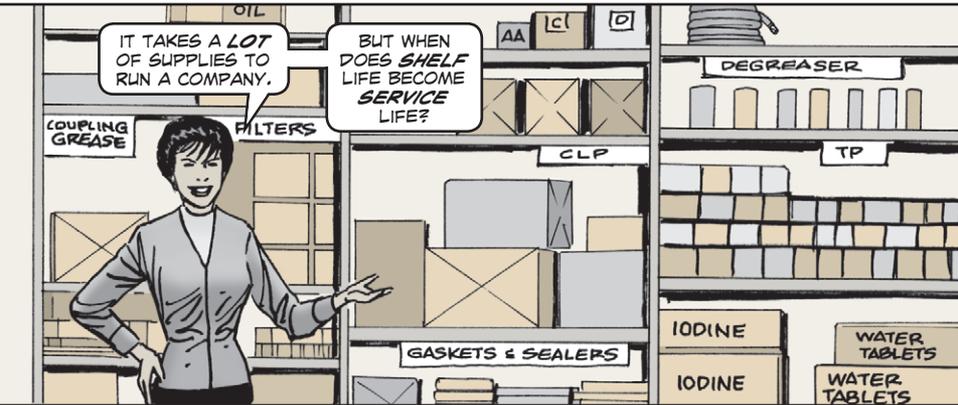


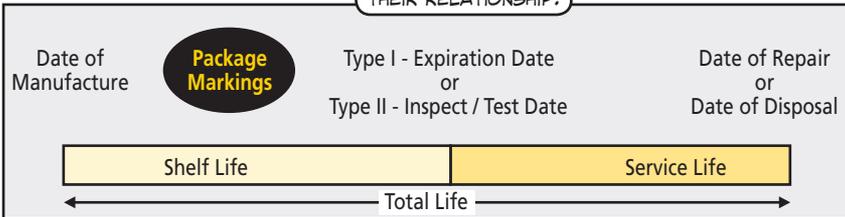
# Just What is Shelf Life?



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **SHELF** LIFE AND **SERVICE** LIFE CAUSES SOME CONFUSION IN SUPPLY MANAGEMENT.

SUPPLY ITEMS HAVE A USEFUL LIFE EXPECTANCY AND SHELF LIFE AND SERVICE LIFE ARE TWO DIFFERENT PARTS OF AN ITEM'S **TOTAL** LIFE.

THIS ILLUSTRATES THEIR RELATIONSHIP.



Shelf life expiration dates and inspect/test dates depend on items being properly packaged and stored.

For instance, storage temperatures affect shelf life. If they are too high or too low, shelf life is reduced.

Another aspect that affects shelf life is the opening of unit-of-issue containers like cans, sealed bags and tubes. Opening reduces packaging and preservation protection. Shelf life ends and service life begins when unit-of-issue containers are open.



Service life depends on how often and for how long the container is open and on the storage environment. More frequent testing and inspections are required for supply items that have entered their service life. Testing and inspection requirements for items in service life should be found in technical manuals.

However, many consumable (non-reparable) items do not have a given service life. When doubt exists about the serviceability of these items, they should be disposed of.

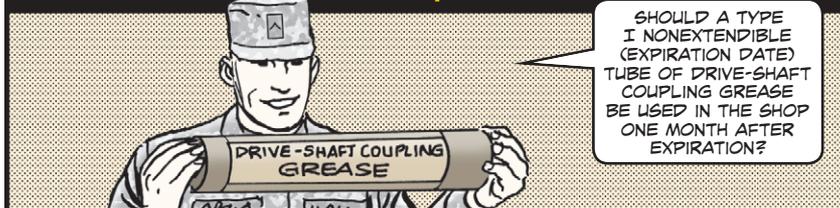


## Managing Service Life

THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES PROVIDE SOME GUIDANCE ON MANAGING SERVICE LIFE.



### Example 1



NO, THE PRODUCT IS **NOT USABLE** BECAUSE EVEN UNOPENED ON THE SHELF, WHEN A TYPE I ITEM EXPIRES, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED FOR EXTENSION TESTING OR INSPECTION AND MAY NOT BE ISSUED FOR USE.

