

# Pure Water, Not So Pure Dispensers

*Tamper evident, hygienic "sleeve" shields bottles from contamination*

**B**ack in the 1950s at my grandfather's home, I can recall the original glass bottles and metal "tilters" that were used for dispensing fresh spring water from bottle to pitcher. If it were only so simple today.

We have come a long way in the last 50 years—trips to Mars, cell phones, microwaves, computers and liter PET bottles. Yet in an industry that effects

many of us, the 5-gallon bottled water industry has seen little to no new innovations. Innovation is available, just not being demanded by the consumer.

Changes from the heavy glass bottles to the new polycarbonate and PET bottles have evolved for convenience sake. Even with the percentage of "leakers" and ensuing damage claims, the benefits have outweighed the problems. Tilters have upgraded to open top dispensers to give us cold or hot water at the push of a lever. Open top dispensers comprise 95 percent or more of the industry and were enhanced with the introduction of the "Water Guard" cap in the early 1990s. Yet with these changes, are consumers better off than they were 50 years ago when it comes to drinking pure water?

Presenting the case in hand, every time we open the sealed top of the bottle container, whether or not we remove the cap or displace a plug, we subject the contents to undesirables such as bacteria and dirt.

What makes the water so pure—no chlorine, ozone or any combatants, only defenseless, pure water—also is what makes it so susceptible to foreign

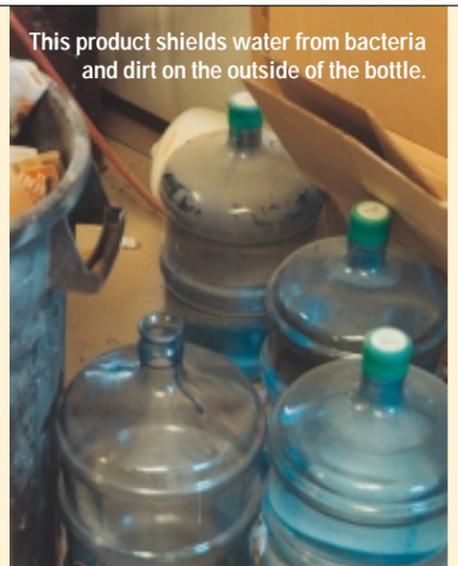
invaders. Think of the steps a bottle goes through.

- Bottle is filled.
- Bottle is placed on the route truck for travel.
- Bottle is removed for delivery.
- Bottle is stacked at home or in the office rack.
- Bottle is left for days or weeks to collect fallout from whatever kind of atmosphere it is sitting in before it finally is used.
- Bottle is picked up again for delivery to the water dispenser.

Each time that bottle is handled, the cap and outside of the bottle are likely to get dirty.

The hands that carried the bottle (most times right at the neck) before it is delivered to the customer have diverted sneezes, opened doors, politely shaken the hand of who knows who and may not have been washed before leaving the bathroom. They have deposited colonies of invaders on the bottle's outside. Bacteria and dirt, among other things, lie waiting to find a host home in which to multiply. Meanwhile back at the ranch (or rather the dispenser) the last batch of invaders have been

This product shields water from bacteria and dirt on the outside of the bottle.



multiplying, waiting for reinforcements to arrive, which they always do.

Open top containers tend to provide the most likely scenario for invasion. The entire water reservoir is open to contamination as soon as the bottle is tipped upside down and placed on the cooler for dispensing. The first sound of water and air exchanging places is the assurance that the neck and shoulder areas are being gently rinsed off to allow whatever was on the outside of the bottle to drip off into the inside of the cooler reservoir.

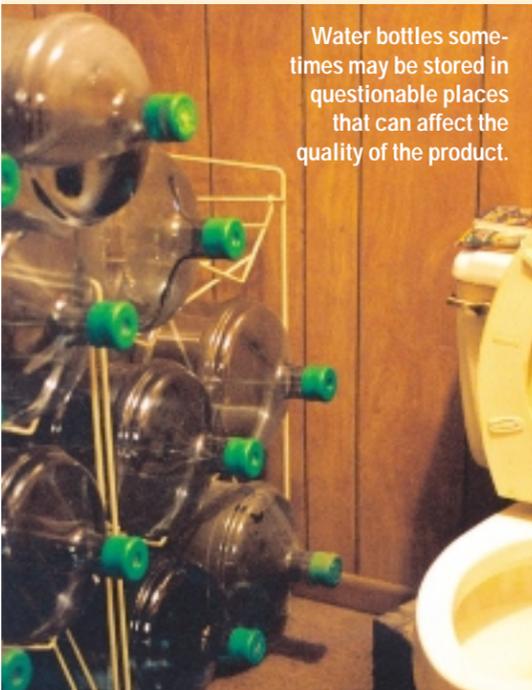
It is up to you to provide your customers with the proper sanitization for their water coolers. The bottle that you deliver should not be covered with dust, fallout, germs and "hand grime."

