

## Case Study

# Craft Brewer Taps into Cost Savings with Switch-Rated Plugs

Bell's Brewery, Inc., uses MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles to connect and disconnect equipment safely and easily. The brewery, based in Comstock, MI produces a full line of ales, beers, and stouts, which requires safe electrical connections for their production equipment, including grain handlers, conveyor motors, portable pump carts, and keg washers.

Bell's chose MELTRIC devices initially to reduce installation costs, increase production efficiency during equipment maintenance and changeouts, and to ensure worker safety, including simplified lockout/tagout procedures. They found MELTRIC plugs and receptacles to be the ideal connection solution for their production equipment at a cost-effective price.

### Rapid Growth Drives Cost-Effective Purchasing Decisions

As Bell's Brewery continues to successfully grow its brand, they expanded their original operations facility and built an additional facility several miles away from the original plant. MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles play an important role in the facilities' expansion. Jeff Carter, Facilities and Utilities Manager of Bell's Brewery explained, "When we installed the 200 BBL grain handling system, MELTRIC Switch-Rated connectors helped us decrease the cost of the construction project by simplifying the installation, since the MELTRIC devices are NEC-approved 'line of sight' disconnects."

Prior to installing MELTRIC connectors on its production equipment, Bell's used pin and sleeve connectors. However, the pin and sleeve connectors were more expensive because they required installation of an additional disconnect switch along with the pin and sleeve connector. To reduce installation costs, Bell's Brewery purchased MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles which are UL/CSA rated for motor and branch circuit disconnect switching. They meet NEC requirements as a 'line of sight' disconnect switch without the need to install additional switching equipment. Carter says, "They [MELTRIC] are better than the pin and sleeve connectors we previously used. MELTRIC saves money because you don't need a separately mounted 'line of sight' disconnect."

MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles combine the safety and functionality of a disconnect switch with the convenience of a plug and receptacle in one cost-saving device. Their integral switching mechanism allows users to safely make and break connections under full load. An enclosed arc chamber and dead-front design eliminate arcing at disconnection and ensure that live parts are inaccessible before the plug can be removed. This design protects users from potential arc flash and other electrical hazards while making and breaking connections.



MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles are favored by Bell's Brewery for their safety, reliability, and ability to reduce downtime during maintenance and motor changeouts.



MELTRIC Switch-Rated connectors meet NEC 'line of sight' disconnect requirements. Users can safely make and break electrical connections under full load.

Switch-Rated devices have the additional benefit of reducing downtime associated with maintenance and equipment changeouts by up to 50 percent, because no hardwiring of connections is necessary. The spring-loaded, integral switching mechanism can safely disconnect a circuit by simply depressing the pawl on the MELTRIC device, resulting in the plug ejecting into the "Off" position. The user then rotates the plug and withdraws it from the receptacle to complete the disconnecting operation. Qualified personnel can safely and easily disconnect equipment. Carter remarked, "The time savings associated with prewiring replacements saves us downtime, which is an added bonus."

### **Simplified MELTRIC Lockout/Tagout Influenced Purchasing Decision**

As Bell's Brewery has grown, so has its maintenance department, which now operates as part of beer production, packaging, facilities, and utilities departments. Now, the need to lockout and tagout equipment for maintenance is not only crucial for worker safety, but occurs more frequently. Carter explained, "We use the lockout/tagout feature for our pumps. With MELTRIC, all you need is a lock, which is inserted into the hole on the plug. The safety that comes with the lockability of MELTRIC devices is something that influenced our purchasing decision, as well."

MELTRIC plugs have a built-in lockout/tagout provision that makes it easy to comply with OSHA's lockout/tagout requirements. A  $\frac{5}{16}$ " lockout hole is standard in the plug shroud. With this feature, MELTRIC devices can be easily locked out by inserting a user-provided lock or hasp through the hole in the male plug. The lock prevents insertion into the female receptacle and provides visual verification of deenergization. In comparison, most other pin and sleeve plugs require an additional third-party lockout shield or plug cap, which can be expensive and often get lost or broken, or are unavailable when needed.

### **MELTRIC is the Bell's Brewery Standard for Plugs**

Carter is happy with the MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles and intends to specify them for use in future brewery expansion projects. He says, "Safety, functionality, reliability, and cost set MELTRIC apart from the rest. It is our standard for plugs."



*At Bell's Brewery, portable pump carts are connected with MELTRIC Switch-Rated plugs and receptacles. Silver-nickel contacts provide reliable corrosion-free connections, even in harsh conditions.*



*With MELTRIC, hardwired connections aren't necessary. This reduces maintenance and motor changeout downtime for Bell's Brewery.*