

# CAST POLYMER CONNECTION

Fall 2020

## Bradley Corporation: Celebrating a century of success



### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- COVID-19 and OSHA compliance
- Changing business direction
- Temperature, measurements and avoiding prerelease

STYRENE  
UPDATE

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



- 8 Reopening in light of COVID
- 14 Pivoting your business
- 18 Workplace styrene exposure limits

### 4 Profile on Bradley Corporation



## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's letter
- 20 Technical tips: temperature and measurement
- 22 Ask the expert: prerelease
- 24 ICPA news to know
- 26 Index of advertisers

**Cover:** In this time of uncertainty and challenge, it's good to step back and celebrate the positives. Bradley Corporation turns 100 in 2021. The cover photo from 1942 is a picture of Elizabeth S. Wetherell (center), Bradley's president at the time and the first woman president of a company in Wisconsin; Howard G. Mullet (seated), the son of the original owner; and R. Gordon Owen (standing), advertising manager at the time.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

# Moving ahead



**I'M DELIGHTED TO START MY TERM OUT AS PRESIDENT OF ICPA**, despite the reality that we are experiencing one of the most difficult periods of business and daily life in recent years. Given the economic challenges of our current world and the frustrations of dealing with COVID-19, the tag line we've chosen for ourselves "moving forward with forward thinking"

is even more critical to our success today. Though our "normal" is forever changed, and no one is yet clear on what that normal will look like, the association is our backbone. The resources ICPA provides and the support we give each other will be invaluable in creating a new world that promises opportunity and success as long as we keep our heads up, our attitudes upbeat and our eyes facing forward.

The association is already providing some of the tools we'll need to transition into a new normal. Cast Polymer Radio has really taken off with some terrific speakers on everything from best practices in the shop to everyday business issues to dealing with legal and regulatory problems. The Zoom-in virtual series is providing a new channel for learning as well as a source to network, share tips, and talk about our challenges and possible solutions. Our social media networks are allowing us to connect. We're launching both membership and SAFE PLANT campaigns so that we can expand our reach and provide a means for creating the safety and health programs we all need.

Meanwhile, this magazine began discussions on COVID-19 in the last issue and continues them in the current issue with articles on how we can learn to look for opportunities

among the difficulties of the present situation and what we may need to do to protect ourselves against regulatory citations that we could face because of new requirements. This issue also addresses what remains one of our most critical regulatory issues: possible styrene emissions changes.

It provides invaluable technical information on the importance of temperatures and measurements in our processes and how to tackle prerelease issues.

Finally, the profile highlights Bradley Corporation, a family-run company about to celebrate 100 years in business. I think what company spokesperson Cameron Barnes, CCT-CP, had to say about the association in that article ex-

presses how I feel. He points out that the reason companies belong to an organization such as ICPA is that there is strength in joining forces—we are much more effective together than we are as separate entities.

I wish for all of you that your families and your employees stay safe, healthy and positive. I'll try to help you with that positive attitude, and I welcome your comments and ideas on how to accomplish our efforts to move forward. ■

THOUGH OUR "NORMAL" IS FOREVER CHANGED, AND NO ONE IS YET CLEAR ON WHAT THAT NORMAL WILL LOOK LIKE, THE ASSOCIATION IS OUR BACKBONE. THE RESOURCES ICPA PROVIDES AND THE SUPPORT WE GIVE EACH OTHER WILL BE INVALUABLE.

**ReBecca Erdmann**  
ICPA President

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# Bradley Corporation:

## *A century of creating innovative bath products*

**BY GENILEE PARENTE**

**BRADLEY CORPORATION, MENOMONEE FALLS, WI** is coming up on a major event

in 2021: 100 years in business. Although 2020 presented the fifth-generation, family-owned manufacturing and commercial plumbing organization the same pandemic challenges as the rest of the world, the company has much to celebrate. During its century of existence, Bradley has gone from a small operation that produced about 15 units of a newly invented hand-washing product its first year to a multi-market company that has installed over a million of its most popular product—the washfountain—all over the world. Bradley's main products include handwashing units made of cast polymer products, washroom accessories, emergency safety shower equipment and a new series of touch-free bath equipment that hit the market well before “hands-free” became something the world increasingly considers essential.

“Our long history and our family connections are a great source of pride and we hope to find ways we can safely commemorate our accomplishments next year on our anniversary. The world needs positive stories right now, and at Bradley, we are celebrating not only successfully navigating the COVID-19 crisis, but also the fact our products answer the current call for more germ-free ways to accomplish everyday functions,” says Bryan Mullett, CEO, Bradley Corp.

### **From good idea to modern times**

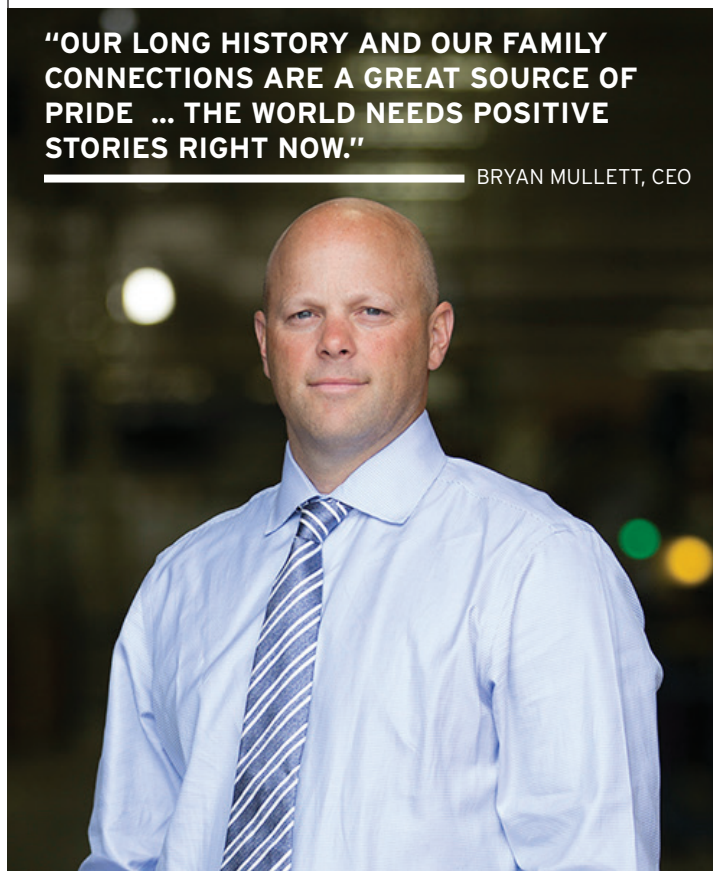
In 1917, Harry Bradley, the founder of Allen Bradley Corporation had an innovative idea. To help workers on the job wash their hands more quickly and efficiently, he created a bank of sinks that could reduce floor space in the restroom. By the following year, he'd developed the “washfountain” and by 1919, he'd received a patent for the idea.

Bradley sold his patent to three partners: Gustav Grossenbach, Louis Schlesinger and Howard A. Mullett. Mullett rose to become president of the company by 1928, which began a succession of family leaders that has stretched over five generations. Howard's son Howard G. Mullett rose through the sales ranks and took over the presidency by 1953. His grandson Donald was president by 1980 and continues today as the chairman. Following in Don's footsteps, his son Bryan was named CEO in 2016.

Meanwhile, the product went from a one-piece, hand-operated sink system that shot water upwards to the first foot-operated model in 1925 to a downward-pointed spray head in 1930 that eliminated water surges. Over the years, that particular product has been finetuned and recreated many times and the line of what goes with that sink has been expanded to include many washroom accessories such as grab bars, dispensers, trash receptacles, partitions and more, as well as a line of emergency safety products. In 2012, the company was the first to introduce a new concept: an all-in-one handwashing fixture: a lavatory unit that dispenses soap and water and also serves as a dual-sided hand dryer. By 2016, the all-in-one handwashing concept evolved into the washbar: a high-tech touchless, hygienic unit that incorporates the latest in sensor technology including LED lights that “guide” a person through the steps of hand-washing from soap to rinse to dry.

**“OUR LONG HISTORY AND OUR FAMILY CONNECTIONS ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF PRIDE ... THE WORLD NEEDS POSITIVE STORIES RIGHT NOW.”**

**BRYAN MULLETT, CEO**



“Product innovation is a company-wide mission and the lifeblood of Bradley,” says Bryan Mullett. “Our research and development (R&D) department is instrumental in our success, and we have a manager of Advanced Technologies who spearheads and tests new technology.”

