

Q&A from the March 27, 2018, Webinar: D System Keg Valves

with presenter Jon Graber, Micro Matic

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Will the industry ever be able to move to superior styles of keg coupler? ex: flat M-type/style

- This has happened in EU/UK with most breweries using A, G, M, having moved away from S. In North America, it will be up to breweries themselves to decide – it will not be easy for those who are “early adopters” of a System other than D. There will be push-back from retailers and distributors who have to supply (and in many regions, charge for) replacement A, G, M, S System couplers, teach people the difference and how to use the non-D couplers, etc. And any time there is a problem (foaming, etc.) the “different” valve and coupler will be blamed! Not to be too pessimistic, but.... 😊

What is the story behind the keg coupler in line-washing kegs that mix gas and liquid in the product discharge line?

- I understand the question, but don't know the answer. I can forward this to our Quality/Innovation Director on the Dispense Products side of Micro Matic for an answer.

Is there a tool for straightening the neck?

- Yes – and no – as explained on the webinar recording.

Please explain further how a damaged CO2 valve will cause a keg to get rejected by our keg line. We have a keg rejection problem, on a small manual IDD washer/filler machine

- Two things are most likely: A.) the CO2 valve is delaminating, acting as a check valve, slowing down or even stopping the purge; B.) the coupler is worn out – usually the center probe sealing gasket, but sometimes other mechanical parts wear out too – preventing the CO2 valve from being pushed far enough to open the valve “wide open”. This will slow down purging to the extent that the machine (if programmed for this) will reject the keg. “B” is far more common than “A”.

Is there a durometer rating required on the rubber goods???

- Each manufacturer establishes what they think is the ideal specification for these parts. It may not be the same from one manufacturer to the other. I am not aware of any “required” Shore rating range or value, but it may be spelled out in the DIN standards, for example – if it is, you can be quite certain that the manufacturers are following that standard (within the range) for all the spears and parts they produce.

Could you talk a bit more about beer stone detection and removal (i.e. is it usually on the bottom and visible?)

- Only way to detect it is to pull spears from cleaned kegs (safely, using the correct tools and procedures). Inspect the down tube of the spear; inspect the keg internally with a bright light. Only way to remove it is using a chemical solution that destroys rubber. Therefore... try to avoid

getting it in your kegs in the first place! Pro Tip: if you have beer stone on the down tube, but not on the inside of the keg... your machine may have a poorly-tuned low-flow cycle (or NO low-flow cycle, even worse!)

Do you foresee a switch to Ball type entirely in the future?

- Nearly all (98%+) of new kegs installed with D System are using ball-type already.

How can you identify the keg spear manufacturer?

- Micro Matic will have MMDK xxxx etched on the stainless rim around the CO2 valve on newer ball-type, and usually (but not always) MM or MR embossed on the rubber – but numerous other marks and codes were used over the past 35+ years.
- DSI has “DSI” embossed on the rubber CO2 valve
- Micro Matic and DSI have different design of Retainer Disks to hold together the spear/valve assembly
- Take photos if you’re uncertain and send them to your keg or keg spear supplier requesting assistance

Are poppet valves more susceptible to poor re-seating when filling is complete compared to ball valves? We've never seen a ball valve not seat properly, but we see it relatively frequently with poppet valves.

- This is generally only a problem with poppet valves as they age – once they are 10+ years old – or if they have been abused by over-stroking, over-exposure to UV light or high steam temp, for example. If the rubber and springs are in good condition, there should be no difference in performance between ball- and poppet-type.

What chems do you recommend we use in keg washers i.e caustic or and acid? And, should we alternate the chems?

- This is a question for your chemical supplier and/or keg washing machine supplier – I am not an expert at this and Micro Matic makes no recommendations on which specific products to use.

Does Micro Matic have correct instructions for pulling and rebuilding spears on their website?

- No, we at Micro Matic are careful NOT to allow this info out into the world! At least not to homebrewers, bartenders or others who should NEVER be tampering with (borrowing) your kegs. Instead, we work directly with you and your maintenance/operations staff with links to videos, digital manuals and hands-on/one-on-one training sessions.