



TECH TIPS

a technical bulletin by the experts at Gaco Western

Mix it Up!

When using open cell foam, it is necessary to use a mixer. The Spray Guide and/or Product Data Sheet for the foam will contain information regarding the proper mixer to use as well as specifications for product application and machine temperature settings. This will give you guidelines for how long and how often the product should be mixed.

Why do we mix?

When a drum sits over time, the thicker chemicals can settle to the drum bottom. A mixer is then used to bring those fluids off the drum floor, keep them suspended and prevent them from re-settling. The mixer helps give you a consistent product and the best yields possible.

Not running the mixer long enough or running at too low of a speed will affect the quality and yield of your foam. When not mixed properly the transfer pump can pull the thicker product from the bottom of the drum leaving progressively less chemical makeup as the drum fluid level drops while spraying. This results in poor rise and low yield.

Mixer Considerations

There are many different mixers in the marketplace. Here are some items to consider:

1. Air Compressor Size

When using an **air mixer** make sure the air compressor is sized large enough to provide adequate CFM to run your equipment and the air mixer. An undersized air compressor can create a variety of issues such as:

- Air can be taken from transfer pumps, therefore sending less chemical to the proportioner or preventing the spray gun from operating properly.
- A lack of sufficient air pressure could hinder the mixer's ability to turn fast enough to mix chemicals properly.

**Having trouble with foam?
Just pick up the phone!**

Gaco Western's Tech Hotline:
855 639 4649

8am - 8pm CST, Mon-Sun

**Ideas, suggestions
or questions?**

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A collapsible triple blade is used for mixing.



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2. Power Source

If you are running an **electric mixer**, make sure the generator or power source is large enough to run the electric mixer in addition to any other items plugged in to the outlets which pull lots of amperage (such as an electric heater in winter).

3. Length and Blade Placement

Some mixers may not have a shaft long enough to reach the bottom of the drum to mix properly so be sure to take this into consideration before making a mixer purchase. Some electric mixers come with a small propeller at the bottom of the shaft which take a long time to mix a full drum - they don't reach the bottom of the drum and don't mix as well as the collapsible three blade mixer. You should look to see that the chemical is turning at the top of the drum - this will help ensure a good even mix.


4. Speed

Some mixers have only one speed, but it is important to have a way to slow down your mixer when needed.

When you start the day with less than a full drum - for example 1/4 or 1/2 drum - you do not want to run the mixer on high but would want to reduce the speed. For an air mixer, an air valve should be installed and closed to slow the mixer. Choose an electric mixer with a variable speed option.

As important as proper mixing is to product consistency and yield, it is equally as important to avoid overmixing.

Overmixing occurs when the mixer is left running too long. As the fluid chemical level drops in the drum while spraying, the mixer has less drag on the blades causing the mixer to speed up. This causes bubbles to form and be sprayed out at the gun, resulting in foam with poor cell structure and appearing to be ISO rich.

Remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions when mixing their spray foam products. Doing your homework up front will help you get the best results possible every time. 

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