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The All Important Laundry Formula

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When was the last time you reviewed your wash formulas? Has it been since installation? One year, two years, or more? Don't feel bad. If surveyed, I'd bet most struggle to review laundry formulas on a regular basis. If it isn't broken, don't fix it...right?

Of course, this task is not a necessity or even mandatory. However, one could argue that wash formulas are the backbone of any laundry operation. Think about it. Wash formulas can affect many things like linen quality, water consumption, energy consumption, production time, overall guest perceptions, linen life, and more. Checking and reviewing wash formulas on a regular basis should be part of any laundry maintenance program. Small improvements to wash formulas and regular reviews of the categories below can save customers time and resources, which can lead to bottom line savings. And who knows, you might see improvements to cleanliness and linen life as well. Now that is a value proposition!

1. **Water Levels & Temperatures:** Incorrect water levels in wash formulas will have an adverse effect on water consumption just like incorrectly programmed water temperatures can adversely affect gas or electricity consumption. And while it may not seem like a lot today, over a period of weeks and months, it can add up quickly. A good rule of thumb is use low level settings for steps involving the addition of chemistry and medium to high water settings for rinsing steps. Temperature settings should be checked for each step and be based on what is recommended for your chemistry program. Remember that water levels and temperatures can also be affected by the washer itself. For example, clogged transducers or inaccurate level gauges or faulty temperature sensors can also lead to higher water consumption and poor linen quality. These should also be part of your review. In the cases where you may find a problem, seek the assistance of the local maintenance engineer and bring the issues to their attention so they can fix them.
2. **Step Times:** It is a good idea to review step times periodically. You may find there are opportunities to shorten a step by a minute or two and keep the same quality levels expected by your clients. For example, if a Wash step in a light to medium soil program is set for 10 minutes, try lowering it to 8 or 9 minutes. Wash a few loads and observe the



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quality and plan to review quality again in a week or two to make sure there are no issues. In cases where this is a very frequently run formula, the time savings will add up over the weeks and months. This time can be spent running stain loads or reclaim loads without compromising normal production. Time the account could use to clean the plant, maintenance equipment, or blow down the laundry. Value!

3. **Chemical Signals:** Washing equipment is just like any other electrical piece of equipment and over time and with heavy use, things can change or even stop working. Supply signals are no exception. In addition, mistakes can be made when programming wash formulas into microprocessors at the time of the installation. These mistakes may go unnoticed for a period of time. It is a good idea to review whether the supply signals are working properly and that injection steps in your wash formulas have not changed.
4. **Drain Times:** Trying to cut corners on drain times can be detrimental to linen quality. A good rule of thumb for drain times is 45 sec to 1 min. During the drain steps, the machine is aiding in the removal of soils and residual chemicals from the linen and the wash wheel. When drain times are too short, soils and residual chemistry remain in the washer and could re-deposit on linens. This re-deposition can cause poor linen quality and possibly affect linen life. Make sure you have a drain step programmed between each wash formula step for an adequate amount of time.
5. **Extraction:** The extraction step should be programmed to remove the right amount of water or moisture without creating other issues. Extract times programmed correctly in a wash formula can help to lower dry times, sometimes by several minutes. This lower dry time will save gas or electric costs and can also help improve linen life. Value! It is hard to say exactly what the right extract times are per linen classification, because environmental conditions and extraction speeds vary and have an impact on the amount of water removed. In order to optimize your extract times and moisture retention rates, experiment with extract times and consult the local maintenance engineer for additional assistance.

It is no secret that programmed wash formulas affect laundry operations. A proactive review of the programmed wash formulas in each washing machine, should be part of a regular maintenance program to prevent unnecessary quality issues and help to improve the overall laundry operations for your customers.