Water guard or similar product dispensers, for example, may be an advantage because they allow the tipping and placement of the bottle without spilling water on the wall or carpet. One can even remove the bottle while it is half full and not spill a drop. It is ideal for the bottler to know that when the bottle is returned for refill, the cap is still in place, sealed with the inner plug, reassuring him that no foreign substances such as pennies, gasoline, urine or fertilizer have been introduced. (It's amazing what people do with empty 5-gallon water containers.)

However, this solution poses a problem. When you get a chance, look down in the bottom of the Water Guard reservoir cup. Notice the shallow puddle of not-so-inviting liquid. (It's the one with the "squiggles" floating around in it.)

The main issue with the water guard product is the residual water in the bottle-holding cup that can sit, sometimes for months, growing new breeds of invaders that cling to the cap as it is withdrawn with the bottle, dripping back to the center of the cap, directly onto the probe being introduced into

Water bottles sometimes may be stored in questionable places that can affect the quality of the product.



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**About the Author**

Born and raised in Ocala, Fla., David Clark has worked in management and sales in the plastics and bottled water industry for six years while earning the degree of CCBW and in the land and railroad industry for the last 18 years. He also is involved in the research and development for the Sanisleeve as well as obtaining its domestic and international patents. He may be reached at 352-351-5088.

the “fresh” bottle. Whatever was growing in the puddle, now is growing unchecked on the probe and in the drinking or spring water the customer just paid good money for.

Tufts University’s *Diet & Nutrition Letter* reported that many coolers may be nurturing high levels of bacteria that could cause nausea and diarrhea.<sup>1</sup> Scientists checked the bacterial count from 10 water dispensers at Boston’s Northeastern University and found that water from each dispenser had bacteria counts reaching at least 2,000 potentially harmful organisms for every milliliter of water or four times the limit recommended by the government. Counts exceeded 2,000 times the government’s recommendation in coolers used on a frequent basis. The problem does not stem from the pure bottled water, but instead it appears that the invaders from the outside of each new bottle of water multiply as they are added to the dispenser system.

**A Sanitary Solution**

Using a product such as the Sanisleeve™—which is added just after the filling and capping of the bottle at the bottling facility while the bottled is still clean—can create that barrier needed to block contaminants when changing bottles. This product provides a tamper evident seal and is a hygienic sleeve that covers the outside cap, neck and shoulder of the bottle, shielding it from airborne contaminants, hands of any sorts, dust, dirt and the like.

This patented product will carry contaminants away just before the bottle is used.

The sleeve remains intact, shielding the outside of the bottle until the customer removes it, just like a tamper evident seal on any other market item you purchase such as Tylenol. Bottlers have

the availability of the sleeve at present, and as consumers become aware of existing problems they can request it as a solution towards the problems.

**Show Customers It Does Work**

Cleanliness is definitely next to godliness when it comes to water coolers. Unlike our European friends

who have quarterly dispenser sanitation, the United States has no regulated cleaning program.

Let your customers know that they can

- ask for the Sanisleeve™
- ask you to clean the dispenser, which could result in having a new

one delivered and swapped out with the existing dispenser, or

- do the job themselves.

Customers should follow the distributors’ instructions regarding the cooler reservoir. Use the water/bleach solution and method suggested for cleaning and be sure to run the



sanitizing solution through the holding reservoir as well as the faucets to purge all parts that come in contact with the water he is drinking.

All in all, cooler sanitation is vital to the hygienic safety of the water we consume. There needs to be a conscientious effort made by the distributor to

do all that is possible to keep the bottle as well as the dispenser a safe haven for the water he works so hard to keep pure. The Sanisleeve™, clean bottles and good cooler hygiene will make a

complete, safe delivery of pure water for the customers' enjoyment. **WQP**

*\*Sanisleeve™, patented UK, Pat. Pend. USA, CAN, AUS, NZ.*



For more information on this subject, write in 1015 on the reader service card.



## LearnMore!

For more information related to this article, go to [www.waterinfocenter.com/lm.cfm/wq100305](http://www.waterinfocenter.com/lm.cfm/wq100305)

### References

- 1 *Diet & Nutrition Letter*, Tuft University, Vol. X, No. 6. Available at [www.lesliewaterworks.com/AtWork-water.htm](http://www.lesliewaterworks.com/AtWork-water.htm) and [www.healthychild.net/Articles/HY24Water.html](http://www.healthychild.net/Articles/HY24Water.html).

*WQP does not endorse any specific products.*

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## HIGHLIGHTS

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### Convertible Bottled Water Cart

This company's #510000 convertible bottled water cart is shown with three popular options. Slick tires are easier to wipe down and lessen the likelihood of tracking dirt. Stair climbers rest on the stair edge and give delivery people a balance point. Wheel fenders, in conjunction with the large foot plate, allow the cart to carry salt bags. These options are available in addition to other standard features.

AM Products & Services, Manitowoc, WI  
Write in 1128



### Cyanide Test Strip



The SenSafe Cyanide test strip does not require any chemical mixing for detecting free cyanide levels in water down to 0.1 ppm. Simply collect a 50 ml sample, dip the strip into the water for 90 seconds, remove and match to the closest color to determine the concentration of free cyanide.

Industrial Test Systems, Inc., Rock Hill, SC  
Write in 1130

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