



Beer Line Cleaning and Cellar Maintenance

We all hate having to do it, we all complain that it takes up too much time and we all reckon it costs us too much money ... but if you don't do it you'll go out of business quicker than a snow-ball vendor in Hades. Beer-line cleaning and cellar maintenance are two of the fundamental principles of good pub management ...yes they are a chore, yes they take up precious time and yes it does cost for the lost beer, water and chemicals ... but if you have dirty beer-lines and foul-tasting beer then you will soon have an empty pub.

This guide will help you understand how to clean your beer-lines safely, effectively and efficiently; save time and minimise the cost to your business. I have always been of the mind-set that beer should be treated like any foodstuff in your kitchen (the law certainly classifies beer as a foodstuff anyway); as with food in the kitchen, you need to handle beer correctly and hygienically, store it in the correct conditions and keep the equipment and areas you store it in scrupulously clean - just as you do with your kitchen.

20 Step Beer Line Cleaning

Before You Start Safety Note: beer-line cleaner is hazardous to your health. You should always read and follow the instructions for its use (dilution and contact time), wear the correct protective equipment (goggles, rubberised apron / gloves) and know what to do about spills and splashes before you start using it.

1. The first point of contact between your beer and your customer is the keg coupler and the wall mounted cleaning socket and you need to keep both clean. When you start the beer-line cleaning process the first thing to do is immerse the coupler in a bucket of warm water with beer-line cleaning solution diluted at the proportion and clean it thoroughly (and the socket too).
2. Once cleaned attach all the keg couplers to their respective sockets and turn off the gas to each line. (Sockets, whilst providing a pretty good liquid seal, sometimes leak gas.) Turn on the gas to the cleaning system, this will push the cleaning fluid solution through the "ring main" and on to the individual fonts on your bar.
3. Turn off any "flash coolers" and the remote cooling system in the cellar - this will prevent any chance of cleaning fluid solution or flush water freezing in the lines. And why waste energy and money cooling cleaning fluid solution or flush water? (Turn off the blowers and cellar cooling whilst you are beer line cleaning - the constant to and fro and with doors open will make it work over-time - the cellar will cool back down quickly enough when you've finished.) Every penny counts!
4. Wash out the cleaning container (having emptied it of any liquid left over from the last time you cleaned the lines - Tsk! Tsk!). Fill the container to the level indicated on the container.
5. Set all the cellar buoys to their respective cleaning positions and bleed off any gas.



6. In the bar, remove all the diffusers and sparklers from the beer fonts and place in a bucket of water.
7. Now flush all the lines of beer by running the cold water in the cleaning container through the taps, it will get rid of any accumulated debris and will minimise the amount of cleaning fluid solution you have to use to effectively clean the lines.
8. Make up the correct dilution of cleaning fluid in the cleaning container in the cellar according to the instructions on the cleaning fluid you use for the size of cleaning container you are using. (Whether you are relying on staff to carry out beer line cleaning or doing it yourself, I would recommend that you choose a cleaning fluid with dye contained in it to ensure that all cleaning fluid is flushed out at the rinsing stage of the process.)
9. You can now pull the cleaning solution through each line until all the water has been displaced. You will know when this has been achieved in one of two ways: if you are using a clear solution you can use a litmus paper strip that will change colour or you can feel the solution come through when it feels "slippery" when rubbed between your finger-tips. (The latter method isn't really recommended, but sometimes you run out of litmus paper strips - if you do use this method make sure you wash your hands afterwards and avoid contact with your mouth or eyes.)
10. Return to the cellar and bleed cleaning solution through the fob detectors to make sure they are cleaned too.

You're half way through the process now...

11. Wait fifteen minutes (good time for a cuppa now) and repeat the process of drawing cleaning fluid through the lines. By drawing sufficient cleaning fluid through the line you can tell when the line is clean if the solution, when viewed in a glass has a "milky" appearance, or if using a dyed solution when the solution will stay the same colour as it was when you started.
12. If necessary, and your lines are heavily soiled (some lines soil more than others) then repeat the process. In any event do not leave cleaning solution in the lines for longer than the cleaning fluid manufacturer recommends ... under no circumstances should you leave cleaning fluid in the lines over-night in an attempt to save time in the morning.)
13. Once you are satisfied that your beer lines are clean you can begin the flushing out process. If you have cask lines you will have cleaned them between cask changes. (I have always retained the unused cleaning solution in a stainless steel bucket to keep any dirty cask taps immersed in to clean them before leaving them thoroughly rinsed in their storage rack - you can also use retained cleaning fluid for scrubbing stubborn beer drips and spills on the cellar floor).
14. Thoroughly rinse out the cleaning container with cold running water until all traces of cleaning fluid are removed and then fill with cold water to the level indicated on the cleaning container.
15. Now you can flush each line with 10 litres (2 gallons) of fresh water to remove the yeast that will have been dislodged by the cleaning fluid solution in the line. Don't forget to flush out the cellar buoys and fob



- detectors too! Once again check each line is clear of all traces of cleaning solution by using your litmus paper strips.
16. Drain the cleaning container of all water and turn off the cleaning line gas supply.
 17. Re-connect keg couplers to their respective kegs, turn the fob detectors from their cleaning setting to their dispense setting and turn on the gas to each beer line.
 18. Bleed the fob detectors of all water until full of beer.
 19. In the bar, replace all sparklers and diffusers on their respective taps and draw off each line until beer is running clearly and looks and tastes good.
 20. Finally remember to turn on the remote cooler in the cellar and all "flash coolers" under the bar.

Cellar Maintenance

Your beer cellar or keg store is a food storage area and should be kept clean and tidy at all times. Not only will it help to ensure your stocks are kept in optimum condition but you will also be able to work more efficiently. Your cellar is for beer only - not a place to keep other foodstuffs or garden furniture, broken chairs, tools etc!

You cellar should be at the correct temperature of between 11° - 13° C.

Your cellar should be well lit and contain access to a sink with hot and cold running water.

Keep all cleaning containers clean, store cleaning chemicals properly and keep the cellar floor and walls clean. You should ensure the walls are treated or painted with an anti-fungal cleaner/paint.

Don't forget to air your cellar on a daily basis for at least ten minutes a day.

Make sure all drains and sumps are cleaned weekly and clear of obstructions at all times - those pesky keg caps and cask ale pegs/bungs really need to be put in the bin!

Keep water hoses on their reel or securely tied up after use - they are a trip hazard.

Make sure all gas cylinders are correctly stored both when in use (full) and when empty, ensure all retaining chains are properly fitted and in use.

Keep all cooling fans clear of build ups of dust and remote cooler system grilles clear at all times.

Other Beer Cleaning Tips



Cleaning your beer-lines regularly will mean a lot waste, being a frugal publican I have always tried to recycle any product wasted via the pub kitchen ... steak & ale pie, Guinness & steak pie, pork with cider ... make sure you know what the kitchen is cooking and the kitchen knows when you clean beer-lines.

Line cleaner is also great for cleaning your cellar floor especially around your cask ales remember to rinse thoroughly and avoid contact in accordance with your COSHH policy.

If you sell real or cask conditioned ales always try to clean the lines as casks empty, whilst it may be tempting to just flush the line with water between cask changes, for the optimum in beer quality a full clean should be carried out every time. Very occasionally you will come across an ale that is particularly forgiving such as, Nottingham brewer, Castle Rock's Harvest Pale, which I have been able to "run on", but this has been an exception to the rule.

Top 10 Dispense Tips from “Innserve”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=IWaxKZdMFuI