Although the original washfountain was offered in Terrazzo cement, the industrial sink products today are now largely made of two microbe-fighting materials: solid surface and engineered quartz, along with the metal that makes up the faucets and accessories.

Besides its own R&D department, the company also has partnered with international design firms on a few projects including the newer all-in-one washing bar series. Mullett says that for a Bradley product to come to market requires a concerted effort of R&D, product management, engineering, sales and marketing, and manufacturing.

Paul Byrne, vice president of Global Sales and Marketing for Bradley, explains that: “We all work together to make sure our products check all the boxes: they solve customer pain points, perform at a high level, provide good customer experience, improve operational efficiency and meet our design visions.” That includes not just the high-tech equipment, but entire units. For example, in 1993, Bradley introduced a lavatory system made of solid surface for commercial washrooms.

“This solid surface is molded in shapes and ready to install, so there’s no need for a fabricator to install on-site. The material itself is nonporous and easy to clean and maintain while being durable, cost effective and sleek in design,” he adds.



An early version of Bradley’s washfountain, a product designed to make handwashing a simple, quick task.

## COVID-19 affects handwashing practices

Some interesting facts that came out of an April survey Bradley conducted on handwashing (see page 7) include:

- 78% of Americans are now washing their hands six times or more each day, and 20% of them are washing their hands more than 16 times a day.
- 88% say they are at least somewhat likely to maintain these handwashing habits once the Coronavirus outbreak is over.
- Over a third of respondents said they now consider themselves germaphobes.
- 90% say they wash their hands more frequently, thoroughly or longer after using a public restroom.
- 64% of Americans correctly believe (according to the Centers for Disease Control) that their hands are less germy after washing with soap and water versus using hand sanitizer.

Bradley’s washing bar sinks and hardware in a commercial washroom today.





Terrazzo washfountain molds.

The other most popular material for Bradley's products is a cast-formed quartz mix, which is molded into round and curved shapes that offer outstanding design options and a variety of colors. Bradley's line of quartz is made from natural materials such as natural quartz and granite.

Both the solid surface and quartz lines also use pre-consumer recycled content and bio-based resin and have been certified by GREENGUARD as low-VOC-emitting (low volatile organic compound) material.

### Reaching Bradley's customers

Bradley's customers, like its products, have evolved over the years, as has its ways of marketing.

"100 years ago, our company sales were to the manufacturing arena. We gradually moved into the education market, appealing to schools because it helped get students in and out of restrooms quickly between classes," Bryan Mullett says.

"It didn't take long for the concept to be embraced by sports and recreational facilities, transportation terminals, highway rest stops, post offices, movie theaters, retail stores and many other industries," he adds.

Today, the diversity of the customer base is as broad as the geographic markets, which cover much of the globe.

"We have sales representatives in Mexico, Europe, Canada, Australia and Dubai," Mullett says.

The company also is involved in key international trade shows such as ISH, a giant water/energy show held in Germany that focuses on modern bath design, as well as intelligent home systems and sustainable building.

"Our physical presence abroad helps us connect and build relationships with our international partners all over the world," Paul Byrne explains.

The company's customers are people planning new commercial construction or renovating commercial buildings, which means facility managers, architects, specifiers, engineers, building owners, building contractors, project managers and more. The products are sold through distribution channels via representatives and agencies to local plumbing wholesalers and national retailers.

Because of this broad reach and the need to present itself as an innovator, the company's website ([www.bradleycorp.com](http://www.bradleycorp.com)) is its "window to the world," Byrne says.

"It showcases our latest product innovations and provides customers with key product information, design tools material descriptions and colors, technical data, case studies, videos and more," he adds.

The company has two blogs that focus on trends, updates and helpful news in the world of commercial washrooms. It also "engages with our customers via email and social media, and we showcase our newest products in trade publications specializing in customer industries," he adds.

All this happens in five locations: the headquarters and plant for producing solid surface and commercial products in Menomonee Falls, WI; specialized product plants in Germantown, WI; Marion, OH; and Delton, MI; and an office/warehouse that houses its western distribution operations.

## Bradley's association involvement

Like its own long company history, Bradley has been involved in the association many years, though it dropped out for a period while the former ICPA was part of the larger American Composites Manufacturing Association (ACMA). Bradley was active in ACMA to gain access to tradeshow and suppliers, "but we quickly realized the importance of maintaining a strong knowledge of cast polymers, one of our core competencies since our founding 100 years ago," Cameron Barnes, CCT-CP, material engineer for Bradley, explains.

When ICPA struck out on its own, the company gladly rejoined.

"ICPA provides us the opportunity to keep connected with our suppliers as well as provide an expansive portfolio of technical documents, opinions and advice for highly experienced professionals that are experts in the field," Barnes says. "This allows us to relay the information to our company employees, who can use the data to perform their functions and manufacture products better, more efficiently and with better quality," he adds.

The company's hope for the association is that it will continue to expand "and maintain its focus on community growth because we grow much better when we all grow together," he concludes.

That last location was opened more than 20 years ago as the company's reach expanded to the western U.S. To meet that need, BradWest, the company's first distribution center in Ontario, CA and a major lifeline to customers on the west coast, was built close to major interstates and freight lines, an airport and a thriving business district. Bradley has since formed additional distribution partnerships across the U.S. to stay close to customers in other locations.

The distribution centers are a vital part of Bradley's commitment to customer service. Because Bradley is working with construction projects, getting products to market as fast and efficiently as possible is vital.

"Speed is everything to our customers. Using best-in-class quote tools, fully stocked warehouses and dedicated customer services teams, we've been able to offer that efficiency as well as lower freight costs and less risk of damage, which translates into happier customers," Mullett explains.

### A family affair

Although Bradley reaches into most corners of the world, it's what happens in the plants that eventually creates the quality the company seeks. The generations of Mulletts who have been at the helm are only part of that picture: the business also has depended heavily on the family atmosphere of its plants and offices.

"It's remarkable to see how many generations of employees have grown right along with us," Mullett says. "We have many employees who come from families that have worked with us over the course of two or three generations and employees who have been with us 30 to 40 years. Their dedication and longevity are a testament to our company's success."

To replenish the skills needed within its staff, the company has a separate careers page that leads potential employees to lists of where jobs are situated but also emphasizes the company's corporate responsibilities, its commitment to the



Wet polishing is performed on a natural quartz surface.

environment and the many benefits the company offers such as a generous flex-time package. The site also has a button marked simply "fun," which leads to explanations of amenities at certain locations such as stress reduction classes, nutrition and wellness advice, exercise classes, a pool table, onsite showers, onsite medical care and more.

As far as how this staff dealt with COVID-19, Mullett says Bradley faced the same uncertainties as the rest of the world. However, none of Bradley's locations had to close, office workers worked remotely and "we retooled our onsite manufacturing operations to keep workers socially distant and well-equipped for cleaning/sanitizing, etc.," Mullett says.

COVID-19 also has brought a new consideration into the picture: the world's increased cry for more hygienic bathrooms. Bradley, which conducts a Healthy Hand Washing Survey every year, decided that, even though the last survey was done in December 2019, it needed to do another study amidst the pandemic. Researchers talked to people across the nation in April 2020.

"The most recent survey found that 91% of Americans feel strongly about wanting touchless fixtures in public restrooms; it was the top requested improvement," reports Will Haas, senior product manager, Bradley Corp.

Meanwhile, many of Bradley's customers are also seeking antimicrobial materials.

Sinks made of solid surface and quartz "are smooth and nonporous with seamless construction, which helps prevent bacteria, mold, mildew and delamination accumulation—substances that can adversely affect indoor air quality," Haas says. Also, with no seams in sink basins "dirt and bacteria don't accumulate in these small crevices," he adds.

People today have become aware of the advantages of these materials, Haas notes.

For that reason: "We expect hygienic sink materials to grow in popularity, just like touch-free products," he says. ■

**GENILEE PARENTE** is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. She can be reached at [gsparente@verizon.net](mailto:gsparente@verizon.net).

A plant employee works on making a mold of the natural quartz surface.



