

# Dilution Ratios Can Change with the Seasons

By: Anthony Shifflett

***“When it comes to the weather, the only thing we can rely on is that it will change!”***

Some years back, while standing at the exit of a tunnel, a veteran car wash owner told me, “In car washing, when it comes to the weather, the only thing we can rely on is that it will change!” He said this just as the rain started, another great day in the wonderful world of washing cars.

There are many variables that can cause chemicals to work efficiently. One such variable is “Seasonal Changes”. Temperature, water source changes, salt, brine, bugs etc. are all reasons that constitute an adjustment by a factory trained chemical representative. As you know, chemistry is only one of the five factors of cleaning (water quality, mechanical action, temperature, and time are the others). The five factors work in synergy with one another, and by adjusting the chemistry, and some of the other factors from season to season, one can achieve a consistently clean, dry, shiny, car year-round.



Many do not realize this, but it is not uncommon for municipalities to change their water source from season to season. Periodically checking one’s water quality is a necessity to ensure the chemicals are working optimally. The water hardness and TDS levels have a direct effect on your product offering, and if the incoming water quality changes, it is imperative that adjustments are made.



With colder temperatures in the winter months, it is harder to clean and dry cars (especially with touchless cleaning). Some helpful tips are to increase the application concentration and slow

down the wash cycle. The winter months can also provide a unique challenge in many parts of the country due to the chemicals that are used to treat the roads. Each region has its unique challenge in this regard and there is not a wholesale change that you can make to combat this challenge.

As spring arrives and temperatures rise, reducing the drying agent to its normal settings is recommended. In addition, any changes that you made to combat the road treatment chemicals and cold weather can be reversed as well.

Bugs are often a huge problem in the spring. Using a product specifically formulated for removing bugs is always recommended.



If you do not have a product specifically formulated to combat bugs, increasing the alkalinity of your presoak or prep soap can help. When doing this, be very careful, especially as the temperatures rise, high alkalinity and hot temperatures can damage a vehicle's surface and negatively affect drying.

Reducing the alkalinity in your product offering is often recommended during the summer months. This weaker product application can be combatted with a slower wash cycle to achieve clean vehicles. Drying is easier in warm weather and sometimes, one can reduce the dilution ratio of the drying agent even more.

As the temps start to cool and fall arrives, going back to similar settings to the spring are recommended. As fall progresses, gradually converting back to the winter settings are recommended.

Challenges in producing a consistently clean, dry, and shiny car are constantly changing. Always remember, changes in dilution ratio and wash speed need to be made with intent, and by a professionally trained representative familiar with the challenges in your car wash model, as well as your region.

A good representative will even record the data for you to review, so that these results can be duplicated from year to year. Always remember, the seasons change, but your consistently great product, does not have to. Happy washing!

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