

TechTip G1 – Gun Cleaners

Most manufacturers recommend glycol ether-based solvents for cleaning SPF spray guns and parts from a safety and handling point of view. These solvents are adequate for normal daily use. Small pressurized gun cleaning manifolds and tanks are available, and many times can eliminate or reduce the need to disassemble the spray gun.

More aggressive solvents are widely available and can be useful in removing stubborn buildup. With more aggressive solvents, it is especially important to not allow your parts to soak for extended periods of time (overnight) in the solvents due to the possible effects the solvents may have on the parts themselves.

Use separate trays to clean isocyanurate and resin (polyol blend) parts to prevent reaction within the liquid solution, build up on parts and inadvertent switching of parts during reassembly.

Wash off parts, blow dry with compressed air and reassemble the cleaned gun (or other part). Don't leave the item to soak in the cleaning solvent.

A light coating of a manufacturer's recommended grease, such as lithium based greases, applied to parts and o-rings during reassembly can reduce wear and tear associated with the disassembly and reassembly of the gun and will reduce the amount of build-up that occurs during foam and coating application.

A supply of cleaning drill bits, dental picks, and brass brushes of different sizes should be kept in a dedicated box for cleaning guns. Build-up and deposits found in the gun should be mechanically removed if at all possible. Having a dedicated box for these tools will keep them in easy reach and make the task much faster and efficient.

Do not mix different gun cleaners (or other solvents) to avoid possible reactions which may produce hazardous vapors or other dangerous conditions.

Using solvents which carry red (flammable) labels requires extra precautions. Keep these solvents away from open flames, spark sources and other heat sources. Use metal containers and solvent trays, grounding the container and person to prevent static sparking and possible flash fire hazard.

Acetone and MEK (methyl ethyl ketone) are not recommended as gun cleaning solvents due to their volatility. These materials evaporate too quickly to be useful as a cleaning solvent and are highly flammable.

Occasional hardened deposits may require more aggressive cleaning by mechanical means or a more potent solvent than the glycol ethers. Use only when needed.

As with any solvent, as well as isocyanurate and polyol blends:

- Review MSDS information prior to use.
- Use only in a well-ventilated area.
- Wear chemical rated gloves.
- Wear eye protection
- Dispose of waste properly
- No Smoking

Gun cleaning solvents may be available from equipment and/or SPF suppliers.

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Founded in 1987, the Spray Polyurethane Foam Alliance (SPFA) is the voice, educational and technical resource, for the spray polyurethane foam industry. A 501(c)6 trade association, the alliance is composed of contractors; manufacturers and distributors of polyurethane foam, related equipment and protective coatings; and consultants who provide inspections and other services. The organization supports the best practices and the growth of the industry through several core initiatives, which include educational programs and events, the SPFA Professional Installer Certification Program, technical literature and guidelines, legislative advocacy, research, and networking opportunities. For more information, please use the contact information and links provided in this document.

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