

# Considering Abrasiveness Levels Of Tools When Cleaning Stainless Steel

A lot of equipment in the food processing world is stainless steel. Whether it is a vat, mixer, conveyor belt, tank or any other piece of equipment, it is likely made out of stainless steel or contains stainless steel parts. Stainless steel is a great material to make these things out of, and it is easy to keep clean and sanitize.

The danger for food processors lies in scratching and damaging the stainless steel over time through routine cleanings. Eventually those scratches, dings, and scrapes from routine cleaning can harbor bacteria or product deposits and become a food safety threat. They also make it harder for sanitizers to do their job. This is also really important because a lot of the stainless-steel equipment is very expensive; you wouldn't want to ruin a \$500,000 massive tank because you used the wrong \$15 brush. To ensure this doesn't happen to you, we suggest following these suggestions.

## **1. Invest in high quality brushes and scrub pads.**

In the long run, the money you may save on brushes is nothing compared to the money you may lose in damaged equipment. It's worth the few extra dollars to ensure a higher quality brush that will last longer than cheaper alternatives and won't pose as high of a threat to your equipment.

## **2. Always start with low abrasive level brushes and abrasive pads.**

The best way to avoid scratching stainless still is to stick to high quality brushes and abrasive pads that use soft bristles and low abrasive levels. For the vast majority of scrub brushes, hand brushes and abrasive pads a soft, medium and stiff version exists. Stick to the soft bristle brushes and soft pads first to avoid scratching the stainless steel surface.

## **3. Cautiously consider medium abrasive level brushes and scrub pads if needed.**

This is always a balancing act, because sometimes the job itself requires a stiffer bristle brush than the stainless steel can handle. A good example is dried chocolate on stainless steel. If you are trying to scrub that off with a soft bristle brush it is either going to take forever, or not work at all. In cases where the job itself requires a stiffer scrub or pad, starting out scrubbing as soft as you can, and then work your way up through the stiffness or abrasive levels. By doing this incrementally, you avoid going too stiff for the job and running the risk of damaging the stainless steel.

## **4. Don't forget to consider handles as well.**

It's also important to consider the risk handles for particular tools can pose to stainless steel surfaces. A good example would be cleaning out a vat with a tank brush. Tank brushes require a handle, and if that handle is going to come in contact with the sides of the vat, its best to opt for a plastic handle instead of an aluminum or stainless steel handle. The metal handles can ding, dent and damage the stainless still just like a stiff bristle brush could.

*Should you have any other questions about selecting cleaning tools for cleaning stainless steel surfaces, we encourage you to contact us at R.S. Quality Products.*

