Joint Committee Issue Paper

NSF Standard(s) Impacted: 

Background:
Provide a brief background statement indicating the cause and nature of concern, the impacts identified relevant to public health, public understanding, etc, and any other reason why the issue should be considered by the Committee. Reference as appropriate any specific section(s) of the standard(s) that are related to the issue.

In the late 1980s, Breton S.P.A, a privately held company in Treviso Italy, introduced a composite material made of crushed stone bound together by a polymer resin glue they named Bretonstone. Bretonstone or Engineered stone as it is known technically, is also commonly referred to as Agglomerate or Quartz Surface's. Quartz surface comes in sheets or slabs that are produced from a factory, which are then cut and polished by fabricator, and assembled at the worksite by installer as a finished product.

Quartz surface products are gaining in popularity and are sometimes preferred over granite products because engineered stone requires less maintenance. The color and texture of its surface is more consistent them natural stone. Its polyester resin binding agents allow some flexibility, preventing cracking under flexural pressure making it easier to manhandle. It is also more resistant to mold and mildew then traditional stone making it more hygienic. It is to fabricate whereas natural stone may contain fissures, cracks, or weaknesses in structure.

Breton S.P.A manufactures the equipment that produces the quartz surface and supplies the equipment to companies who produce and market Quartz surface brands such as Zodiaq, Silestone, Ceasarstone, Vicostone and Quantra. To avoid conflict of interest, Breton S.P.A does not produce quartz surface materials for sale.

Although Breton S.P.A is the original and dominant supplier of quartz surface production equipment, there are now several other companies producing similar equipment in China, Stone Machinery being the largest and most established.
By 2012, China had become the biggest producer of quartz surfaces in the world. There are more than 100 quartz surface producers in China today, and the number is increasing. Most of these producers are OEM contractors who produce quartz surfaces on a contractual basis for other companies or brand of quartz surfaces. Most companies buying Quartz on a contractual basis from OEM contractors, buy from more than one source leaving that material unbranded from the manufacturer. Unlike the OEM Contractors that only produce with their brand label and do not private label. These companies are not being regulated for the chemicals used in resins, most containing harmful VOC’s (Volatile organic compounds), that are not found in the Breton Engineered Stone’s.

Most of China’s production companies are getting their products certified by the NSF as Splash Zone Safe, rather than the certifications of Breton Engineered Stone that is certified by the NSF as Food Zone Safe. The standard Splash Zone is allowing companies to appear safe for Kitchens and Food contact area, but have not been tested for their Chemical makeup.

By having Solid Surfacing Materials in the NSF/ANSI 51 Food Equipment Standards, it leaves confusion to Public Understanding and Public Health Safety. It’s allowed Solid Surfacing Materials to fall through cracks set forth for products that are intended for different applications in Food Equipment Materials. The majority of all Solid Surfacing Materials are intended for Direct Food Contact (Surfacing materials that are certified for use in food zones may be used for countertops, table tops, or other surfaces in which food contact is intended. Surfacing materials certified for splash zone should not be used on any surfaces intended for food contact.) A statement made by Mike Kohler in the August 2015 article of Slippery Rock Gazette.
Recommendation:
Clearly state what action is needed: e.g., recommended changes to the standard(s) including the current text of the relevant section(s) indicating deletions by use of strike-out and additions by highlighting or underlining; e.g., reference of the issue to a Task Group for detailed consideration; etc.

Quartz Materials needs to be certified as a Food Zone Safe Material under a new Food Equipment Standard.

NSF/ANS (53) Solid Surfacing Materials

These Standards should be written around the Food Zone Material Standards already in place in the NSF/ANSI 51 Food Equipment Material Standard. Also adding new standards for Compliance, Safety and Product Labeling.

Supplementary Materials (photographs, diagrams, reports, etc.):

2015_Aug SRG_NSF-ANSI.pdf.zip
If not provided electronically, the submitter will be responsible to have sufficient copies to distribute to committee members.
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*Type written name will suffice as signature