# COVID-19:

## Reopening safely and preventing OSHA violations

BY KELLY DEBUSK

IN THE SAFETY WORLD, A WIDELY HELD BELIEF RIGHT

NOW is that in 2020, COVID-19-related violations could potentially top the list of reasons for citations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). As of July 19, 2020, more than 26,000 complaints and referrals were made to OSHA agencies across the U.S.

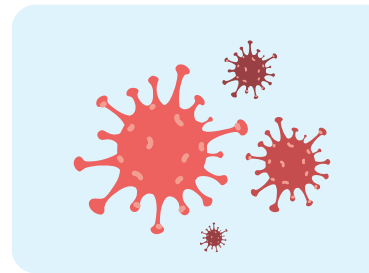
While federal OSHA and most state OSHA agencies do not have specific COVID-19 regulations in place at the time of this article, OSHA agencies will investigate COVID-related complaints under the General Duty Clause. (An exception on the state issue is Virginia. The state passed the Virginia Emergency COVID-19 Standard on July 15, 2020).

The question many companies are now asking themselves is: how can we keep employees safe while also avoiding OSHA violations related to COVID-19?

This article seeks to give you a few answers by reporting some of the main issues in question.

### Do you have a written COVID-19 policy?

Having a written COVID-19 policy is the best way to ensure employee safety while also avoiding potential OSHA violations. By having a written policy, you can communicate to staff pertinent information related to health and safety during the pandemic while outlining for them what their responsibilities include. Additionally, a written policy demonstrates compliance with the OSHA guideline on Pandemic Preparedness and Response, evidence that will be beneficial in the event of a COVID-related inspection.

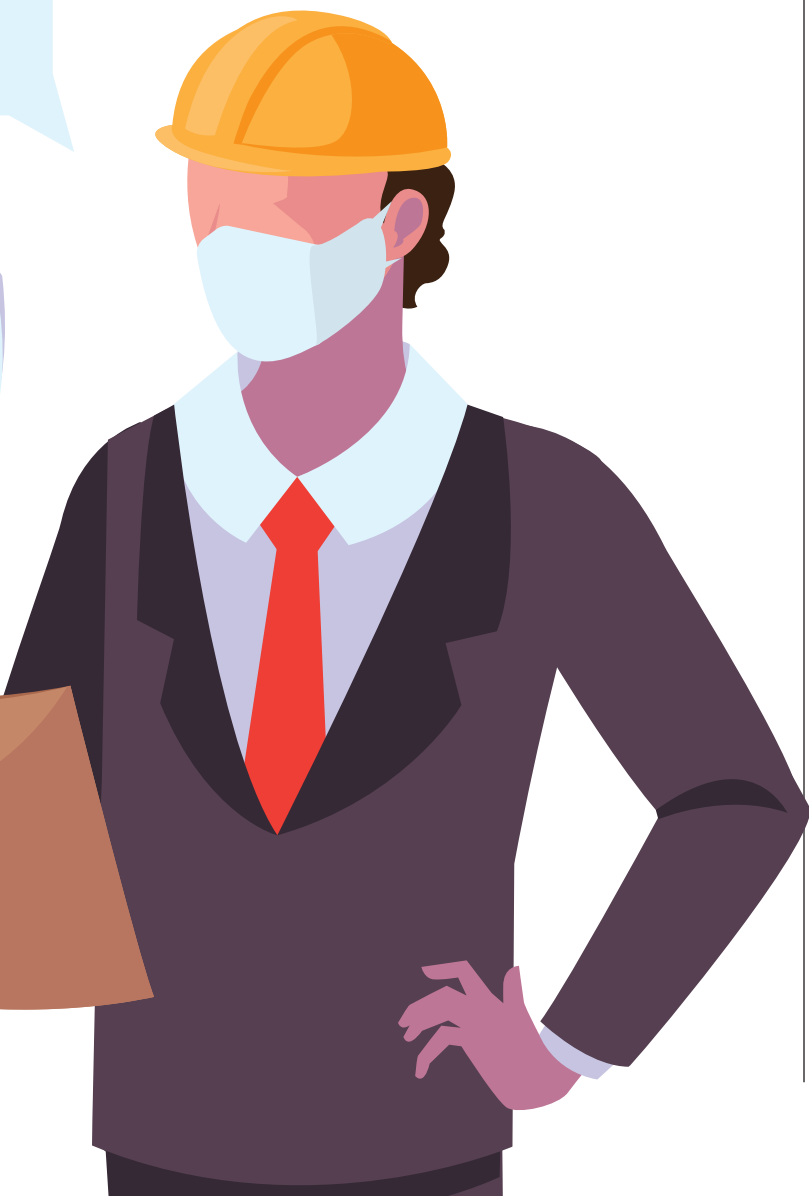




## What should be included in a written COVID-19 policy?

The first point of the policy should be an introduction that includes a brief overview of COVID-19. Here's a sample:

*Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which originated in China but has spread globally. The infection can cause illnesses ranging from mild to severe and in some cases can be fatal. Symptoms typically include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. It is spread between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) or through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that contains the virus and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes.*



Second, an Essential Business Designation should be included in your policy—a statement that explains why your business is essential. Critical manufacturing and construction were both listed in the March 19, 2020 Memorandum of Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response, which came from the Director of Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security. Although most states are in the process of reopening, the increase in positive cases could potentially lead to states restricting business operations again. Having the essential designation as part of your policy will help to ensure you can still manufacture should this occur.

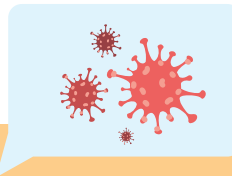
The next step is one of the most crucial steps of the entire written policy: a risk assessment. The assessment should be conducted for each position within your organization. (In the state of Virginia, the Virginia Emergency COVID-19 Standard requires that a risk assessment be conducted for each employee, not just each position.) In performing a risk assessment, the following issues should be addressed. Be sure to get employees' input on these areas because they are the ones performing the tasks.

- Determine how close an employee needs to be to other workers or customers and how often this proximity occurs.
- Ask employees if they've had contact with individuals who are known or suspected to have COVID-19.
- Determine how much public contact each individual has (by role, except in Virginia).
- List which employees need to leave the primary business location to deliver or provide services to the public.
- Decide how frequently the public visits your business location.

According to the OSHA risk triangle [a pyramid OSHA released that assesses four exposure risk levels], most manufacturing employees are likely to fall under the low-risk category while showroom employees are likely to fall under the medium-risk category because of their contact with the public.

Once your risk assessment is completed, it's time to write procedures for eliminating or reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Here are some factors to consider:

**Outside visitors to the property:** Can you limit access to your facility? For instance, can you open your showroom by



## Is it time to consider ventilation issues?

With the current COVID-19 pandemic and the potential styrene regulation facing the industry, now is a good time to evaluate the ventilation in your plant.

According to the article “Ventilation and Coronavirus (COVID-19)” on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) website, increased ventilation is an important approach to lowering concentrations of indoor air pollutants and contaminants, including viruses.

While ventilation with outside air is not enough to fully protect workers by itself, it can help reduce the concentration of contaminants such as COVID-19 when used along with other best practices recommended by the CDC. When evaluating the adequacy of your ventilation system for COVID-19, the number of people who could potentially occupy a space at any given time should be considered.

In looking at styrene exposure concentrations in your

plant, you should first consider source control—ways to reduce styrene emissions at the source. Source reduction techniques can help but they will most likely not be enough, and ventilation will need to be considered. Testing at many cast polymer facilities has shown ventilation is effective in many processes for the current permissible exposure limits (See story on page 18). However, the potential lower limits facing the industry could be difficult to achieve through ventilation, so PPE may need to be used.

In the short term, ventilation is a crucial part of the protection against COVID-19 in your plants. In the long-term, it also is important to know how effective your current ventilation is so you can participate in potential meetings concerning new styrene regulations.

Do you know what your current styrene levels in your plant are?

appointment only? Can no-contact deliveries and shipments be made? You also need to assess how you can monitor nonemployees who visit the property. Be sure to include what you’ll do as far as limiting outside visitors and what measures will be put into place to ensure policy is followed.

**Social distancing:** How will you maintain social distancing at your facility? If social distancing cannot be maintained, you need to specify when employees are required to wear face coverings. When determining face covering requirements, you also must consider other safety risks involved in the manufacturing process such as whether a face covering in certain situations would be more of a hazard than a protection. Some considerations to address include job function, heatstroke implications in non-climate-controlled areas and the effectiveness of required personal protective equipment (PPE) that would preclude other face coverings

**Cleaning procedures:** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has cleaning guidelines ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html)) listed on its website. Use these guidelines to ensure your policy states how often areas should be cleaned, who is responsible for cleaning each area, what cleaners will be used and what PPE should be worn while cleaning.