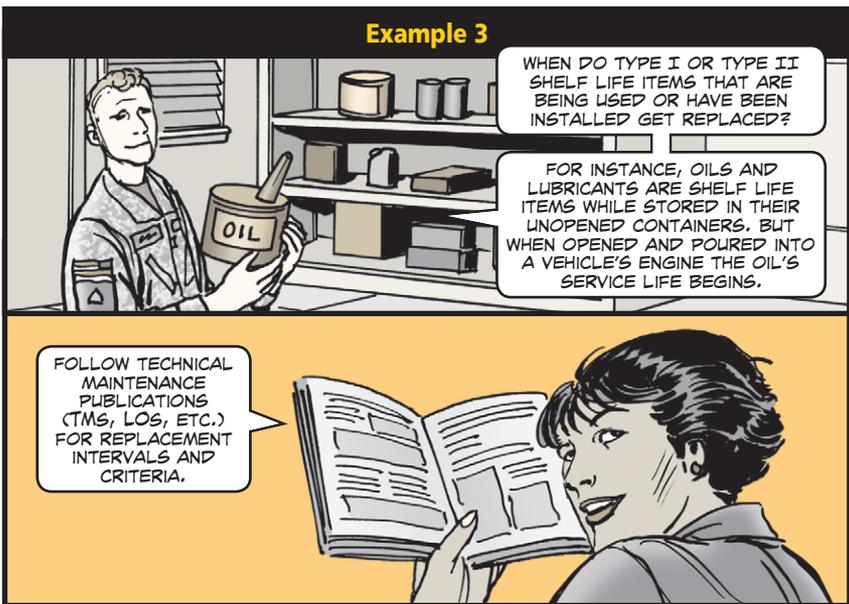
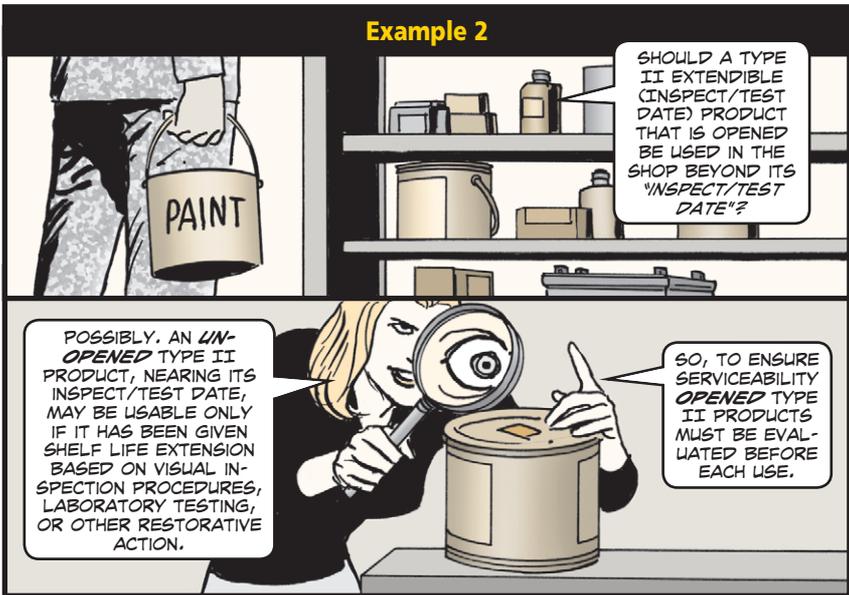
ONCE OPENED, SERVICE LIFE IS ACTIVATED AND DETERIORATION ACCELERATES.

USE THE ITEM **BEFORE** THE EXPIRATION DATE.

(NOTE: ONE EXCEPTION IS THE FDA PHARMACEUTICAL SHELF LIFE EXTENSION PROGRAM.)



### Example 2



EFFECTIVE SHELF LIFE AND SERVICE LIFE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES...



- Requisition/procure items in smaller quantities and units of issue. Use Supply Support Requests when necessary.
- Reduce inventory stockage levels.
- Requisition items just-in-time.
- Practice stock rotation, i.e. first-in, first-out (FIFO).
- Maintain required prescribed storage conditions, particularly for shelf life items which are hazardous materials.
- Extend Type II shelf life items by:
  - using test results from the Shelf Life Extension System (SLES).
  - testing samples when cost effective, or
  - accomplishing authorized visual inspections or restoration procedures.
- Remark or labeling extended Type II items using DD Form 2477 series labels, available from the DoD Shelflife website.
- Preparing Supply Discrepancy Reports (SDR) when issued outdated shelf life items.
- Submitting shelf life code challenges to the DoD Shelflife website when experience indicates a change is needed.
- Processing outdated items promptly for disposal.
- Obtaining shelf-life training at the DoD Shelflife website.
- Following tech pub guidance when managing service-life.

TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE SLES AND OTHER ITEMS ON THE SECURE DOD INTRANET WEBSITE FROM A .mil DOMAIN COMPUTER CALL: DSN 795-7685, OR EMAIL: [@us.army.mil](mailto:us.army.mil)



SOLDIERS CAN ALSO USE THE PUBLIC SHELF LIFE WEBSITE (LOGIN/PASSWORD NEEDED)... <http://www.shelflife.hq.dla.mil>

PS END

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