

Recycling Wax: What are the Benefits?

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Most airline plating facilities use wax to mask off engine and landing gear components. This prevents plating and/or chemical etching from occurring on areas not requiring plating. As a general observation in most facilities, the wax tank used for masking a part to be chrome plated is also used to remove the bulk of wax from the parts being processed. The same holds true for nickel plating. The wax build-up and removal takes place in the same wax tank. This is done to prevent cross-contamination between the chrome and nickel baths. Over the past 35 years, UAL has used hot water to remove wax. It recycles its wax by removing the wax in a hot water tank that rinses the chemicals out of the wax. The wax floats to the top of the tank and overflows into a drain leading to another tank. UAL has four wax tanks with a total wax content of 47,245 lb. In 1999, we disposed of 1,250 lb of solid, unusable wax at a cost of \$2,625.00. This cost is far less than disposing of the contents or partial contents of the wax tanks, then replenishing with new wax each year. This paper will explain the method we use to recycle wax, the flow of wax in the recycling process, the design of the tanks, the hazards and concerns in the recycling process, and the benefits of in-house recycling.

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