

## Proper Care of Your Brass Instrument

### Everyday

- OIL your valves whether they seem to need it or not. Only place a few drops of oil directly on the valve. Do not simply drip oil through the hole on the bottom of the valve. French Horns – unscrew the valve cap and place a few drops of oil on the center of the rotor.
- Gently wipe the instrument with a soft cloth. This removes the dirt and oils from your hands and protects the finish.

### Every Week

- Clean the mouthpiece (especially the shank) with a mouthpiece brush in cool running water.
- Check water keys (spit valves) for proper function. Notify your director if the cork is in bad condition or the valve is not functioning properly. He will either repair it or recommend a repair shop.
- Oil all valves whether they seem to need it or not.
- Run a flexible cleaning brush (snake) through the lead pipe and main tuning slide to remove any build-up of corrosion or debris. Rinse with cool water.

### Every Month

- Completely clean your instrument in a bath of cool to luke-warm water. (Hot water will damage the clear-coat finish). Remove all valves and slides, remembering what goes where. Soak the slides and instrument body in sink or tub for 20 minutes. Clean valves in the sink with cool running water, being careful not to get the felt washers on the top of the valve wet. Use a snake to clean all slides and instrument tubing. Use only gentle hand soap. (Dishwashing soap will take a long, long time to completely rinse out of the instrument.) Allow instrument to completely dry. Oil valves and grease slides. Re-assemble. NEVER use slide grease on the valves or valve oil on the slides.

### Other Maintenance

- Never put extra things such as music folders and books in your case unless your case has a designated place. Do not put anything, even cleaning cloths, between your instrument and the case lid. The case is designed to protect your *instrument*. Extra items in your case can bend tubing and misalign valves.
- NEVER try to pull out a stuck mouthpiece with pliers! If your mouthpiece gets stuck, bring it to your band director. He will use a mouthpiece puller to properly and safely remove your mouthpiece.
- Always place your instrument on its side or on your chair when you're not playing. NEVER stand the instrument on the bell or lay it across a music stand. Gravity can cause much damage to instruments!
- Do not eat or chew gum while playing your instrument.
- Store your instrument in the case and make sure the latches are closed. Do not sit or stand on your case.

### Trombone Slide Maintenance (in addition to the above maintenance)

**Everyday:** Lubricate the slide using either slide oil or slide cream and a spray bottle of water. If you can hear the slide moving, it needs to be lubricated.

**Every Week:** If you are using slide cream, spread a thin layer of cream on the slide and wipe off excess with a cloth. Spray with water and work slide to spread cream evenly. Clean the inside of the slide and slide cover with a snake.

**Every Month:** Follow instrument bath instructions and then lubricate the slide as described above. Make sure you put tuning slide grease (not slide cream or slide oil) on the tuning slide.

Nothing will ruin a trombone faster than not taking care of the slide. If you hear any scraping sounds or feel any resistance in the slide, lubricate it immediately. If that does not solve the problem, see your band director. It is equally important to give your trombone an instrument bath regularly to get rid of the build-up of slide cream. Built-up slide cream can also cause slide operation problems (stickiness).