

COMMON SENSE FLEXO

From Joe Flexo: Dishing the dirt on cleaning your anilox rolls

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For Ultrasonic Cleaning:

Install a filtration system: This can extend cleaning chemistry life and system performance.

Place several ping-pong balls in the ultrasonic tank: This reduces splashing of the cleaning chemistry.

Do not attempt to clean adhesive application rolls in the ultrasonic cleaner: Glue deadens the cavitation action leaving only the chemistry to break up the adhesive. Typically, glue is more easily removed with a solvent or thinner.

Monitor ultrasonic cleaning solution temperature: Heating the solution excites the chemistry to create a more effective clean. While this benefits the cleaning process, excess heat can result in the cleaning solution residues drying back into the cells and causing a more difficult cleaning challenge. The optimum operating temperature is between 120 and 140 deg F.

Place the ultrasonic system away from outside doors: This helps it maintain proper operating temperatures (even in cold weather).

For Steam Cleaning:

Purchase a continuous fill machine: Units with a fill tank are difficult and time-consuming to work with because you have to wait for the water to heat up before you start cleaning, the system may run out of water before the roll is done, and then you have to wait for it to cool off before refilling. With a continuous-fill system, you can keep cleaning until the job is done.

Insure the machine has a stainless-steel tank: This allows for use of mildly caustic detergents, which improves the success of the cleaning operation. Caustics tend to cause corrosion problems for lesser models.

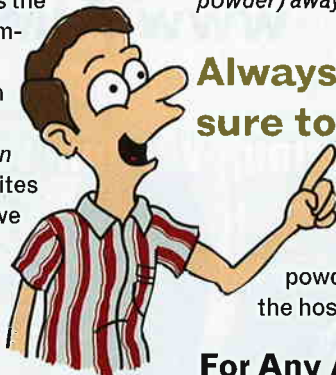
For Soda-Jet Cleaning Systems:

Do not clean rolls in the soda-jet cleaning system any more than is necessary: Wall deterioration often results from either excessive exposure to the blast

action or the cumulative effect of repeated cleanings. It may also be beneficial to reduce the nozzle pressure to slow the progress or cell-wall deterioration.

Use vinegar to rinse off the roll after soda-jet cleaning: Vinegar reacts with the baking soda, suspending it in a liquid form so it can be cleanly wiped from the roll surface.

Place soda-jet systems (and stored baking soda powder) away from outside doors: Moisture from



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ambient-air humidity can cause the powder to clump, resulting in clogging of the hoses and inconsistent blast action.

For Any And All Cleaning Methods:

Always put rolls away clean: In general, rolls should be cleaned with the press wash recommended by the inkmaker before storing. This greatly reduces the potential for serious plugging problems without investing a great deal of money in a cleaning system.

Thoroughly rinse rolls after cleaning with liquid cleaners: Rinse with warm water after application of the chemistry. Rolls should be dried with a clean, soft cloth to prevent cleaning residue from drying into the cells and staining the roll surface.

Send seriously plugged rolls out for cleaning: This is an opportunity both to refresh your rolls and to investigate the effectiveness of various cleaning systems before you invest in them.

Add a small fluorescent light above the cleaning area: This localized light source provides good visibility to monitor the operation and inspect the condition of rolls as they are cleaned.

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