

Cleaner or Sanitizer?

By Mike Dixon mpdixon@ipass.net

It appears there are many homebrewers (and retailers) who are confused about cleaners and sanitizers and their properties. Cleaning employs chemicals and scrubbing to remove deposits. Sanitizing employs chemicals to kill organisms, which remain after cleaning.

Many that are commonly used by homebrewers are listed below, along with their concentrations, applications, and whether or not they are a cleaner or a sanitizer.

Bleach – Sanitizer – 1 tablespoon per gallon water (200 ppm) – 30 second contact time – Rinse – Corrosive to stainless steel, copper, and aluminum.

Iodophor – Sanitizer – 1 teaspoon per gallon water (25 ppm) – 60 second contact time – Rinse recommended at 25 ppm. At 12.5 ppm (1/2 tsp/gal), 5 minute contact time, no rinse required – Non corrosive, but will stain most plastics.

TSP (Trisodium Phosphate) – Cleaner – 1 teaspoon per gallon – Rinse required – Wear protective gloves. – Good for cleaning glass

Baking Soda – Cleaner - 1 teaspoon per gallon – Rinse – Mild and slow acting cleaner.

B-Brite – Cleaner - 1 tablespoon per gallon – Rinse – Good for metal items (has corrosion inhibitor), limited sanitizing ability

C-Brite – Cleaner and Sanitizer – 1 package (0.8 oz) per 2 gallons - No rinse

Straight-A – Cleaner - 1 tablespoon per gallon – Rinse – Biodegradable, has corrosive inhibitor

PBW (Powdered Brewers Wash) – Cleaner – 2 oz per 5 gallons - Rinse – Biodegradable, good for soaking

Ethyl alcohol (Vodka or Grain Alcohol) – Sanitizer - Use undiluted without rinse – Expensive

Star San – Sanitizer – 2 tablespoons per 5 gallons- No rinse - 2 minute contact time – Foams into crevices

One-Step – Cleaner (Sanitizer?) - 1 tablespoon per gallon – No rinse – Biodegradable, non-staining

CMC – Cleaner – 1 oz per gallon – Rinse – Biodegradable, can be used on stainless