supply a loaner.

- How thorough is the company's remanufacturing process? Is it truly remanufacturing? Or is it merely refurbishing? Or just repairing?
- The cost is important. After all, one of the key benefits of remanufacturing is that it contains and controls OR expenditures. However, be careful not to be enticed by a quotation that is substantial less than the major remanufacturers are charging. Skimping at this point could leave you completely disappointed.
- Does the company have product liability insurance?

#### IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

Chances are, a portion of your surgical tables require some sort of attention, possibly minor adjustment, major repair or remanufacturing. Others may be in peak con-

dition and require no adjustment of any type.

Ideally you will want to keep an eye on the condition of each table, so that you can catch problems before they compromise operating room performance and patient safety.

How do you go about it? The first step is to speak with OR personnel, your maintenance technicians and bio-medical engineers, to determine the condition of your existing tables. Determining if there appears to be any immediate candidates for remanufacturing or other repair. These people need to be familiarized with the advantages and cost savings associated with remanufacturing. Pointing out that the remanufacturing process achieves high-quality and performance equivalent to new, but at a fraction of the cost. Often this allows these people to purchase other equipment that they

cannot include in their current budgets.

In addition to sending out tables for remanufacturing, you may want to set up an annual preventative maintenance contract with the remanufacturer for a program that provides regular inspections and on-sight servicing. This keeps all tables in safe condition and insures reliable performance while minimizing problems and down-time in the OR.

#### CONCLUSION

In the health care materiel management field, especially with today's emphasis on cost restraint, buying a brand-new table every time an existing table wears out or breaks down, does not make good sense economically. Remanufacturing offers a sensible alternative that achieves significant cost savings while providing a peak level of quality and performance to the clinical staff and the patient in the OR. ■

A proud supporter of the Canadian Healthcare Material Management Association.

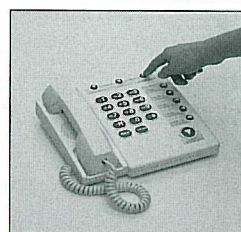
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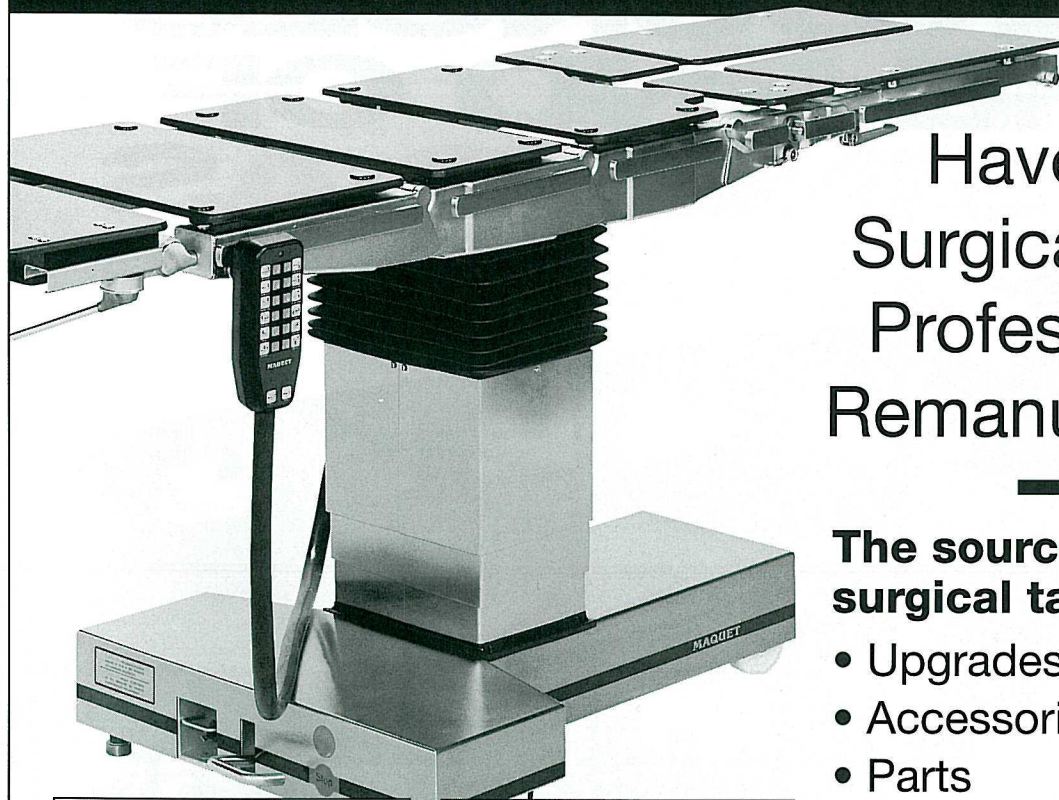
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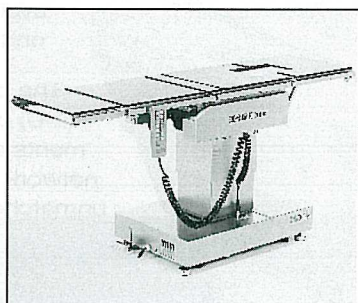
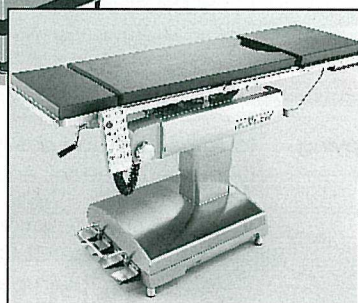
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