

Washing Milk Containers Checklist

1. Are the containers rinsed before going into the wash water?

Organic compounds destroy the bacteria-killing power of chlorine in the wash water. Dirt and milk are organic compounds. Most of them will rinse off easily before washing.

High temperatures change milk proteins. It makes them stick to surfaces. We don't want milk protein, especially whey, to stick to milk containers. Thus, we try to rinse the protein off the containers before we wash them in hot water.

ALWAYS USE LUKEWARM WATER. It should feel comfortable to your bare hand. Do not rinse with hot water.

2. Are the containers washed in hot soapy water with chlorine? Are they brushed vigorously?

Milk fats, proteins and sugars are sources of food for bacteria. We brush container surfaces vigorously to loosen these solids. These milk solids are suspended in the wash water.

If wash water temperatures fall below 120° (49°C) the suspended solids will stick to container surfaces. Do not put containers into wash water below 120° that contains suspended milk solids. The containers may come out dirtier than when they went into the water. KEEP WASH WATER ABOVE 120°.

3. Are the containers rinsed in an acid solution after washing?

Even with the best rinsing and washing, small amounts of milk solids remain on containers. Small numbers of bacteria remain there, too. An acid rinse lowers the surface pH. Most bacteria grow poorly in very acid conditions.

Pipeline CIP acid at the rate of about 1 ounce per 5 gallons (30 ml per 19 liters) of lukewarm water will lower container surface pH adequately. Acid/sanitizers used for manual cleaning or bulk tanks dilute at about the same rate. They are preferred for this step. They keep the pH lower longer than milk line acid.

4. Are the containers allowed to completely dry between uses?

Bacteria require moisture in order to grow. If we dry our containers between uses the rate of bacterial regrowth slows down or even stops.

Avoid stacking pails inside each other until completely dry. Never sit freshly washed pails upside down on a concrete floor. That creates a bacterial incubator (warm, damp, dark).

RATE YOURSELF

| | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. I rinse my milk containers in lukewarm water before washing them. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. I wash my milk containers in water above 120° F (49°C) | _____ | _____ |
| 3. I use soap and chlorine in my wash water. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. I rinse my milk containers in an acid solution after washing. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. I allow my milk containers to completely dry between uses. | _____ | _____ |