**Employee responsibility:** Employees should wash their hands frequently or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if hand washing is not readily available. They should also avoid touching their eyes, noses and mouths. Your policy should also require covering the mouth and nose with an elbow when coughing or sneezing.

The policy also should emphasize: **Stay home if you are sick.** This is probably the most important employee responsibility. All employees should be encouraged not to come in if they are sick especially if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough or shortness of breath). The policy also should include an emergency contact within the company so that any employee experiencing symptoms can call and get immediate instructions. This is needed so that the company can notify other workers immediately who may be affected. Do you have an emergency COVID-19 contact within your company?

**Outside of work:** The policy should address what employees should do when they are outside of work to help keep coworkers safe.

You should remind all employees that what they do elsewhere each day can impact the workplace. Encourage social distancing and have a vacation policy in place for anyone who might choose to vacation outside your area, especially if they plan to visit a potential hot zone.

**Quarantine area:** An area within your plant and facilities should be designated for anyone experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms. This should not be a public area in the facility and security measures and cleaning measures should be in place within the designated area. All employees should be aware of where that quarantine area is located.

**Contingency plans:** You need to address what employees should do if someone within their home is sick with symptoms or is notified of suspected exposure to the virus.

If someone in the household of an employee is



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### Prolite Uses Less Resin AND Reduces More Weight than the Competition

Prolite's unique particle-packed design makes it the most efficient and economical lightweight filler on the market today. No other filler saves you resin and reduces the weight of your parts quite like Prolite.

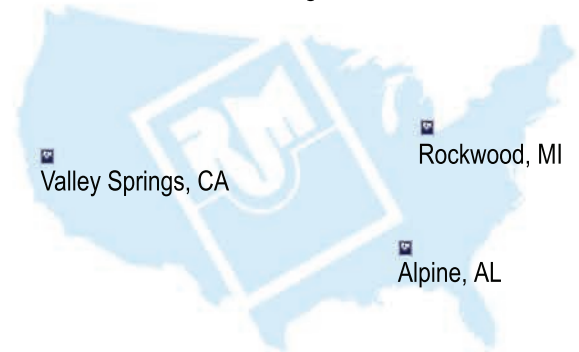
#### The advantages of using less resin

- ◆ Lower cost
- ◆ Less shrinkage
- ◆ Lower VOC emissions
- ◆ Reduced chance of stress fractures & cracking during cure
- ◆ Decreased chance of warping

#### The advantages of lighter parts

- ◆ Less labor used in manufacturing, handling & installation
- ◆ Lower shipping & distribution cost
- ◆ Less potential for part damage during installation

#### Manufacturing Locations



### Prolite Provides Superior Wet-out, Flow and Air Release

Conventional lightweight fillers can be difficult to wet out and require extra mixing time. Resulting matrixes are often dense and "stiff"; resisting flow and inhibiting air release. This is not the case with Prolite.

### Prolite Improves Thermal Shock Resistance

Independent testing has proven that products made with R.J. Marshall Company lightweight fillers perform better than conventional marble fillers; up to three times better in many cases. When casting according to standard marble manufacturing procedures, Prolite fillers exceed all ANSI certification standards.

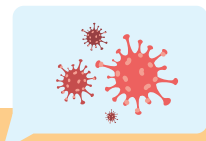
### Direct Replacement for Calcium Carbonate

Prolite 15 and Prolite 25 can be used as a direct, one to one, replacement for calcium carbonate.

Typical Physical Properties	Prolite 15	Prolite 25	Prolite 35	Prolite 50	Prolite 50FGA	Prolite FR50
Resin % required in matrix*	23 - 24	27 - 28	32 - 33	42 - 43	45 - 46	47 - 48
Loose bulk density (lbs./cu.ft.)	65	58	46	29	29	28
Specific gravity	2.3	1.8	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Free moisture content	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%	< 0.4%

\*Resin % recommendations are based on an 800-1000 cps casting resin at 70° F.

*"We Seek To Make Our Customers Successful"*



**THE FAMILY FIRST  
CORONAVIRUS  
RELIEF ACT (FFCRA)  
REQUIRES THAT  
EMPLOYEES BE PAID  
UP TO 80 HOURS FOR  
ABSENCES DUE TO  
COVID-19-RELATED  
ILLNESSES.**

symptomatic or has been notified of suspected exposure, the company needs to be able to tell employees what they should do. Do you want them to get tested immediately and wait to return to work until the results are back or do you want to allow them to keep working in designated quarantine areas with the proper CDC precautions in place? Regardless of which choice is implemented as part of your policy, the employee should contact the facility emergency COVID-19 contact to notify him or her of potential exposure.

The emergency contact also should have the authority to either insist on testing or instruct the employee on the safety procedures that must be followed if returning to work.

If the decision is to allow the employee to return to work, that employee should report to the quarantine area before the beginning of each shift for a temperature check, and checks should be made throughout the day. Be advised that if temperature levels are noted, this data will fall under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements. If a pass/fail reading is conducted, HIPAA does not apply. A mask should be worn by potentially exposed employees at all times when in the workplace for 14 days after exposure. The employee should avoid common areas. Employees who develop symptoms should remain at home, contact the emergency COVID-19 contact and seek medical diagnosis.

It's important to note that in addition to the preceding steps, the local health department could mandate that an employee be tested after only potential exposure. Be sure to follow all local health department guidelines and mandates and make sure your procedure reflects that in your policy.

**When symptoms appear:** What happens if an employee becomes symptomatic at work or receives a positive test result?

The employee should immediately report to the quarantine area for evaluation and instruction. He or she should be sent home and instructed to seek medical diagnosis. Affected employees should be notified. Areas used by the sick person need to be closed off. Outside doors and windows should be opened to increase air circulation. The suggestion is to wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting. Clean and disinfect not just the areas used by the sick person but also common areas such as bathrooms and break areas.

**Absenteeism policy for COVID-19:** The Family First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) requires that employees be paid up to 80 hours for absences due to COVID-19-related illnesses. You cannot require sick time, personal time or

vacation time be used for this specific illness. In the early days of the pandemic, testing was sometimes hard to find. With the increase in testing, your policy can now require proper documentation that a person sought that testing. This section should also address your policy on family medical leave concerning the Coronavirus. This is in addition to regular family medical leave and must be directly related to COVID-19 issues.

It is a good idea to reiterate the standard attendance policy for all non-COVID-related illnesses as well.

**Communication:** If you need to inform employees of potential exposure, you should specify a means to do this. Will you do it via email, written letter, in person or a combination? Make sure to include how you will notify employees in your policy so they will know what to expect.

**Enforcement:** You also need to specify how you'll enforce your written policies. Will you implement write-ups, suspensions, terminations for violations of the COVID-19 policy? Be sure to check with your labor lawyer or consultant before implementing your enforcement policy. Some actions may be protected under FFCRA. However, at a minimum, write-ups should be implemented to show you are enforcing the policy in the event of an OSHA complaint or site outbreak.

**Implementation responsibilities:** Designate a company representative to implement, enforce and maintain the COVID-19 policy. The policy also should be evaluated after any incident, and government regulations should be monitored continuously for changes. At the time of publication, Virginia OSHA is the only state that has implemented a specific COVID-19 policy; 18 other states have the authority to do so.

## Final thoughts

A written COVID-19 policy is the best way to ensure everyone is on the same page during this pandemic. Be sure all employees receive a copy of your COVID-19 policy. This is the best way to communicate what you are doing to keep them safe and what everyone's responsibilities are. Make sure you are reviewing and updating your policy as needed and that employees are notified of any changes. This will help keep your employees safe and potentially help you avoid OSHA violations and fines. ■

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# HOW TO PIVOT YOUR BUSINESS DURING COVID-19



OLD WAY

NEW WAY

**BY SHARYN AND HANK YULOFF**

**IN HIS LANDMARK 1859 BOOK, THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES,**

Charles Darwin showed that species that adapt best to their changing environment have the best chance of surviving, while those who do not adapt do not make it.

Darwin wrote: “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

At Yuloff Creative, we have used that quote as it relates to business when we advise company presidents on what they need to do to better face challenges—how they can pivot or change their processes to meet those challenges.

