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We truly and sincerely wish all of you customers, employees, vendors, and friends a Merry Christmas this year. As we reflect on 2020, we can't help but be grateful for all of the relationships that have helped us through this unusual year. We thank you all so much for our connection with you!

A few years ago we established and promoted our core values of: Flexibility, Attention to Detail, Reliability, and Motivation as a focus for us to abide by in all of our dealings. Never before has there been a year when these values were called into play like 2020. It has been our desire to help you succeed in 2020 and launch you into a prosperous 2021.

In this holiday season, we pray that you can take a pause and spend time with family to appreciate the true meaning of Christmas. We can rest assured that our God, who gives us the gift of his own Son, will get us through this pandemic and unrest in the world.

Have a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

Ted & John

Anti-Microbial Coatings

Anti-Microbial powder coatings have gotten a lot of attention in 2020 because of Covid-19. With the extra attention, more detailed information has become available on these coatings from powder manufacturers including how they work and if the coatings will kill Covid-19. In the manufacturing world, highly touched surfaces have seen the largest increase in demand and many believe that demand will continue to grow.

“Anti-microbial” is defined as having properties that inhibit the growth of microbes which can include bacteria or viruses. When added to a coating and applied to a surface, it could keep that surface cleaner and safer. Does it kill Covid-19? Short answer, no one seems to know yet because organized testing is not widespread and you won’t find powder manufacturers making that claim because of the liability. As far as application and aesthetics go, the powder coatings are said to have no noticeable difference from a normal powder coating. There are also options for mixing an anti-microbial additive to an existing powder coat.

Highly touched surfaces including hand rails, playground equipment, electronics, equipment handles, and medical equipment are the topics of discussion for adding these coatings. Increased cost is a factor on if these coatings will become more widespread as they are more expensive than a normal powder coating. AFI has multiple powder suppliers that offer these types of coatings. Contact us if you would like more information from our suppliers.



Farewell & Thank-You

After eight years of service to AFI, Dee Dreyer is ready to retire and move on to the next chapter of her life. During her time at AFI, she served as the Billing Clerk as well as many other odd jobs. Known for her attention to detail, she kept AFI on track and organized in her tenure and helped set up great systems to move us forward.

Dee plans to catch up on her reading, watch Jeopardy, and take trips to see family in her retirement. Once things are back to “normal” she can’t wait to get back to the Minnesota State Maverick hockey games.

We want to thank Dee for all of her hard work and effort over the past eight years. We wish her a long and exciting retirement!

Congratulations Dee!



Pretreatment Application & Controls

AFI is always trying to evolve to become a better company and the pretreatment process before painting is no exception. Metal parts are pretreated by using a chemical bath that etches the surface and applies a performance boosting coating. The application equipment and controls of this process are the keys to a consistent, high performing final coating. AFI is continuing to upgrade the process with new technology and relationships with vendors. How are your parts pretreated? That depends on the size and quantity of your order to determine the most efficient way to complete the pretreatment.

Tunnel Multi-Stage In-Line Washer

AFI uses the PEM Spraylean system to clean and pretreat smaller, high volumes of parts. The system’s modular design and flooded pumps make it more efficient than the traditional washer systems and it is placed along the conveyor to automatically wash parts as they pass through. The stages are easier to maintain and can be physically moved and adjusted as needed. The parts pass through these stages with high pressure nozzles applying cleaner and pretreatment solutions followed by rinses to prep for coating. The keys to keeping the baths maintained are the temperature, cleanliness, and concentration of the chemical in the bath. To maintain these parameters, AFI uses a combination of manual checks, electronic monitoring and automatic pumps. The concentration is monitored electronically and automatic pumps add cleaning chemical as needed to always stay within the optimal range. We also manually check the titrations of the baths once a shift to ensure that the monitors and pumps are working properly.

SprayWand System

AFI uses the PEM SprayWand system to clean and pretreat larger or lower volume runs of parts. This system is a manual operation with a pressure washer type wand to apply the water and chemicals needed to pretreat the part. This system can be utilized to apply as many stages of cleaning and pretreatment as necessary to finish the job. It gives the operator the freedom to move around the part and fully pretreat the hard to reach areas. In this setup, the chemical is pumped out of the drum and added to the high pressure water to create the correct solution. The concentration of the chemical is controlled using patented orifices that inject the chemical downstream from the pump. To verify this concentration, the solution is sprayed into a bucket and then titrated to check that the orifice is still allowing the correct amount of chemical through the wand.

If you would like to read more about pretreatment application check out Ted Schreyer’s feature in Powder Coated Tough Magazine January/February 2019 Edition

