



FLEXTANK

Superior Solutions for Professional Winemaking

TANK CLEANING PROCEDURES



HAND CLEANING | NON-AUTOMATED CLEANERS

Flextank.com | 360.450.2694

CLEANING YOUR FLEXTANK

It is vital to the integrity of your equipment and your final products to keep your tanks and hardware clean.

Cleaning your tank and hardware properly and frequently will help you avoid build-up, stains, etching, pitting, rusting, and contamination.

For our customers who do not have an automatic cleaning system or do not want to use their automatic system on smaller tanks, these procedures will guide you through the recommended methods to hand clean your plastic tank and hardware.

There are, of course, many various methods to clean plastic tanks and more chemicals than are suggested here, but these instructions provide a detailed set of procedures and the most common cleaners and items which are safe-tested to not cause damage to plastic tanks and hardware.

SAFETY PREPARATION

Prior to cleaning tanks, be sure to understand all chemical hazards and handling requirements and wear the proper protective gear. We do not recommend climbing inside the tanks unless you are trained in access of enclosed spaces in a safe manner.



CLEANING, SANITIZATION AND STERILIZATION- WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

In the wine, cider, mead and spirit industries we strive to maintain a level of sanitation that keeps spoilage organisms in check, but we can never entirely eliminate them.

CLEANING:

THE REMOVAL OF ALL SURFACE DEPOSITS THAT COULD PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SPOILAGE ORGANISMS COULD THRIVE

The first step in this process involves cleaning all surfaces of the tank and hardware that will come in contact with the product you are making. Cleaning will also remove most, but not all active microbes and their spores and eliminate deposits (organic or mineral) that might make good future homes for spoilage organisms.

SANITIZATION:

THE REMOVAL OF 99% OF THE MICROBES AND CAN BE PERFORMED USING EITHER HEAT OR CHEMICALS

Following the cleaning process the tank and hardware needs to be sanitized. To sanitize with heat, we generally use a steam generator but sanitizing with chemicals is a much more common practice.

STERILIZATION:

THE TOTAL REMOVAL OF 100% OF ALL MICROBES

Sterilization is very difficult to achieve and impossible to maintain for any significant period of time.



FLEXTANK RECOMMENDED CLEANING CHEMICALS

A large variety of cleaners are available at your local supply center. Be sure to discuss the type of tank and hardware you are cleaning with your supplier.

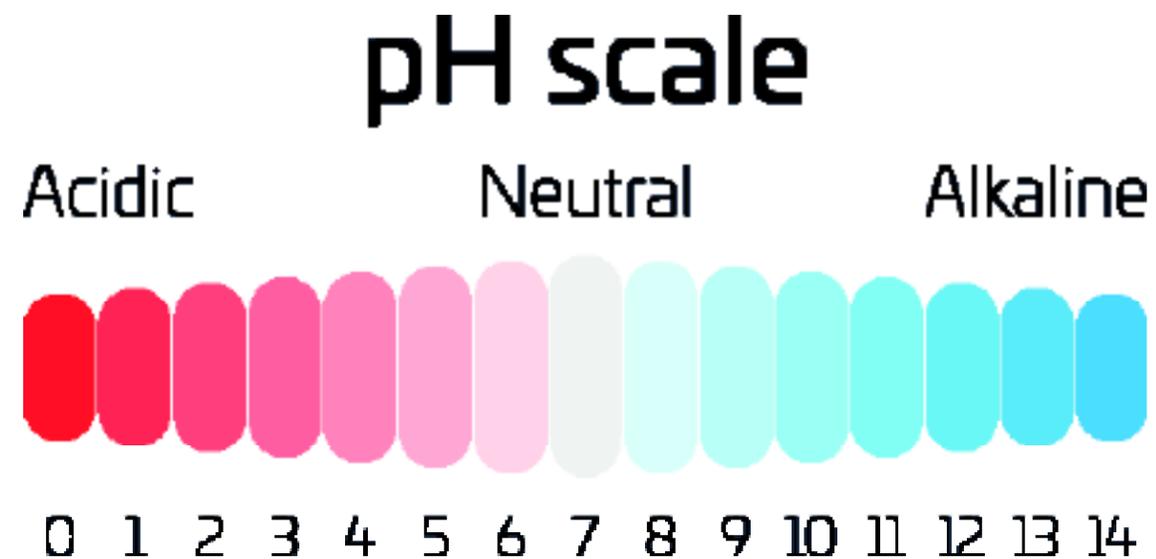
TYPES OF CLEANERS FALL INTO TWO GROUPS

- Very low pH Acidic Cleaners
- High pH Caustic/Alkaline Cleaners

SANITIZERS

- Acid-based sanitizer

*Never mix caustics and acids together, follow the manufacturer's instructions for your chosen cleaner.



CLEANING: LET'S GET STARTED

1. REMOVE THE LID ASSEMBLY (INCLUDING GASKET AND CLAMP IF A DEXTER LID)



2. VERIFY ANY DRAIN OR SAMPLE VALVES ARE IN THE CLOSED POSITION.



3. FILL THE TANK WITH HOT (120F/50C) NON-CHLORINATED WATER. THE HOT WATER WILL READILY DISSOLVE TARTRATES AND MOST OTHER WINE DEPOSITS.



CLEANING: CONT.