After all, since Fortune magazine came out with the Fortune 500 in 1955, they have had to replace 429 of the original 500 companies because, even though those organizations were large, they did not adapt to the continually evolving economic landscape. The

good news for smaller companies is that pivoting can be easier and quicker than what those large corporations must do.

Currently, the business world is dealing with an unprecedented economic situation. For the first time since 2007-2008, the economy is in an economic recession—and not just any recession but one complicated by a worldwide pandemic. The downturn itself was not unforeseen. Normal economic cycle indicators saw it coming on the horizon. It’s just that the horizon itself came months faster than expected. This leaves all of us in the business world seeking to answer a significant question: How are we going to pivot our marketing programs to fit this current economy and the new paradigm that will follow? In fact, how can we pivot our businesses while facing the COVID-19 crisis?

## Ensuring the survival of our businesses

By now you've seen that no matter how you define your sales community—from local areas to global size—there is a definite change in your community and how your community relates to itself and its members. A huge change is occurring in how your community sees your business.

The first thing that changed during all this was buying habits. Normally we teach that there is a two-part question you must get a prospect to answer to make the sale. That question is “Why buy from me?” followed by “Why buy from me instead of my competitors?” Now, a third option, an option that has always existed but does not come into play as often under normal circumstances, is more prevalent. That question is, “Should you buy at all?”

To successfully pivot your business during COVID-19 requires that you must first answer that third question to attract buyer attention.

This process has already begun to happen in the larger marketplaces. For example, we are seeing that automotive manufacturers Ford, Chrysler and Toyota all use a version of: “If, during this time you need a vehicle...” instead of highlighting the features and benefits of particular models. These auto giants are leading their messages with “no payments

for a certain amount of time.” In other words, they are pointing out that, assuming things will get better soon, buyers can take advantage now of deals on a car. This is right out of their “How to sell cars during a recession” playbook. Automotive vending machine company Carvana is even touting contactless delivery of their vehicles.

We also are seeing a similar focus in pizza delivery ads. Have you noticed that major chains such as Domino's and Papa John's are talking about how they deliver pizza without having ever touched it instead of marketing the value of their pizzas? They are answering that third question first with: buy because we're safe. Both examples, automotive companies and pizza delivery companies, are relying on consumers to remember years of previous features and benefits that were stressed through advertising. One bit of proof on this is that Pizza Hut, which was slow to tout contactless delivery options, just had a quarter with sales down 11% and their largest franchisee partner declaring bankruptcy.

## What to do to pivot

The business world that COVID-19 has created includes some new rules such as:

**First, look at your customer base.** Decide what that base

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needs from you, and just as importantly, how you can deliver what your customers need. Restaurants were the first to figure this out because of necessity: they were not able to seat their clients in their establishments. In our small town of Sedona, CA, take-out banners appeared in front of several dozen restaurants almost immediately. Next, our doctor's office began using Zoom for contactless appointments.

At Yuloff Creative, we had to pivot all of our events from in-person to virtual. In a short three-week arc, we went from in-person, 3-day Small Business Breakthrough Bootcamp to a 2-day completely virtual boot camp because we could not see exposing our attendees to a possible virus.

**Second, embrace the Era of Personal Distancing.** Personal distancing may not be going away anytime soon, which is difficult for us in the United States where we love our "Hugs, Handshakes and High Fives." Even if every case of COVID-19 were to miraculously disappear overnight, it would take a long time for things to get back to normal. I remember that after the January 1994 Northridge Earthquake, people in this area of the state did not travel to see clients in the north end of the San Fernando Valley. The Yuloffs were gun shy because our house was just two miles south of the epicenter. With COVID-19, the entire world is the epicenter, and we are all in the middle of it.


Meanwhile, no matter what, your business has to make money, so we will all need to change the sales and marketing strategies we were using just a short while ago. We will need to embrace the digital marketplace to do so.

For some of you, this is no big deal while others probably view this as: oh no, I'm not ready. Each business owner has a different comfort level when it comes to the digital marketplace.

One common business pivot tool today is video conferencing. With video conferencing software such as FreeConferenceCalling, GoToMeeting, Zoom, Skype and FaceTime, small businesses can schedule and hold virtual meetings with staff, customers, prospects and everyone else important to the business. Even if we cannot be "belly to belly" we can still be "face-to-face."

This can be beneficial in a time when many of your customers are staying at home, spending hours online and looking at their devices. Why not take advantage by making full use of your blogs, your social media, email marketing and even digital ads?

**Third, use this time to create educational opportunities.**



**BUSINESSES IN THE CAST POLYMER WORLD KNOW THEY NEED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF THEIR PRODUCTS; HOW EASY IT IS TO MAINTAIN; HOW STRONG THE MATERIALS; HOW RESISTANT TO MOLD, MILDEW AND OTHER NASTY ATTACKERS.**

The next pivot we'd recommend for your business during COVID-19 is to educate prospects by offering virtual classes, education, even virtual networking events when possible.

Businesses in the cast polymer world know that they need to educate the public about the benefits of their products; how easy it is to maintain; how strong the materials; how resistant it is to mold, mildew and other nasty attackers (A good selling point

with today's germ-phobic mentality). Meanwhile, around the world, every classroom, every industry conference and most certainly every convention has been shut down or postponed. Yet clients and prospects still want a chance to network with peers or to learn about the product.

Your company can pivot by helping to fill the knowledge gap with virtual classes or events, educational videos on YouTube and each of your social media platforms, and by blogging on your website.

## Conclusion

It is a rare company that has not had its sales process changed by the pandemic. Even retailers who were already online have to work with their shipping companies to be extra certain their shipments will arrive on time and safely. Meanwhile, if you rely on being in-person to make sales, you have drastically changed your process.

We have noticed that a lot of companies are mailing out more printed sales materials and every piece that is being sent has been updated in some way. As you do this, we suggest you highlight your ability to give free consultations. Then we suggest that in implementing those calls, you add this important twist: At the beginning of the calls, whether in person or by phone, take a few minutes to connect on a human level. Make sure you ask about their family's experience with the virus and how they are overcoming it on a personal and business level.

This does not mean you should be eschewing all your other marketing efforts. But direct mail, phone calls and stressing the human factor can be a large part of what will attract your ideal and most profitable clients. ■

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**HANK AND SHARYN YULOFF** ([www.yuloffcreativemarketingsolutions.com](http://www.yuloffcreativemarketingsolutions.com)) are business coaches specializing in helping small companies improve their sales, marketing, human resources and public speaking efforts. They are offering readers a free 30-minute consultation to become more focused on a successful path. For information, go to [www.FreeMarketingConsultation.com](http://www.FreeMarketingConsultation.com). To reserve a free spot or get information on their next Small Business Breakthrough Bootcamp, go to [www.PlanYourMarketing.com](http://www.PlanYourMarketing.com).



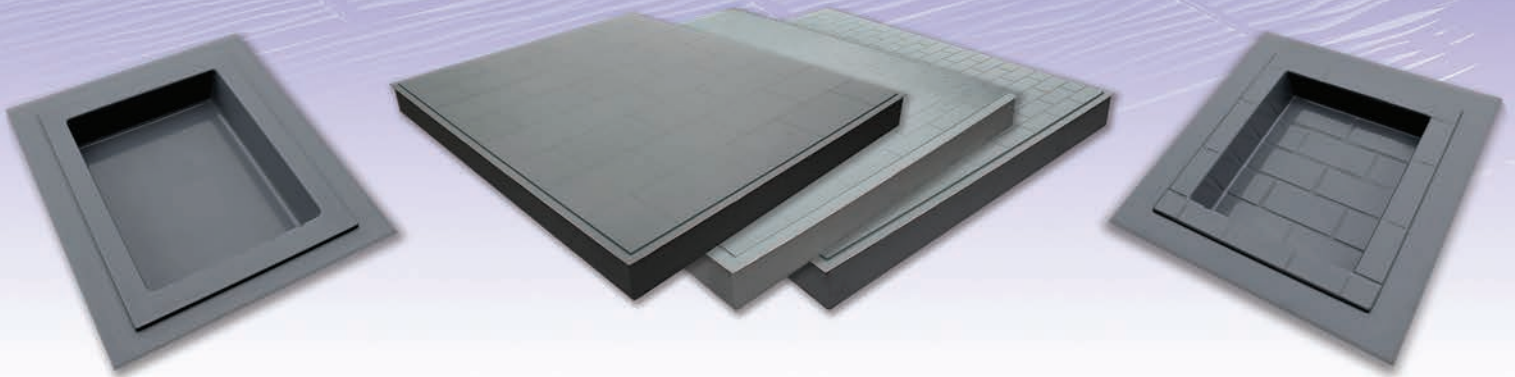


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# Updating workplace exposure limits on styrene



**ONE OF THE REGULATORY ISSUES ON THE MINDS OF MOST CAST POLYMER MANUFACTURERS TODAY** is pending updates from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) or the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) of enforceable limits for workplace exposure to styrene. Action is expected sometime in the next few years so we're all keeping a close eye on what's happened and what may occur. Here's the latest on what we know:

## Why the updates?

OSHA's current 100 parts per million (ppm) permissible exposure limit (PEL) for average exposure during an 8-hour workday is considered outdated. In 1997, the styrene industry recommended a voluntary limit of 50 ppm, which was revised to 20 ppm in 2010. During the Obama Administration, OSHA announced it was beginning the process of updating the styrene PEL, but no activity on styrene by that agency has happened since 2016. This rulemaking could be reopened in 2021 if a change in Administrations occurs.

