

Die Cleaning (Dec 1999)

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A quick and easy method of cleaning extrusion dies/die components during changeovers is air stripping. Tools required are just an airgun in one hand and needle-nose pliers in the other hand. As components are removed, freeze a small area of exposed molten material with a blast from the airgun and grab it with the pliers. Begin to pull the solidified plastic away from the metal while keeping a stream of air on the point where the material is coming off. (This is the point where some practice helps). You must attain a balance of enough air to cool, but not so much that it completely solidifies and stiffens the material. When this is working correctly, the polymer should be completely stripped, leaving clean metal.

Continue this process until all polymer is removed. This can be done to internal components such as mandrels and spiders before removal from the die body, as well. The procedure works best on polyolefins, but can be used with virtually any material after a bit of practice.

Be sure to wear safety glasses/goggles and gloves before starting to prevent injury to the eyes and hands.

- Paul Berenbrok, The Conair Group, Inc

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