



Cleaning the Hard to Clean

ACT on your Cleaning Process to Reduce Defects and Save Money

As seen in *Products Finishing* magazine

In Brief

Through a straightforward and disciplined process, OEMs and job shops can find ways to improve cleaning processes, reduce defect rate and improve overall product quality. In doing so they stand to gain efficiencies like reducing cleaning steps, reducing rework requirements and saving money.

There is no question that a direct correlation occurs between finishing and coating defects and the improper utilization of parts cleaning and pretreatment practices.

As a leader in cleaning chemistries and technologies, we see first-hand the impact of cleaning at OEMs and job shops. Based on hundreds of observations by Hubbard-Hall's experts, there are numerous ways to improve a shop's cleaning process, reduce defects, and improve product quality.

More importantly, making these improvements does not always come with additional costs and expenses; in fact, a thorough examination by the team from Hubbard-Hall often identifies areas

where improvements will actually save a shop money by eliminating needless steps or improving the quality of the cleaning process.

Hubbard-Hall experts suggest three initial steps – that we'll call **ACT** – that every shop should take to improve their cleaning process, reduce rejects and rework, and save money in the process.

A - Audit your cleaning needs.

A lot goes into choosing the right cleaner and cleaning process. There are product-related considerations, like the soils you're removing, your cleanliness specifications, part geometry, and your alloys. Then, there are criteria specific to your production process and site: throughput,

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energy demands, available footprint, and regulatory and waste handling processes. By starting with a thorough cleaning audit to define and prioritize these important criteria, you'll have a better chance of choosing the right cleaner and cleaning process. For instance, a precision cleaning operation may need a solvent cleaner to meet its cleanliness specifications with less use of water and energy resources. Meanwhile, a brass nozzle maker may benefit from the brightening capabilities of aqueous cleaners.

C - Calculate your total cost of cleaning.

Are you selecting a cleaner based on low price? You may be paying more in the long run. In addition to increasing your scrap rate, poor cleaning causes defects that can lead to rejects, rework, and even the loss of customers. The cost impact doesn't just come from defects, either. Cleaners that last longer or save you steps can save you money in the end.

T -Team up with an expert.

Plenty of companies can sell you cleaners. The best ones will work with you to understand your process and desired outcomes and recommend ways to reduce the cost, complexity and chemical consumption associated with cleaning. They'll have cleaning experts at the ready to analyze your process. They'll have a wide variety of cleaning technologies, so they can recommend the best cleaners to balance your efficacy, cost and other considerations. They'll have a quick response, because your operations can't shut down. And, they'll be adding new chemistries and technologies to their portfolio to respond to emerging cleaning needs.

The evidence is clear. Cleaners may be inexpensive, but poor cleaning is always expensive. There are simple steps you can take – Auditing your cleaning process, Calculating your total cost of cleaning, and Teaming up with an expert partner – to build the right cleaning program to reach your operational goals. So, if cleaning up your cleaning operation is important, now is the time to ACT.

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