

Nano:H₂O"

Technical Service Bulletin 113

Membrane Cleaning

To maintain the performance and efficiency of LG Chem elements, periodic cleanings need to be conducted according to LG Chem's

specifications and requirements. Chemical deaning is helpful in removing contaminants that have accumulated on the membrane surface or in the feed channel either from normal operation or an unexpected increase in feed water fouling potential.

Operating data should be collected and normalized frequently as described in LG Chem TSB 111. Trends of normalized data are the best indicators for determining when a membrane cleaning is required. A membrane cleaning should be performed when one or more of the following changes have occurred:

- Normalized permeate flow has decreased 10% since startup or last cleaning
- Normalized salt passage has increased 10% since startup or last cleaning
- Normalized pressure drop from feed to concentrate has increased 15% since startup or last cleaning.

Under certain conditions, cleanings may not be needed until changes greater than those listed above have occurred. Please contact LG Chem for possible site specific cleaning guidelines prior to any cleaning.

Cleaning Chemicals

In many cases, RO elements can be effectively cleaned with a high pH sodium hydroxide solution (NaOH) followed by a low pH citric acid solution. The common chelating agent, EDTA, can be added to the sodium hydroxide solution if necessary. The recommended concentrations and allowable temperature and pH limits are provided below.

Recommended Concentrations

Solution	Concentration	Recommended pH Range	Recommended Temperature Range (°C)
NaOH / RO permeate	Up to 0.1% by weight	10-12	25 - 30
NaOH, EDTA/ RO permeate	NaOH: Up to 0.1% by weight EDTA: Up to 1.0% by weight	10-12	25 - 30
Citric Acid / RO Permeate	Up to 2% by weight	2-4	25 - 30

Allowable pH / Temperature Limits

	Corresponding Maximum Temperature (°C)		
pH Limit	Seawater RO	Brackish Water RO	
≥2	40	40	
≤ 11	35	35	
≤12	30	25	
≤13	25		

Notes:

Use of generic or proprietary chemical cleaners other than those listed above may be necessary or desired. The compatibility of other cleaners has been tested by LG Chem and/or the cleaning chemical provider and approved for use in many site specific applications. Please contact Chem for immediate assistance before proceeding with a chemical cleaner other than the recommended generic chemicals listed above.

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The following basic procedure is to be used for all cleanings unless otherwise approved by LG Chem.

Cleaning Procedure

- 1. If the unit does not have an adequate amount of permeate flush at shutdown, flush all vessels with RO permeate until the feed-concentrate process water is completely displaced. RO permeate used for flushing and mixing of cleaning chemicals must be free of any chlorine or other oxidizing agent.
- 2. Prepare a high pH NaOH solution per the allowable pH and temperature guidelines.
- 3. Introduce cleaning solution at a rate of 75 liters per minute (20 gallons per minute) per 8-inch diameter vessel.
- 4. Do not allow any feed-concentrate process water displaced from the introduction of cleaning solution to enter the cleaning tank. If the initial volume of cleaning solution returning to the tank is extremely dirty, discard that as well.
- 5. Recirculate the cleaning solution at a rate of 151 liters per minute (40 gallons per minute) per 8-inch diameter vessel for a period of 45 minutes.
- 6. Allow solution to soak if it has been determined that an extended soak time is beneficial to the cleaning process. Extended soak times typically range from 1-12 hours.

Notes:

Soak times are usually established based on operator knowledge of previous results or a detailed foulant analysis.

- 7. Flush the high pH cleaning solution from the vessels using RO permeate until the flush water pH exiting the vessel is close to the flush water pH entering the vessel. (Be sure to have an adequate amount of RO permeate stored before cleaning is initiated). If a soak period was introduced, recirculation of cleaning solution may also be required prior to flushing.
- 8. Closely monitor the pH of the cleaning solution during the cleaning process and adjust the pH as needed.
- 9. Measure the temperature and flow of the cleaning solution during the start, middle and end of the recirculation periods.
- 10. Never allow the vessel pressure drop to exceed 4 bar (60 psi) during any point in the cleaning. This applies to each pressure vessel housing FIVE OR MORE elements. If vessels contain less than five elements, contact LG Chem for pressure limit guidelines.
- 11. Once the high pH solution has been rinsed from all pressure vessels and piping as described in Step 7, proceed with a low pH cleaning using citric acid. Follow the appropriate pH and temperature limits. Flows, recirculation time, and maximum differential pressure for the citric acid cleaning are the same as the high pH cleaning.
- 12. Once the low pH citric acid cleaning is complete, flush the spent solution from the vessels using RO permeate until the flush water pH exiting the vessel is close to the flush water pH entering the vessel.
- 13. Cleaning chemicals may be present in the permeate after cleaning. Upon restart (post-cleaning), RO permeate should be directed to drain for a minimum of 10 minutes. Please note that the permeate conductivity is usually elevated after a cleaning and may take some time to stabilize.
- 14. Contact LG Chem with the RO operating data taken prior to and 48 hours after cleanings.

Notes:

Direction of cleaning flow through the pressure vessels must always be in the same direction as feed flow during normal operation. Cleaning equipment, supply piping and return piping MUST be free of any contaminants or free standing water before beginning the cleaning process.

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Data Collection

It is important to collect the following data during the cleaning process:

- Date & Time
- · Chemical(s) Used

Starting & Ending pH

Starting & Ending Temperature

- Recirculation Flow & Time
- Soak Time
- Observations

A CAUTION

When using ANY chemical, follow accepted safety practices and read all manufacturer's instructions. Consult the chemical

manufacturer for further details on handling and disposal. When preparing cleaning solutions, ensure that all chemicals are dissolved and well mixed before circulation the solutions through the elements.



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Contact LG Chem Water Solutions

• America +1 424 218 4042 • Europe, Africa except Egypt +34 678 444 020 • Middle East, Egypt +971 50 624 3184 • Korea +82 2 3773 6572 • China +86 135 8181 3295 • India +91 9810013345 • South East Asia +65 9749 7471

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