

What's the Best Way to Clean PCBs?

Almost everybody uses the dip-and-brush method to clean circuit boards during rework and repair. But this process doesn't work very well.

Other companies suggest you should use high-pressure aerosols and blast the contamination off the board; which will work fine, if you don't mind buying lots of aerosol cans.

At Micro Care, we think the best way to clean PCBs is using the Trigger Grip System. We invented it after watching people try to clean PCBs using the older processes. The reason the Trigger Grip works great is because it forces the Benchtop techs to use the four-step cleaning process: **Wet, Scrub, Rinse and Dry.**



When you think about it, everything gets cleaned using these same four steps: your car, the dishes in the sink, your teeth, a baby in the bath, your hair in the shower in the morning and so on.

So if everything is cleaned using these four steps, why do we only use two steps when we try to clean circuit boards? It simply doesn't work. But the Trigger Grip allows you to obtain great cleaning quickly, easily and without a lot of chemicals.

The Four Steps to Quality Cleaning

As mentioned above, quality cleaning requires four universal steps: wet, scrub, rinse and dry. Each step is important:

- Wetting softens the contamination, loosening the soils.
- Scrubbing uses mechanical energy to dislodge the toughest soils, speeding the process.
- Rinsing removes the contamination and prevents them from being re-deposited on the board.
- Finally, drying speeds the process so that dust is not attracted back to the surface.

These same simple steps will produce great results with a Trigger Grip:

1. **Wet.** First, hold the PCB at a slight angle, supporting it on a countertop and with the area to be cleaned on the lowest side. Spray a small amount on the board, wetting the residues.
2. **Scrub.** Gently scrub the board with the Trigger Grip. A little squirt every now and then will help loosen the grime; there is no need to spray continuously. Many techs customize the Trigger Grip with different brushes or syringes to clean more quickly with less solvent, or use their lead trimmers to shape the brushes to get into hard-to-reach corners.
3. **Rinse.** Once the contamination is dissolved, briefly spray and rinse the board.
4. **Dry.** After rinsing, gently shake the board to dry it quickly. For slow-drying solvents, expedite drying with a gentle squirt of compressed air or absorb the liquid into a lint-free wipe.

If any step is skipped, the boards will not be cleaned in a speedy and cost-effective manner. For example, "dip-and-brush" cleaning skips the rinsing step, leaving contamination on the board. Old-style aerosols are great at wetting and rinsing, but used too much solvent and may be hazardous with today's new ozone-safe solvents.

That's why customers love the time-saving, money-saving Micro Care Trigger Grip system.

