

How Maintenance Plays a Role in Your Soldering Process

Session Questions and Answers

Q: How often should maintenance be done on a wave solder system?

A: I think everybody is different. Some customers run two or three shifts and then some run one shift. I always like to use an example of when a person cuts their grass. How low or what do you want your yard to look like? When you know how you want that to look, you can maintain your yard as needed. Same with your equipment, you can get that visual look and decide whether or not you're having any process issues. That's how you maintain the equipment. It will be different for everybody.

Q: Is there a chemistry that can be used to clean flux residues from a reflow machine?

A: Absolutely. The chemistry suppliers do offer chemistries or solvents that are capable of cleaning flux residues within the machine. It is much harder to do inside the machine but there are chemistries to do that.

Q: What causes a conveyor width chain to jerk or skip on a wave solder system?

A: 99% of the time it's because maintenance hasn't been done on the cleaning side. After you clean, go back to relubricate, or grease the conveyor system. Those chains are running on an aluminum anodized rail and if they lack lubrication, they're going to dig into that rail and cause skipping or jerking.

Q: Can a reflow oven width chain be cleaned when it is still in the machine?

A: I would say, to a certain point that you can. The best way to actually clean a reflow chain is to take the master link off, take that chain completely out, put it in a chemistry, let it soak, and it will come out looking brand new. Then of course, don't forget to soak it in tribol oils to get those pivot spots lubricated. Then reinstall it back into the machine.