Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
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This Wisconsin-based pickle processor has seen significant payback from its new approach to connecting and disconnecting pumps, conveyors and other equipment.

Van Holten's Pickles certainly knows its stuff. Founded in 1898, the company has been producing individually wrapped Pickle-in-a-Pouch products since 1939. Originally based in Milwaukee, Van Holten's moved to a larger plant in Waterloo, WI in 1956. That's where it recently opened a new 53,000 square foot facility—and where it now produces approximately 18 million individually pouched pickles annually.

These days, Van Holten's is finding that connecting and disconnecting pumps, conveyors and other equipment in its operations has become much easier and safer than in the past, simply by using combination plug/receptacle and disconnect switches. The company has turned to Meltric Decontactor™ Series switch-rated plugs and receptacles that allow workers to safely make and break electrical equipment connections, even under full load. And, because they are UL switch and horsepower rated, the Decontactors meet NEC requirements for a motor "line of sight" disconnect. These devices also cost less than conventional connectors over the longterm.

Yesterday and today

Previously, Van Holten's connected its many pumps and conveyors with twist type or pin-and-sleeve connectors partnered with separate disconnect switches. The combination of salt, moisture, acid and heat used in the pickling process caused the switches and plugs to fail regularly. Safety also was an issue because of the potential for a worker to insert or remove a plug without first verifying deenergization at the local disconnect switch.

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