

# Solvent Mileage & Solvent Levels



CUSTOMER BULLETIN #5

Maintaining an adequate solvent level and checking solvent mileage are areas that are often overlooked by drycleaners but that can have a tremendous effect on your operation if not appropriately monitored. This bulletin provides some important guidelines to incorporate into daily operating procedures to help prevent improper cleaning and operational damage resulting from issues related to solvent levels and mileage.

## Solvent Levels

Solvent levels in the base tanks of your drycleaning machine should always be kept at a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  tank for the working tanks and a minimum of  $\frac{1}{2}$  tank for the reserve tank. Having low solvent levels can greatly affect your cleaning quality, resulting in greying and redeposition on garments which can cause permanent damage. Low solvent levels can also cause costly damage to the solvent pump on your drycleaning machine. As the pump is starved of solvent, it begins to cavitate as vapor pockets form in the once flowing liquid, causing premature wear to the solvent pump and even possible structural damage to the pump.

Normal operating procedures should definitely include checking solvent levels every day at the beginning of the day and throughout the day as solvent levels fluctuate. If solvent levels become low, solvent should be added. One less challenging way of making small additions and maintaining a proper level in the reserve tanks is to purchase solvent in a 5-gallon size container, which is easier to handle and can be easier on cash flow during slower times. **However, you must check your state and local regulations to determine if your state allows the delivery and use of 5 gallon pails of perc (i.e., non-closed loop delivery).** All of the Street's solvents (DF2000™ High Flash Hydrocarbon, Lift™ Modified Alcohol, HC Boost™ High Flash Hydrocarbon Glycol blend, and PerSec® brand perchloroethylene) are available in both 55-gallon drums and the 5-gallon pails. PerSec® is also available in the 15-gallon "keg" and Carefill® drum.

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STREET'S SOLVENTS

Elevate Your Cleaning  
**LIFT**

DF-2000 **fluid**  
The Proven Alternative

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## Solvent Mileage

The importance of monitoring your solvent mileage cannot be emphasized enough. Simply knowing how much solvent you are purchasing is not sufficient to tell you how efficiently your drycleaning machine is operating. The only way you can truly measure the solvent efficiency of your drycleaning machine is by calculating the weight of garments cleaned and the actual consumption of solvent used in cleaning those garments. Whether you are using perc, DF2000, Lift or HC Boost, one way to help the profitability of your business is to maximize your solvent mileage. **Checking your solvent mileage is a very simple and quick procedure:**

- First, it is recommended that drycleaners purchase a scale from their supply distributor to weigh each load to be cleaned. You must determine the poundage that is being run in each load in order to calculate solvent mileage. Knowing the poundage of each load can also help prevent over-loading the machine, which will also lead to better cleaning and better solvent mileage.

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- Second, if you are currently not recording the size of each load, you will want to start using poundage charts, which are usually available from your solvent supplier. Weigh each load before cleaning and **RECORD** the weight of the load in pounds on the chart. Add up the poundage cleaned daily and then add up the daily totals at the end of each week for a total of pounds cleaned per week.



- At the beginning of the week, calculate the total amount of solvent by adding together the amount of solvent in each tank. During the week, if new solvent is added to the drycleaning machine, make sure to add this amount to the beginning solvent amount. At the end of the week, calculate the total amount of solvent left in the tanks, as you did at the beginning of the week. Subtract this end of week total from the amount you had at the beginning of the week (plus any additions of new solvent). This will leave you with the total amount of gallons used for the week.
- To arrive at your solvent mileage, divide the total pounds cleaned for the week by the number of gallons of solvent consumed for that week.
- **Bingo!!! Now you know your solvent mileage.**
- Keep a file of these poundage records in order to establish a trend for your solvent consumption.

Once you have established your solvent mileage, it is recommended that you contact your machine manufacturer and ask what you should expect the optimum solvent mileage for your particular brand and model of machine to be. If your mileage is lower than what they suggest, discuss with the machine manufacturer what they would recommend in order to increase the solvent mileage.

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Some things that can contribute to poor solvent mileage are:

- Overloading the machine.
- Short drying time.
- Drying temperature set too low.
- Condensing coils clogged with lint.
- Improper operation of the still.
- Inefficient extraction times or speed (belt slipping).
- Dry control not working or set properly.

In summary, make it a priority to maintain your solvent levels and calculate your solvent mileage to help maximize operational efficiency. If you're experiencing challenges with this, be sure to talk to the machine manufacturer or hire a mechanic because at the end of the year the savings will add up.

If you have questions regarding proper plant maintenance and energy saving opportunities, as well as product and process questions related to drycleaning/wetcleaning/laundry, please feel free to contact us at **1-800-4STREET** or email [techsupport@4streets.com](mailto:techsupport@4streets.com).

For further questions about machine maintenance and operating procedures, please contact your equipment manufacturer. Always follow proper safety recommendations.



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#2166 101520