SILICON FOREST ELECTRONICS

Making a positive and profound impact.

Kev's Korner | November 2021 | Fall Update





Fall is finally here in the beautiful Pacific Northwest which means it's time to warm up the leaf blower, head up into the woods to seek out some of those delicious Chanterelle mushrooms, wax the skis, and dust off the Gore-Tex in preparation for this typically soggy season. At SFE we have elected to celebrate the rainy season ahead by adding some additional "wet" capacity to our facility in the form of an additional batch cleaning system. FYI ~ When I started in this industry over 20 years ago, I was a bit baffled when I saw one of our production team members place a fully assembled printed circuit board assembly (PCBA) into a water-based cleaner… I thought you weren't supposed to get them wet! It didn't take long for me to realize how important proper cleaning processes are in the assembly of PCBA's.



Electrovert Aquastorm 50 Batch Cleaner

While not exactly the most technically interesting addition we have ever made, we are excited to have this second batch cleaning system for the added capacity it brings to our cleaning processes. We currently have two large inline-style cleaners for removing water-soluble fluxes from certain PCBA's that we build for our customers. This new batch cleaner (a twin to our current batch cleaning system) allows for more flexibility and capacity for our production team members when cleaning "no-clean" flux residues. Let's back up for a second ~ Why in the world would anyone want to clean a flux residue that is not necessarily meant to be cleaned? This is a great question worth a little deeper look. Although no-clean flux residues are designed to remain on PCBA's after soldering, there are certain designs that can be sensitive to these residues. In addition, many of our customers desire a "clean" product even though a no-clean flux is required for assembly. To effectively clean a no-clean flux, a small percentage of chemistry is added to the deionized water in the wash tank of the cleaner to aid in breaking down and removing these residues. This is why a separate cleaning system is typically used as compared to those that use pure, deionized water for the removal of water-soluble flux residues.

Our new cleaner is installed and qualification activities are currently underway. As always, if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to us here at SFE.

Thanks for reading, and good luck mushroom hunting. 😉

Contributed by:

Kevin Syverson | Chief Technical Officer | **Silicon Forest Electronics** | kevin@si-forest.com