4. WHILE THE TANK IS SOAKING DISASSEMBLE THE LID AND ASSOCIATED HARDWARE

- a. Remove the airlock if present and set in a parts tub
- b. On lids with an internal gasket i.e. ECO lids remove the gasket and set in the tub, with lids that have a separate gasket like the Dexter lids place the gasket in the tub.
- c. Remove all the caps and place in the tub with the lid body.



5. DRAIN THE TANK INTO THE APPROPRIATE DRAIN OR HOLDING TANK.

When draining the tank use both the sample valve and drain valve if present to flush their internal parts. If the interior of the tank is not clean, repeat the hot water soak to get any remaining tartrates. Stubborn deposits might require scrubbing with a soft cloth or soft brush. Do not use any metal or rigid tools that would scratch the tanks surface as this will become a site that will be more difficult to sanitize in the future. Cleaning the larger tanks can be more challenging, but there are a variety of tools available to reach difficult locations.



CLEANING: CONT.

6. PREPARE ENOUGH CLEANING SOLUTION TO THOROUGHLY COVER THE INTERIOR WALLS AND SOME ADDITIONAL FOR CLEANING THE HARDWARE.

Follow the manufacturer's recommendations when preparing your cleaning solution.

7. ADD THE CLEANING SOLUTION TO THE TANK AND SOAK FOR 20-30 MIN.

Using a soft cloth or brush wipe all the walls and bottom of the tank don't forget the inside top of the tank. Also wipe down the exterior surfaces of the tank paying particular attention to the gasket grooves and threads. You might have to apply the solution more than once rinsing with warm water the same temperature as the cleaning solution until the tank is clean.

8. RINSE BY SPRAY WATER ONTO ALL SURFACES WITH CLEANING SOLUTION.

Rinse the tank a minimum of 2 times with clean water and drain through the sample valves and drain valves if present.



CLEANING: CONT.

9. WE RECOMMEND REMOVING YOUR HARDWARE FOR A THOROUGH CLEANING.

Hardware should be placed in the parts tub and cleaned with the same alkaline cleaner used for the other parts. Do Not use any abrasive scrubs or brushes. Following the cleaning rinse all the parts with clean water at least twice.

10. THOROUGHLY RINSE THE HARDWARE WITH WATER AND LET THEM AIR DRY.

It is very important to rinse your hardware at least two times. The sooner you wipe off standing water, especially when it contains cleaning chemicals, the less it will corrode the stainless. After wiping down the hardware, let them air dry. This procedure will allow oxygen to dry your hardware which will help maintain the protective film.



11. THE CLEANED TANKS AND PARTS CAN BE REASSEMBLED AND ARE READY FOR USE.

Always inspect tanks and hardware prior to use to ensure that no contaminants have managed to access the vessel while being stored. A quick water rinse is all that is required followed with a sanitization prior to being placed back in service.

SANITIZING

Prior to putting your tank back into service, a thorough sanitizing is required.

1. PREPARE AN APPROPRIATE QUANTITY OF SANITIZING SOLUTION FOLLOWING THE MANUFACTURER'S PROCEDURE.

2. USING THE SANITIZER, FLOOD ALL THE LOOSE PARTS IN THE PARTS TUB FOR THE RECOMMENDED PERIOD OF TIME THEN RINSE WITH CLEAN COLD WATER.

We recommend rinsing even the “no-rinse sanitizers” at least once.

3. ASSEMBLE THE LID AND ANY STAINLESS HARDWARE THAT WAS REMOVED AND INSTALL ON THE TANK WITH THE VALVES IN THE CLOSED POSITION.

4. RINSE THE INTERNAL TANK WALLS WITH SANITIZER AND ENSURE ALL THE INTERNAL SURFACES WERE WETTED FOR THE RECOMMENDED PERIOD OF TIME.

You do not need to completely fill the tank with sanitizer, a few gallons of sanitizer is sufficient to wet all the surfaces of a large tank. A hand pump garden chemical sprayer (that has never been used for any garden chemicals) is an efficient way to ensure all the surfaces are wet with sanitizer.

5. RINSE THE TANK TWICE, DRAINING THROUGH ALL AVAILABLE VALVES.

Use your final rinse to fill the tank to the top and perform your leak check on all valves and fittings then drain.

YOUR TANK IS CLEAN, SANITIZED AND READY TO BE PUT BACK IN SERVICE.

PREVENTING HARDWARE RUST OR TARNISH

Here are a few to do steps that can help prevent your stainless-steel hardware from Tarnishing or Rust.

1. RINSE YOUR HARDWARE

It is very important to rinse your hardware not once but a least twice. The sooner you wipe off standing water especially when it contains cleaning chemicals the less it will corrode the stainless. After wiping down the hardware, let them air dry. This procedure will allow oxygen to dry your hardware which will help maintain the protective film.

2. USE PROPER TOOLS

Use non-abrasive tools when cleaning your tank. Example soft clothes, plastic scouring pads. DO NOT use Scotch Brite, steel pads, wire brushes or scrapers.

3. ALWAYS KEEP YOUR WINE OR OTHER BEVERAGE EQUIPMENT CLEAN

Clean your tank and hardware frequently to avoid build up, stains and contaminations. Check the stainless equipment visually as the surface should look and feel clean without any coating or stains. Stains or discoloration may be signs of improper rinsing, make sure to follow the chemical manufacturer's instructions. Improper rinsing can lead to etching the stainless thus resulting in pitting which will lead to rust.

FOR ADDITIONAL CLEANING QUESTIONS:

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