

Brush Manufacturing Quality Guide

When purchasing brushes meant for use in a food processing plant, it is important to consider the quality of the brush. Quality brushes may also be appropriate for food service, pharmaceutical, health care and chemical firms, as well as any firm that wants to improve its sanitation procedures. Generally, hand scrub brushes, pipe and valve brushes, pastry brushes and counter dusters are available in varying levels of quality. Oftentimes, higher quality correlates with a bit of a price increase. At R.S. Quality Products, we recommend these high-quality brushes for most cleaning purposes as they have a lower risk of causing cross-contamination and tend to be more durable.

The overall quality of a brush is determined by several factors, including:

1. Block/Handle Material

The block in which the bristles are attached can be made of wood, plastic or metal.

It is recommended that food processors, food service workers and healthcare workers use brushes with a plastic block. Wood blocks can contain and attract living organisms, are more prone to splintering which could cause cross-contamination and can absorb liquids unlike plastic. Finally, it is much easier to color-code plastic than it is for wood and metal.

2. Shape and style of the block

It is important you use the right brush for the right job.

For example, hand scrub brushes are made with a wide variety of block sizes and shapes. Ask your supplier for samples if you are not sure which is the correct brush for your application.

3. How the bristles are fastened to the block

Brushes can be staple set, epoxy set or set using Ultra Safe Technology.

Most brushes are staple set which is the most economic option. These are recommended in low-risk areas where you are not highly concerned about contamination resulting from



loose bristles. For example, if your brushes are meant for sweeping a warehouse floor, these types of brushes would generally be fine to use.

Epoxy set brushes and Ultra Safe Technology brushes are recommended for high-risk areas where you would not want to risk a bristle falling out.

4. Type of bristle

Bristles can be made of animal hair, vegetable fiber, metal or plastic.

Several industries dictate the type of bristle that may be used. For example, food processing and pharmaceutical companies are generally prohibited from using brushes with animal hair or vegetable fiber as they can contain or attract living organisms, are less durable and pose more threats for allergen risk.

Plastic bristles should be used in high quality, hygienic brushes. However, there are many types of plastic bristles available to brush manufacturers. These types include various grades of nylon (grade 6.12 is best) polyester, polystyrene, polypropylene, polyethylene, peek, Teflon, and many others. Some of these bristles offer excellent chemical or heat resistance. Some of the negative qualities can be lack of durability, matting, taking a “set” and difficulty in controlling stiffness. It is very important you discuss your specific brush needs with a manufacturer or distributor to be sure you get the best brush for you.

Metal bristle brushes should be used for extreme cleaning on surfaces that can take the abuse of a steel, brass or copper bristle. It is important to note, however, that these bristles are more prone to breaking than plastic bristles in most cases, and therefore should only be used if necessary for your cleaning purposes.

Should you have any additional questions regarding bristle types please contact our office.

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