Congress amended the Toxic Substances Control Act in 2016, identifying styrene as a "priority substance," which means EPA is to perform a risk evaluation and then establish regulations controlling environmental, consumer or workplace exposure if that agency considers health risks to be excessive. Because of this, styrene could begin a 5-year process of EPA risk evaluation and promulgation of control regulations within the next decade.

One of the issues in the styrene arena is what factors should be considered by OSHA or EPA when setting a new

styrene workplace exposure limit. Setting an enforceable regulatory limit should include consideration of:

- the risk and severity of adverse health effects,
- the applicable legislative requirements,
- the engineering feasibility, and
- the cost and workplace impact of available controls.

## Uncertainty over health risks

Most parties agree that conclusions about the styrene workplace exposure levels associated with excessive health risks are uncertain.

The reported workplace health impacts at exposures below 100 ppm include irritation of the respiratory system and effects on the nervous system such as delayed response time. Industry scientists expect these impacts to be reversible once exposure ceases. For exposures below 50 ppm, effects reportedly can include hearing loss and changes in color discrimination ability, both very mild and not likely to be noticed by workers.

Hearing loss has been identified as the most sensitive effect. An informative study conducted with a large group of workers at a boatbuilding plant found a significant increase in hearing loss among a subgroup of workers who were employed for periods longer than about 15 years and who were exposed at levels above 30 ppm at the time of the study. Neither exposure level nor length of employment was considered independently as factors associated with this effect. Instead, researchers suggested that the hearing loss

was caused by high exposures in the past and noted that an evaluation of this workplace in 1985 found mean air concentrations of styrene that exceeded 100 ppm.

Scientists working for the styrene industry have postulated that exposures of 20 ppm and less are not likely associated with an unacceptable risk of hearing loss, especially when combined with controls to limit exposure to noise to 85 dBA. While 20 ppm may be considered a safe level, the scientists also observed that the available data are not precise enough to allow a conclusion regarding the exact level of styrene exposure at which hearing loss will occur.

The data on vision effects is equally uncertain. Some studies report effects at exposures below 50 ppm, but a look at data on the same workers considered in the hearing study described above found no effects from the level of exposure, length of employment or a combination of those factors—on color vision or contrast sensitivity.

As this shows, the data do not tell us whether the risk of workplace health impacts at an enforceable 8-hour limit of 50 ppm would be significantly greater than at a limit of 20 ppm or lower.

### **Applicable legislative provisions**

In the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Congress did not demand prevention of workplace health impacts that may occur at styrene exposures below 50 ppm.

In promulgating a standard dealing with toxic materials, the act required OSHA to ensure no employee will suffer material impairment of health or functional capacity. Arguably, the health effects reportedly associated with workplace exposure to styrene at 8-hour average levels of not more than 50 ppm do not meet the act's material impairment standard.

Demonstrating that workers exposed at levels below 50 ppm suffer changes in hearing or color discrimination ability would require sensitive tests; there are no reports of workers being aware of these effects or of any impacts to functioning at work or daily life at home.

### **Engineering controls**

One of the issues that has arisen is that compliance through engineering controls with an exposure limit set below 50 ppm is infeasible.

Careful industry studies show that composites manufacturers using common open molding processes can use mechanical ventilation to limit 8-hour styrene exposures to 50 ppm, but moving enough air to reduce worker exposures below 50 ppm becomes excessively costly, especially when considering the costs of heating or cooling large quantities of make-up air.

The American Composites Manufacturing Association's (ACMA) studies conclude that respiratory protection will be needed to achieve any regulatory limit that is below 50 ppm.

Yet the use of respiratory protection can have significant adverse workforce effects and create excessive costs. The following are reasons why many composites manufacturers are concerned about a regulatory requirement that can be met only through the use of respirators:

- Some manufacturers believe that providing and maintaining respirators will be excessively costly and that respirator programs will require the continuous, on-going attention of supervisors, which takes time away from efforts to improve operating efficiency and product quality.
- Many believe a requirement for respiratory protection will exacerbate existing problems they have in hiring and maintaining a workforce.
- As enforced exposure limits are reduced below 50 ppm, more and more workers in a facility will need to use respiratory protection. This is because, in many open molding operations, not just employees directly involved in the resin application process are exposed but also production helpers, maintenance workers, warehouse workers and supervisors. All of these parties might also need to use respirators. At some point, safe and efficient operation becomes impractical.
- Before allowing the use of respirators to meet regulatory exposure limits, OSHA requires employers to demonstrate that engineering controls such as mechanical ventilation are not feasible. However, the agency does not provide a method to assess feasibility. Composites manufacturers often have encountered OSHA officials unwilling to accept any analysis concluding engineering controls are infeasible, which leaves employers in an impossible position.

All of this analysis suggests that the enforceable regulatory limit for 8-hour workplace exposure to styrene should not be lower than 50 ppm. However, to make its case, the industry will likely need more information from composites manufacturers on the feasibility of engineering controls and the costs and impacts of respiratory protection. ACMA is working with ICPA to collect this information and be ready for the anticipated rulemaking by OSHA or EPA. ■

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# The Importance of Temperature and Measurement

**IN THE CAST POLYMER INDUSTRY,** quality control often has focused on product finishing techniques, production line defect identification and repair after pulling a part from a mold and making corrections. Manufacturing facilities rely on highly skilled employees who can make the product look good when it gets delivered to the customer. That's why inspection and refinishing positions are some of the most challenging staff spots to find great employees to fill.

Equipping facilities with process disciplines that will trace each cast polymer product on the production line is one way to ensure quality. Although labor hours are always a concern, finding a way to track time, day, temperature, the humidity of production and what materials were used is an effective quality control tool that takes very little labor and yields excellent results. With the mobile technologies available to us in 2020, recording the data we need for this tracking can be as easy as taking a digital picture of a product lot number or temperature reading or it can mean scanning a barcode setup of the mold set used. These best-practice quality production methods do not require an employee to be a chemist.

Quality control implemented within basic parameters is outlined in the Certified Composites Technician Cast Polymer (CCT-CP) program. These steps can yield excellent results and save significant cost. The three most productive data points to keep in the cast polymer production process are temperature, measurement and time. Chemical processes are best measured with all three of these in mind. Tracking these data points allows employees to collect and retain data everyone in the shop can understand and use. Basic process instructions can improve results from any workforce receiving standard training. By tracking data and following the correct processes, curing conditions that vary could change cosmetic surface and strength results with no change in resin selection.

## Temperature

A top factor that should be measured in cast polymer manufacturing is temperature.



Gel coat spraying in progress

Keeping the shop at a temperature within the recommendations of gel coat and resin supplier requirements should always be standard practice. Basic thermometers mounted in production areas and digital temperature measuring equipment now available offers accurate readings for less than \$20 per thermometer, and these thermometers can be used on molds and resin as well. The time and temperature of cast polymer products during the cure process are vital points to track in cast polymer chemistry.

