

As Head of Supply Chain at Steelite Utopia, with responsibility for oversight of our Quality function, I am writing further to our previous investigation and correspondence regarding the reported presence of small metallic remnants between the tines of a limited number of forks.

Following completion of our investigation, Steelite Utopia does not consider the reported issue to be batch-specific, and we are satisfied that the stock currently held by NHS Supply Chain is suitable for release and use, subject to the standard cleaning and preparation-before-service requirements detailed below.

This conclusion is based on several factors.

The product is supplied in very significant volumes throughout the UK, with more than 1.3 million pieces supplied annually into a wide range of healthcare, hospitality and high-volume catering environments. We have reviewed our Non-Conformance Report records dating back to 2018 and have identified no other reported incidents of this nature.

As part of our standard quality procedures, stock is quality inspected at source prior to shipment and import into the UK. Following notification of this incident, Steelite Utopia also undertook additional spot checks across several thousand pieces of UK-held stock. No evidence of the reported issue was identified during these additional inspections.

Based on our investigation, we consider the original occurrence to represent a rare and isolated failure within the manufacturer's quality assurance process, rather than a defect affecting a particular production batch or the wider product population.

The matter has been formally raised with the manufacturer, and the relevant manufacturing and quality-control procedures have been reviewed with them. Appropriate action has been taken to reinforce the necessary controls and minimise the risk of recurrence.

Cleaning and preparation before first use

As part of our standard product-use guidance, all cutlery must be thoroughly washed before first use and prior to entering service. This is particularly important for new cutlery and ensures that any loose residue or material associated with the manufacturing, finishing, packing or handling processes is removed before use.

The product is suitable for cleaning in a commercial dishwasher. Prior to washing, any visible debris should be removed, and the cutlery should then be washed using the normal dishwasher cycle and an appropriate commercial detergent, in accordance with the dishwasher and detergent manufacturers' instructions.

For effective cleaning, cutlery should not be tightly packed within dishwasher baskets, allowing adequate water flow around each piece. Following completion of the wash cycle, cutlery should be removed promptly, allowed to dry thoroughly and visually inspected before being placed into service.

Following this procedure provides an appropriate control to ensure that any loose manufacturing or handling residue is removed before the product reaches the end user.

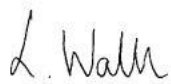
Taking into account:

- the significant annual volume of this product supplied without comparable reported incidents;
- our Non-Conformance records dating back to 2018;
- the additional inspection of several thousand pieces of UK-held stock, during which no similar issues were identified; and
- the subsequent review and action undertaken with the manufacturer,

Steelite Utopia is satisfied that there is no evidence of a batch-specific or systemic quality issue with this product. We therefore confirm that the stock currently held by NHS Supply Chain can be released from quarantine/bonded status and is suitable for its intended use, subject to cleaning and preparation guidance detailed above.

We trust that this provides the necessary assurance to enable the stock to be released.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Walsh

Head of Supply Chain

On behalf of Steelite International Ltd T/A Steelite-Utopia