

## ■ Hot Air Deflashing Systems Trim Residue and Time

By: Mark Stephen, associate editor

Most of us get enough hot air in our daily lives, whether from telemarketers, talking heads on television, politicians, or other sources.

In a plastics production facility, however, the application of hot air can be beneficial, and is the basis for a series of new, customized deflashing systems developed by Stanmech Technologies Inc., of Burlington, Ont.

For the past year, the company has been building specialized hot air systems to debur the unwanted, yet unavoidable, residue that results from the manufacture of plastics parts by injection molding, blow molding and extrusion, and that too often requires an employee's painstaking time and attention to trim manually.

"We had been asked by more than one of our customers to develop a system that can replace open flame or knives in production situations to remove flash from parts," Paul Subject, Stanmech's president, said. "The hot air technology itself has been around since the 1940s, but has not been used in this capacity until now."

Stanmech's deflashing systems, all of which use equipment supplied by Reidstrasse, Switzerland-based Leister Process Technologies, are designed to meet the specific processing needs of a particular customer, based on that customer's production data and a submitted part. "The correct hot air nozzle will differ from system to system because every type of flash differs; for example, a whisker is different than a ridge," Subject explained. "This determines the amount heat required and how that heat source is manipulated -- whether semi-automatically or completely automatically." Once the company has identified these factors, the deflashing system -- complete with nozzle, blower and control package -- is built to satisfy that particular requirement.

A significant advantage to having a system custom built is greater precision, Subject said. "For applications that are particularly appearance-oriented, such as automotive or toy parts, we don't want to expose the whole part to a heat source, only the flash."

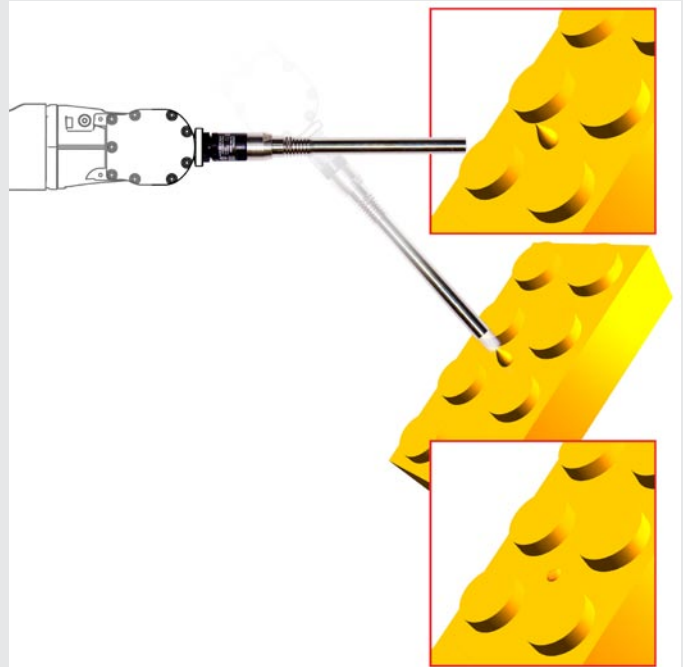
And although each system is custom built, Subject continued, it can still be adapted to suit changing production needs. "If a customer decides they want to manually apply the hot air, we can create a portable tool for them," he explained. "We can also scale up or down based on changes in production size or line speed."

Investment in a hot air deflashing system varies according to size and scope. "A simple handheld device can cost less than \$1,000, while a complex application can cost \$20,000," Subject said. "But our customers find the investment worthwhile because it allows them to reduce labour costs by removing a dedicated worker to trim flash, and also solves safety issues associated with knives and open flames."

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### Photos In This Story



A new custom designed deflashing system from Stanmech Technologies Inc. uses the precise application of hot air to rid plastics parts of unwanted residue.