Gel-coat products are particularly sensitive to temperature. Many instances of cracking, peeling, scaling, color fading, blistering or other defects are connected to temperature. For the best quality, it's

A good scale can be an important tool



ACMA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

important that the temperature of the gel coat, mold and spray-booth interior should be close to the same or within a few degrees of each other. Most gel-coat applications should be done at temperatures between 60–85°F, and the specifications outlined by the maker of the gel coat need to be followed. A frequent problem experienced in shops results from rushing the production process after heating or cooling a shop while still having a cold mold or resin stored at a much lower or higher temperature than the shop area where the product is made.

### Following specs

Gel coat should be mixed according to the supplier's specification and tested for gel time before the coating is applied. Using a gel timer and measuring gel coat to initiator ratio by weight is recommended for accuracy. Shops that spray or brush gel coat should also use a mil gauge to be sure the coating is applied to the mold in three passes for a total wet thickness of 18 to 24 mils (or whatever the specifications are for the product).

Casting resin is also sensitive to temperature. When batch mixing, changes in temperature when dealing with large volumes of resin can mean rapid rises in temperature if the initiator levels are not kept to those recommended by the supplier. It should be noted that when initiator is introduced, higher volume resin batches mean chemical reactions that can create significant heat increases. Various resin, initiator, filler, promoter and inhibitor products will influence temperatures and what should be done when mixing. Some of the more common cast polymer challenges can be found in the CCT study guide under "Module III – Cast Polymer Materials."

### Conclusion

Measuring and keeping track of data on resin, initiator and filler are all keys to keeping consistent casting products, especially given various shifts of the production line as well as differences in what happens on different production days. Keeping temperature and measurement records can document that the correct processes are followed. A simple way to do that is to take photos of scale data and mixing information with mobile devices to easily record input that quality control personnel can use to keep and check records. The CCT-CP program study guide has a helpful tool in Appendix II that is a quality control batch worksheet used for this type of documentation. Accurate records can also assist in identifying causes when problems occur, providing a way



CCT training manuals teach shop employees the processes to follow and what temperatures to track.

to find out what goes wrong when products are not up to specifications.

By communicating to team members that they are all responsible for quality, a company creates a way to improve facility work conditions, lower the amounts of rework projects and improve the bottom line. That means higher quality products and lower waste. For employees, that can translate to job stability and higher pay opportunities. ■

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# The challenges of gel coat prerelease

**Q: My shop continues to struggle with gel coat prerelease, especially in the summer. What are some suggestions for eliminating prerelease?**

**A:** Gel coat prerelease is a condition where the gel coat releases from the mold before a cast polymer matrix is poured. More often than not, this results in the need to repair a defect in the finished part or scrapping of the part. This condition leads to wasted raw materials and excessive man-hours. Let's look at what causes gel coat prerelease and how we can prevent it.

Gel coat, like all unsaturated polyesters, shrinks as it cures. Gel-coat suppliers design these polymers to cure at a controlled rate that will offer superior end-use properties (hardness, gloss, color retention, stain resistance, crack resistance, etc.). In the development of gel coats, a balance of end-use properties, application properties and production requirements must be taken into consideration.

Cast polymer product manufacturers should not hesitate to reach out to their gel-coat suppliers to find a product and cure rate that best suits their specific needs. In such cases, they should be prepared to provide insight about their production facilities that will assist the gel-coat supplier in providing a product that will meet those specific needs. Here's an example: A shop pouring the matrix as soon as the gel coat is tack-free with minimal molds in the process could afford to have a quick-curing gel coat because the coating will not have time to prerelease before the product is cast. On the other hand, manufacturers that have gel-coated parts that sit for a few hours before casting could use a slower curing gel coat, which is less likely to prerelease. Also, a different curing gel coat can be used in summer versus winter months to meet the needs of each environment.

If you're using the recommended gel coat but still have prerelease, other recommendations can be followed.

Here are suggestions to minimize gel-coat prerelease. Following these processes in the hot summer months when prerelease is at its worst is highly recommended.

- **Use the gel-coat suppliers' recommended initiator (catalyst) at the correct ratios.** Never use a partial strength

This picture shows what happens with prerelease.



initiator in the gel coat (all initiators used in the gel coat must be 9% active oxygen). Check spray equipment to ensure it is delivering the proper ratios. A 1.75%–2.50% ratio is the most recommended initiator level for the gel coat. If a company is experiencing excessive prerelease, the lower range of initiator

level (1.75%–2.0%) is recommended. If the initiator is hand-weighed into the gel coat, use a scale (in other words: not the “capful” nor “Glug Glug” methods) and carefully weigh the initiator into the gel coat, based on these same ratios. An example: 500 grams of gel coat requires 10 grams of initiator for a 2% ratio.

- **Cool everything down.** Heat causes the gel coat to cure (and shrink) at a faster rate. Store gel coat and initiator inside in a temperature-controlled environment. Do not spray hot molds (ones that were recently cycled and are still warm from the exotherm of the matrix). A small fan or air movement across a freshly gel-coated part will not only help keep the part cooler, but also will assist the gel coat in curing evenly, reducing the chance for prerelease. Keep the shop as close as possible to 65°F–80°F. If a heat tunnel is used, it may be necessary to reduce the temperature (or turn the heat off) during warm summer months (or run it in the morning and not in the afternoon).
- **Use the wet film thickness gauge** (also known as the mil gauge). Proper gel coat thickness (18–22 mils for most applications) is essential for proper curing. Thick gel coat will shrink more than thin gel coat. Uneven thickness (such as in corners or over wax/clay lines) will cure at differing rates, causing tension during shrinking that is likely to cause prerelease.
- **Consider mold release type.** Modern liquid polymer mold releases drastically reduce the surface tension of the

mold. This lower surface tension does not allow anything for the gel coat to “grab” during the curing or shrinking process. Do not over-wax molds. Consider using a carnauba-based paste wax instead of a polymer mold release, especially on custom parts with wax or clay lines where prerelease is often prevalent. If a polymer mold release is preferred, work closely with the mold release supplier to ensure proper application techniques and storage of the release. Mold release suppliers often have differing formulations that can increase or decrease the “slip” or surface tension of the mold.

- **Cast the part as soon as possible.** The longer the gel coat sits (after it’s tack-free) before being poured, the greater the chance of prerelease. Consider bringing in the gel-coat team about an hour before the casting/pouring team so the team has fresh gel coat that is ready to be poured. Never leave a gel-coated-only part sitting overnight. Consider rotating lunch and break

times so the curing gel coat does not sit too long after it’s tack-free.

- **Keep movement to a minimum.** When moving the gel-coated part to the pouring department, try not to jar the mold—especially if the gel coat is past its tack-free stage. These bumps and excessive movements increase the opportunity for prerelease
- **Vent custom bowls.** If a top has a custom bowl that is clayed or waxed on flat stock, it must be vented. The air under the bowl will expand from heat and will create a prerelease during expansion.

Using these recommendations should help keep the gel coat tight to the mold and ensure cosmetic quality is achieved. ■

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## Rounding out the membership listings

Individual company listings that members have on the ICPA website under “member directory” are a useful tool for both the association and the industry. Because of this, Executive Director Jennifer Towner is asking members to help make that directory a more valuable source of information.

That means sending her a high resolution version of the company logo as well as a short overview of the business including products made and sold; a general description of the industries the company sells to and the customers the company serves, and an emphasis on the business specialties. Towner gives this example:

*The ABC manufacturing company has been in business for more than 25 years and is headquartered in Louisville, KY, with locations in Jefferson City, KY and Jeffersonville, IN. ABC is a manufacturer of cast polymer vanity tops and shower panels. Specializing in decorative tile patterns in beautiful white or trending colors and textures, the company sells to residential home builders and remodelers. Our cast polymer products are strong, durable and mildew resistant. Come visit our show-*

*room and see our website for more information. We also have a cabinetry division to help you complete that bathroom project.*

Companies can also list their websites and addresses for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Houzz, or whatever social and communication channels they use.

Send the information to Jennifer Towner at [jennifer@theicpa.com](mailto:jennifer@theicpa.com)

## Membership renewals well on their way

Although it's been a tough year for many manufacturers, memberships in ICPA remain strong. As this issue of Cast Polymer Connection went to press, more than 85% of ICPA members had renewed for the year, a number that continues to climb.

Membership packets are being mailed out as companies renew, and members still have time to take advantage of 2020/2021 rates, which have not gone up. A new member guide was posted on the website in early July that explains the member benefits and perks and is included in the packet ([www.theicpa.com/membership](http://www.theicpa.com/membership)).

