



3-A Sanitary Standards and 3-A Accepted Practices

3-A SSI formulates sanitary standards and accepted practices for the sanitary design, fabrication, installation and cleanability of dairy and food equipment or systems used to handle, process and package consumable products where a high degree of sanitation is required. These sanitary standards and accepted practices are developed through the cooperative efforts of industry experts, including regulatory sanitarians, fabricators and processors. 3-A Sanitary Standards provide material specifications, design criteria and other necessary information for equipment types to satisfy public health concerns.

3-A Sanitary Standards are available for many equipment types, from fittings to silo tanks. The goal of 3-A SSI is to protect consumable products from contamination and to ensure that all product surfaces can be mechanically (CIP) cleaned or easily dismantled for manual cleaning.

3-A Accepted Practices cover a system, which is defined as a set of connected equipment and machinery that forms a whole or works together. In addition to the criteria for equipment, a practice may also provide specifications for sanitary installation and legal controls. 3-A criteria is universally accepted by equipment manufacturers, fabricators, users and sanitarians.

You can download a free index of all current 3-A SSI documents at the Standards and Practices Store.

3-A Sanitary Standards benefit the entire industry!

For processors, conforming to 3-A Sanitary Standards means they are in compliance with applicable sanitary codes for equipment construction. Processors also can be assured that with equipment meeting 3-A Sanitary Standards, they can apply the most modern cleaning and sanitizing methods, materials and systems to in-plant operations. This increased efficiency in equipment cleaning means lower cleaning costs, especially labor costs. Inspections will present fewer problems when equipment complies with 3-A Sanitary Standards.

For equipment manufacturers, it means equipment fabricated in conformance to 3-A Sanitary Standards will receive universal acceptance from processors and sanitarians. Manufacturers can benefit by the development of standardized equipment to replace custom-made equipment with the resulting savings in tooling, dies, patterns and retrofitting to meet varying local requirements.

For regulatory sanitarians, the adoption and application of uniform design and construction principles has made equipment inspection more sophisticated and consistent. Regulatory sanitarians have been able to test and refine inspection procedures, thus maximizing time and efficiency. Regulatory professionals are able to apply sanitary principles pioneered by 3-A to all food handling equipment. Sanitary codes and guidelines issued by regulatory agencies for equipment are often based on 3-A Sanitary Standards. More importantly, regulatory professionals can have confidence in standards and the resulting equipment design that colleagues have had a major voice in developing.

For more details on the organization and management of the groups responsible for the development and oversight of 3-A SSI consensus documents, see information on the 3-A Steering Committee and Work Groups.