

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## BOWLING TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

### BALL CLEANERS

#### USBC Rule 18 – Bowling Ball – Altering Surface (A.K.A. – “Dry Towel” Rule)

**While bowling in USBC competition, a bowling ball cannot:**

- a. **Have the surface altered by the use of an abrasive**
- b. **Be cleaned with any liquid substance or cleaning agent.**
- c. **Have any foreign material on it including, but not limited to, powder, rosin, marker or paint.**

**All bowling balls so altered or cleaned must be removed from the competition.**

**Note: Should a foreign substance appear on the outer surface of the bowling ball which cannot be removed with a DRY TOWEL, an approved cleaner may be used with consent from a league or tournament officer.**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

1. **I have a ball cleaner that has the USBC “Approved Anytime” logo on it. Can I still use the cleaner during competition?**

No, after August 1, 2019, only a dry towel can be used to clean your bowling ball during competition.

2. **I still see there are products with the USBC “Approved Anytime” logo on it. Why is that?**

USBC communicated in advance of the rule change with bowling ball cleaner companies about our intent, but they were not officially notified until the rule change was announced. The rule was put in place for August 1, 2019 to allow time for everyone to cycle through their products. Some will do that faster than others.

3. **What if the lane or center equipment damages my ball?**

If there is a belt mark or other substance that can't be removed with the dry towel alone, you may contact the league or tournament official about using a cleaning product.

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4. **Can I clean my ball with an approved cleaner during practice?**  
You can clean your ball with an approved cleaner during practice unless otherwise specified by event rules.
5. **Can I clean my ball with an approved cleaner between games during certified competition?**  
You cannot clean your ball between games, as the competition has started.
6. **Can I clean my ball with an approved cleaner between tournament squads?**  
You can clean your ball with an approved cleaner between squads unless otherwise specified by event rules. "During competition" should be defined by events to include or exclude practice and time between competition (where applicable).
7. **What type of towels are approved for use during USBC certified competition?**  
All dry towels are allowed, if it doesn't alter the surface of the bowling ball. This includes the use of dry shammys.
8. **If I change balls or get a different ball out of my locker during competition can I clean the new ball?**  
No, you cannot clean the new/changed ball during competition. All bowling balls used in competition must be cleaned during practice before competition has started.
9. **Since I can only use a dry towel to clean my ball, what if it was used with a liquid cleaner prior to competition?**  
Yes, you can use that towel if the towel is dry at the time of use during competition.
10. **What happens if I violate the rule?**  
Once it is discovered that a bowler is using equipment which is not within specifications, the ball must be removed from competition. The penalty for a violation of this rule can include disqualification, forfeiture, removal from the league, and/or suspension of USBC membership. If the bowler uses a ball that is non-conforming with knowledge that it is out of specification, the scores are subject to forfeiture.

Should you have additional questions not covered above, please direct those to [specifications@bowl.com](mailto:specifications@bowl.com).