



Chemical Dilution: Do You Still RTU?

By Mike Sawchuk

[Share](#)

When it comes to cleaning chemicals, cleaning professionals historically have two options. They can either mix their chemicals manually in a process often referred to as "free pour" (also known as "hope for the best") or they can choose to purchase cleaning chemicals that are premixed and ready to use. This second category is referred to as "RTU" (ready to use) chemicals.

Many facility managers prefer to purchase RTU products because no mixing or measuring time is required, there are no concerns regarding accidents or spills, and exactly the right amount of chemical is used for each cleaning task. RTUs also facilitate inventory control because counting them does not involve any guessing or uncertainty – something that can be an issue when chemicals are in gallon jugs and mixed by hand, resulting in partially used containers.

Many managers believe using RTU chemicals is less costly than the free pour method or even using chemical dispensing units (which we will explore in greater detail momentarily). Unfortunately, this popular belief is simply not based in fact. RTU systems may help when it comes to inventory control, and they definitely eliminate the guess work of mixing, but when cost savings is a priority, they are simply not the right choice.

When analyzed using a variety of cost measures, RTU chemicals can actually cost considerably more than free pouring or using a dispensing system. Plain and simple, when it comes to RTU products, cleaning professionals are paying for the conveniences mentioned earlier – not to mention the additional packaging and shipping costs attached to these products, which are invariably passed on to the purchaser, along with the related environmental impacts.

According to some estimates, an RTU quart of cleaning chemical that costs two to three dollars would only cost between 30 to 60 cents as part of a dispensing system. Although it is harder to estimate costs when a free pour method is used (because there are so many subjective variables), it is still estimated that free pouring cleaning chemicals costs 25 to as much as 65 percent less than RTUs.

From Free Pour to Dispensing Systems

Free pouring is still the most common method by which cleaning professionals mix their chemicals. This is unfortunate, since this method truly does require users to hope for the best. When a cleaning professional mixes chemicals with water in a sprayer, bucket, or auto scrubber, it is nearly impossible to ensure that the concentration of chemicals is precise and accurate.

Why is precise mixing so important? If the amount of chemicals used is too strong, it can damage surfaces and negatively impact the health of the user and the environment, as well as wasting expensive product. If the mix is too weak, it simply may not perform. And if the wrong chemicals are mixed together, serious injury or death may occur.

This is why today more and more facilities, both large and small, are choosing to

QUICK POLL

Which of the following best describes the cleanliness of the office or facility where you work?

VOTE NOW!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Kleenex

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

[Winning World Promotion](#)

[JACKSON SAFETY* W60 TrueSight* Auto-Darkening Filter](#)

QUICK LINKS

[KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL*](#)

[JACKSONSAFETY.COM](#)

[WYPALL.COM](#)

[KC-SAFETY.COM](#)

[KIMTECH.COM](#)

[KCPREDUCETODAY.COM](#)

install auto dispensing systems for their cleaning chemicals. When these systems first came on the market, they offered cost savings and more accurate dilution; however, those early models were often costly to purchase and install, making their use prohibitive for all but larger locations.

Thankfully, today several portable, compact systems are available that are easy to use and also cost effective, while requiring no special installation; these new systems make correctly diluting cleaning chemicals a simple, inexpensive task.

Several types of dispensers are now available to facility managers:

- **Industrial systems typically used to fill large autoscrubbers.** These can release up to 20 gallons of properly diluted cleaning solution per minute, considerably improving worker productivity.
- **Large-volume wall-mounted units.** These models typically dispense about four gallons per minute. They often offer multiple dilution settings and low-flow/high-flow options, and can be used to fill a variety of cleaning tools, from sprayers to scrubbers.
- **Small volume systems with a relatively small footprint.** These systems are also available in portable models that can be moved from location to location.
- **Single-product dispensers, designed to dispense one chemical only.**

The Green Connection

Dispensing systems are a natural choice for facilities making an effort to commit to green cleaning. Since using too much chemical can harm the health of cleaning workers and increase cleaning's impact on the environment, one of the most important goals of any green cleaning program is to use just enough chemical – whether green or conventional – to perform the cleaning task at hand. This is why automatic dispensing systems have become an indispensable tool for many facilities with green cleaning programs in place. In addition, most dispensing systems are what are termed "closed type," which help reduce the amount of potentially harmful VOCs (volatile organic compounds) being emitted into the air.

The Bottom Line

There are now a variety of different types of automatic dispensing systems, many of which are very cost effective, making their many benefits accessible to facility managers who would not previously have considered installing them. They have also become an extremely valuable tool for green cleaning programs. Taking into account their many plusses, this is one technology that every astute facility manager should consider selecting.

Mike Sawchuk has been involved with the jansan industry for more than 15 years. He is currently vice president of [Enviro-Solutions](#), a leading manufacturer of certified-green cleaning chemicals. The company is based in Ontario, Canada.

Published by [KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL*](#). This email was sent from an address that does not accept incoming email. Questions or comments should be directed to TheLink@kcc.com or the [Contact Us](#) page at kcprofessional.com/us. Your visit to this site and use of the information herein is subject to the terms of our [legal statement](#). We invite you to review our [Privacy Policy](#).

If you no longer wish to receive mailings from KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL*, click [here](#).

®/* Trademarks of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. Marques déposées de Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc.
© 2010 KCWW. All Rights Reserved. All names, logos and trademarks are the property of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. or its affiliates.