# Every Workplace Should Have a Safety and Health Program

Safety and health programs should include:



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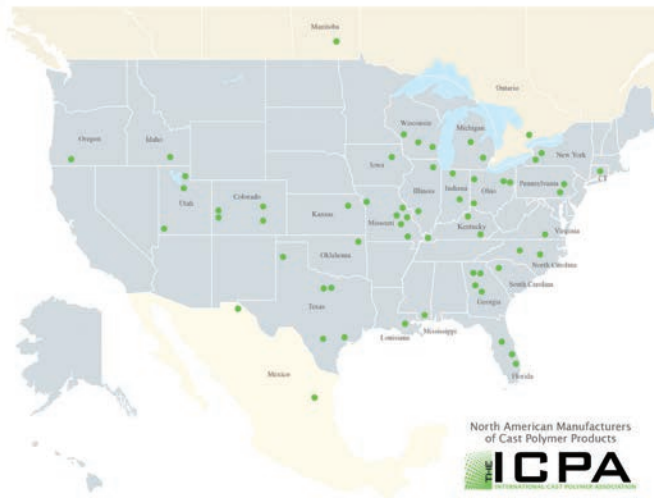


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## ICPA website now has a location map

As the association fine-tunes and expands its marketing message for cast polymer products, the website page entitled “Why Cast Polymer” has been updated and improved (<https://theicpa.com/about-us/what-is-cast-polymer>).

New descriptions and a gallery of images has been added to help the association and industry market the products. An interactive map consumers can use to locate ICPA member manufacturers in their area has been added along with contact information and websites for those manufacturers.

“The ICPA website is our hub for member communications but is also an opportunity to showcase our product,” Executive Director Jennifer Towner explains. “That’s why we need our members to send in their descriptions and logo. We also are encouraging them to share with us any good photos they have of their products for the Why Cast Polymer page,” she added.

Any ICPA manufacturer company wanting to share a photo on that page gallery can send it to Jennifer Towner at [Jennifer@TheICPA.com](mailto:Jennifer@TheICPA.com).

## ICPA roundtables taking off

This summer, the association began a series of roundtables to discuss specific issues of interest to members such as procedures that can help with mold repair, gel coating and other processes, dealing with employment issues, the challenges of styrene limits and plant air quality, and much more.

The discussions are held mainly on Tuesdays and Fridays; they are open dialog between members and are attended by industry experts to assist with solutions to problems or answer questions. The talks provide members both an opportunity to learn about the latest trends and the chance to network with other companies and exchange best practice tips.

“These member-driven meetings, which are conducted on the easy-to-use platform of Zoom, provide the association an opportunity to give members the information they would have gotten if physical meetings were currently part of the picture. They also are providing us with a channel for addressing new issues and finding out about trends,” says ICPA Executive Director Jennifer Towner.

For information and scheduling, go to the website and look under “Zoom-in Virtual Events.”

## Marketing Committee Tackling Several Key Areas

As an added benefit for membership, the ICPA Marketing Committee has a full plate of strategies it is currently working on that are designed to market cast polymer products.

“One area we’re focusing on is providing useful tools for some of our smaller companies that don’t have big marketing departments or budgets,” says Luke Haas, president, Elite Marble Company, chairman of the committee. “We’re trying to provide them a vault of tools they can easily use to market their companies and the general industry,” he adds.

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Some of what's being developed and finetuned includes:

- A collection of items such as pictures, brochure and other marketing piece templates, articles on the industry and suggested language for use in communications and marketing. One example includes the improvements on the website on "Why Cast Polymer," which explains attributes of cast polymer products and why they make a superior choice for kitchens and baths, how the product is made and what advantages cast polymer holds over some other types of materials, and a gallery of photographs. ([www.theicpa.com/about-us/what-is-cast-polymer](http://www.theicpa.com/about-us/what-is-cast-polymer).)
- The association has launched channels on Instagram and on Facebook that focus on the fact cast polymer offers the world a grout-free design. The pages offer pictures of examples, explanations of what cast polymer/engineered marble is and discussion on why grout-free is so important in kitchens and baths.

The @groutfreedesigns page for Facebook can be found at [www.facebook.com/groutfreedesigns](http://www.facebook.com/groutfreedesigns), and on Instagram, find @grout\_free\_designs at [www.instagram.com/grout\\_free\\_designs](http://www.instagram.com/grout_free_designs).

The association is asking members to participate in both channels by visiting, sharing their own photos and designs, commenting on what's there, tagging photos and participating in the general discussions.

### Cast Polymer Radio continues to shine

Cast Polymer Radio ([www.castpolymer.com](http://www.castpolymer.com)) has become a major means of getting information on specific topics out to membership and an important source of education for the membership. A sample of recent topics includes:



- How to Inspire Millennials in the Workplace with best-selling author John Crossman
- COVID-19 and Styrene with Kelly DeBusk, Composites Compliance
- Interviews with Ray Roux of CounterTek, Scott Byers of Majestic Kitchen and Bath Creations, and Derek Hill of Syn-Mar Products that talk about their businesses
- Instagram Marketing and How to Create Ads that Attract New Customers



The first-ever SAFE PLANT of the Year Award recently went to International Marble Industries (IMI), Woodstock, GA. IMI received the award for its excellence in creating and implementing a top-notch safety program. IMI's program and how it was put into effect were featured in **Cast Polymer Connection's** Summer issue. Pictured celebrating the occasion are (from left): Pat Sak, manufacturing manager; Gemma Mantilla, plant engineer; Renato Calmo-Mendoza, production manager; and David Long, shipping & receiving manager.

### Aiming for full participation in SAFE PLANT

ICPA is striving for 100% participation in the association's SAFE PLANT program. Even if a company has an existing health and safety program, joining the program can be of great benefit because it was created in partnership with the OSHA Safe + Sound program.

ICPA's SAFE PLANT uses the core elements that OSHA identifies as key to manufacturing health and safety and their recommended practices and action items. Find out more and get started in the free program at the ICPA website. (<https://theicpa.com/programsevents/safe-plant-campaign>)

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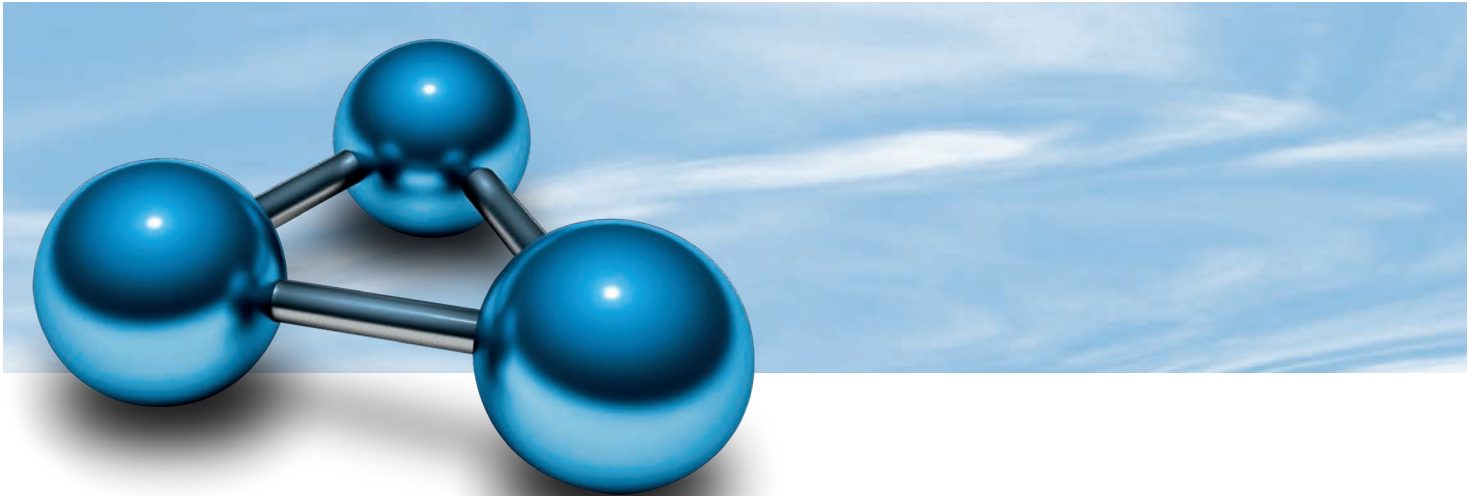
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