

General Cleaning Procedures

Pre-Cleaning, Dry Cleaning & Dry Sanitizing

The following procedures were written by Jacques Rouillard, Senior Scientist, DuBois Chemicals. He has over 40 years of experience in cleaning and sanitation. He has focused on developing the procedures and chemistry to keep our food supply chain safe. Many of today's modern procedures and chemistries are based on his work. Following he applies his experience to deep cleaning an industrial manufacturing plant to a big box retail store.

Pre-Cleaning

1. Conduct any necessary wet cleaning first and then, when areas are dry, conduct dry cleaning.
2. Assemble all cleaning and sanitizing tools and general and specialty chemicals.
3. Lock-out/tag-out equipment as needed
4. Make all parts accessible for cleaning and sanitizing.
5. Place removable parts, as well as loose utensils and tools, on a designated cart.
6. Transport these loose items to a separate cleaning area
7. Use cleaning products and sanitizing products at proper dilutions (per label instructions); Place loose parts (parts must be corrosion resistant or dried before corrosion occurs) on a wire rack and spray with cleaner; allow to sit for desired time and rinse or wipe. Ensure that no parts and or tools are nested.
8. Remove debris from transport cart and/or wire rack; spray with cleaner; allow to sit for desired time, then rinse.
9. Once cleaned, place loose parts upside down to dry and to ensure all water is removed.

Dry Cleaning

1. Depending on the soil, there may be a need for physical removal of the soil. Use either manual or mechanical action (sweeping with hand brooms, scraping, mopping, vacuuming,) to remove excess debris and organic matter. Vacuuming also contains collected dust rather than pushing it into other areas.
2. Use a systemic approach of top-down cleaning—beginning at the top and working toward the floor.
3. For stationary equipment: Use a vacuum to remove loose dust and dirt if possible then use pads, brushes, and dry lint-free towels with a cleaning solution (ensuring that the pads and brushes are free of dripping moisture) to hand-wipe the equipment. Use lint-free towels to completely dry all surfaces.
4. Alcohol-based, fast-drying wipes can be used for surface cleaning.

5. Once surfaces are wiped down, clean all framework, and identify and spot-clean problem areas.
6. Ensure that all surfaces and equipment are cleaned. Particular attention should be paid to controls and touch pads. Floors and walls should be cleaned as necessary.
7. Empty and clean all trash bins. Take particular care with the dust in the vacuum and the soiled pads and towels and properly dispose outside the plant.
8. Perform a post-cleaning visual inspection, and correct any deficiencies.
9. After ensuring all loose parts are dry, return them to their proper areas, reassemble equipment, and remove lock-out/tag-out.
10. If there is any concern that there are areas of equipment that are not completely dry, air and/or heat guns can be used.

Dry Sanitizing

1. Follow cleaning process by sanitizing with a dry disinfectant.
2. Use a low-moisture, EPA-registered sanitizer which is safe for surfaces, such as alcohol-based formulas, as alcohol is highly effective and evaporative, dries quickly, and requires no rinsing.
3. Sanitizers may be in the form of ready-to-use, alcohol-based wipes, sprays, or mists.
4. An alcohol/quaternary ammonium sanitizer can be used almost anywhere as a final kill step. While leaving a safe antimicrobial residual, the evaporative qualities of the compound enable surfaces to be dry and ready for processing within minutes.
5. When evaluating chemicals, check that the selected sanitizer is an EPA-registered surface sanitizer for and that it doesn't require a rinse.
6. After sanitizing, conduct a visual inspection, validate and verify sanitation. Correct any deficiencies.
7. Document cleaning and sanitizing, as well as any corrective actions. Release for production.

Ongoing

1. Hand hygiene, glove, and footwear sanitation provide a crucial role in plant sanitation so as to minimize cross-contamination from employees. Handwashing, hand-sanitizing, and systems should be set up in processing area entryways.
2. Training and employee culture are also key. There should be consistent company-wide training and enforcement of hygiene and sanitation procedures. It should be performed as if an auditor is always present. For example, if the regular crew knows the procedures, but there is no training program for temporary workers, then the effectiveness is reduced.
4. The same can be said for maintenance. If production has a procedure for dry cleaning and sanitation, and then maintenance comes in and moves machinery, dry cleaning and sanitation should be completed again.
5. Document.