Microbrewer Has Taste for Safety

House of Brews, a microbrewer startup company, specified Meltric DECONTACTOR™ Series switch-rated plugs and receptacles for its portable pump carts and keg washer during its build-out phase for the benefits of their plug-n-play capability, watertightness rating and total arc-flash protection. Since the company went into operation one year ago, it is convinced that Meltric is the best solution for connecting portable equipment in a wash-down environment. It plans on using Meltric connecting devices for new equipment when it expands in the future.

By using the Meltric DECONTACTOR™ Series combination plug/receptacle and disconnect switches, House of Brews' workers can save time connecting and disconnecting its portable pumps with an immeasurable amount of safety. House of Brews owner Page Buchanan says, "I constantly have to wash down all my tanks, pumps and fermenters. I have total confidence that the plug can handle me spraying them. Plus, I have interns who work for me, and Meltric plugs offer me peace of mind that they can fully comply with safety standards. Meltric plugs are perfect for all my connection needs."

Even though the House of Brews has only been in operation for a year, Buchanan developed the company over a five-year period as he completed his business plan, obtained a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan, attracted private investors, and purchased used dairy and brewing equipment that he modified with Meltric connecting devices to provide an additional level of electrical safety.

Presently, he has several volunteers assisting him. In the first year of operation, he is projecting to produce 1,000 barrels of small batches of house brand and custom beer. Buchanan currently has a novel distribution system he calls the community-supported brewery (CSB) model where customers subscribe or pre-pay for beer annually and get whatever specialty beers the House of Brews makes. In addition, he is currently distributing to bars, liquor stores and restaurants.

Safety, Inspections & Build-Out

During the build-out phase, Buchanan began the process of designing his microbrewery and selecting equipment suppliers with an eye on both quality and passing building safety inspections. Since he would be using portable equipment in a wet wash-down environment, specifying power devices that could easily be connected or disconnected was extremely important to him.

While sourcing brewery equipment, Buchanan made contact with Chris Murphy of Paleotronics, a portable pump cart supplier, who recommended Meltric's DECONTACTOR™ Series switch-rated plugs and receptacles because their water-tightness rating of up to NEMA 4X was ideal for working around condensation and microbrewery equipment. "They are better than pin-and-sleeve devices when parts start arcing and melting, especially overhead. You'll have no worries with Meltric," says Murphy.

Buchanan attributes Meltric connecting devices as one of the reasons he passed the building safety inspections easily. He knew that if the building inspector saw potential electrical safety hazards or deficiencies, he may not be approved. "My building inspector had great things to say about Meltric," Buchanan says. "When you're doing the build-out and the inspector sees you've taken initiative, they know a guy like me is trying to do things right."

The Wash-down Safety Factor

Meltric Corp. has decades of experience supplying connecting devices designed to withstand the harsh environments found in the food and beverage industries. Meltric's plugs and receptacles all feature a dead front construction with an enclosed arc chamber, which simplifies compliance with NFPA 70E (Risk Category "0" operation), and butt-style, spring-loaded, silver-nickel contacts with a self-cleaning action to maintain excellent contact over thousands of operations. Their plastic/poly-chemical resistant housing can withstand corrosion caused by frequent washdowns.

At a microbrewery, such as the House of Brews, brewing machinery, pumps and equipment are frequently moved and cleaned. So fitting the equipment with a connecting device that could be plugged and unplugged safely in a wet environment was decisive in Buchanan's choice to specify Meltric DECONTACTORs™. "The plugs don't have to be dried out of the way of the brew house," he says.

Presently, he uses the DSN Series switch-rated plugs and receptacles (208-V

3-phase 20 A and 30 A) to connect portable pump carts and keg washers. “It’s the safety factor,” says Buchanan. “I don’t have to worry about employees getting arced.”

Plug-N-Play Connection Convenience

With a small staff and the need to move equipment regularly, Buchanan has learned that Meltric plug-n-play capability gives the House of Brews a time-saving feature that provides a fast and convenient way to connect and disconnect equipment. “Sometimes a pump is 10 yards away from me while I’m in the brew house doing something else,” he remarked. “I don’t have to go back to the pump to shut it off. That is convenience!”

The other option was to plug the pump in above a washer. “My worker would have to stand on a ladder to plug it in. With Meltric connecting devices, you can plug it in right at floor level,” Buchanan added.

Peace of Mind

While the DECONTACTOR™ Series plugs and receptacles make life easier, save time and maximize safety at the House of Brews, Buchanan enjoys the peace of mind that they give him as an owner. Since Meltric DECONTACTOR™ receptacles have a deadfront safety shutter, arc flash hazards are eliminated. He plans on buying more Meltric plugs and receptacles in the future when he expands his operation with a bottling machine.

For more information, please visit www.meltric.com *[1]*

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