chapter 6

preparation to pour

While many of the issues relating to draught quality concern system settings and activities that occur at the bar, some operating issues require attention behind the scenes as well. In this chapter, we'll look at keg handling and other behind-the-scenes preparations to serve beer that affect draught performance. The first sections address the important detail of keg chilling: Warm kegs cause more problems at the tap than nearly any other issue. Second, we'll cover some guidelines for linking kegs in series.

Cold Storage and Proper Chilling of Kegs before Serving

To ensure fresh flavor and ease of dispense, draught beer should remain at or slightly below 38°F throughout distribution, warehousing and delivery. Brewers and distributors use refrigerated storage for draught beer. In warm climates or long routes, they may also use insulating blankets or refrigerated delivery trucks to minimize temperature increases during shipping.

At retail, even a few degrees increase above the ideal maximum of 38°F can create pouring problems, especially excessive foaming. Ideally all draught beer delivered to retail will be stored cold until served.

Accounts that lack cold storage for their entire inventory of draught beer should allow adequate chilling time for recently refrigerated kegs in order to avoid dispense problems. In a similar vein, recently arrived kegs should be allowed adequate chilling time as they usually warm to some degree during delivery. In order to avoid dispense problems, every keg must be at or below 38°F while being served.

To help ensure that your kegs are properly chilled before serving, Chart 1 provides a guide to the time needed to properly chill a keg to 38°F from a given starting temperature. Note that even kegs that "feel cold" (e.g., 44°F) may need to chill overnight in order to ensure proper dispense.

Chart 2 shows how quickly a keg will warm up when exposed to temperatures above 38°F. From this you can see that a keg that warmed up just a little bit during delivery—from 38° to 44°F—would need to be in the cooler for a full 18 hours before reaching serving temperature.

Chart 1

Start Temp	Time to 38° F
50° F	25 hrs
48° F	23.5 hrs
46° F	21 hrs
44° F	18 hrs
40° F	7 hrs
38° F	0 hrs

Chart 2

Time	Temp
0 hrs	38° F
1 hrs	39° F
2 hrs	41° F
3 hrs	42° F
4 hrs	43° F
5 hrs	45° F
6 hrs	48° F

Linking Kegs in Series

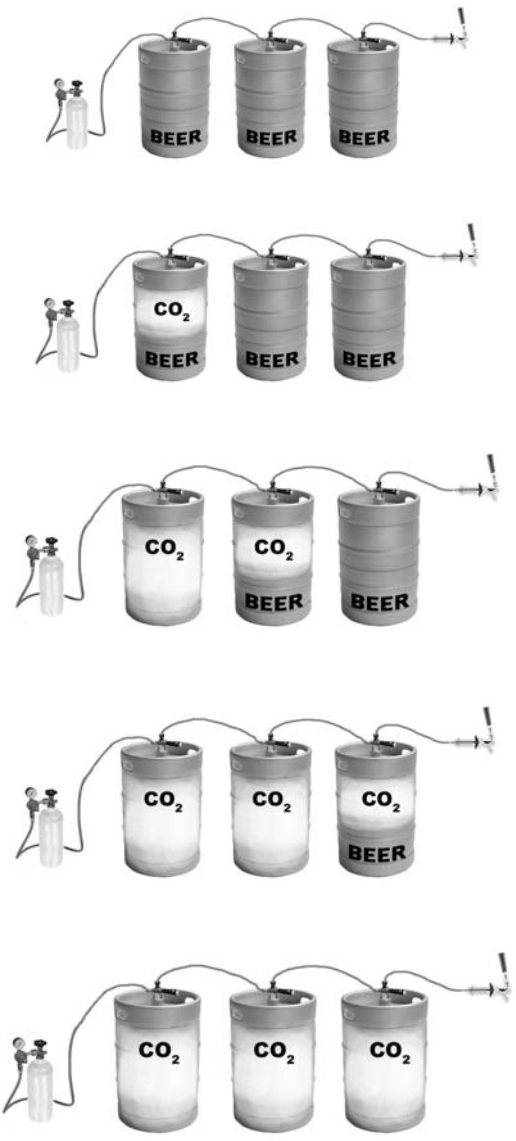
Busy accounts may connect kegs in a series or in a chain to meet peak capacity demands. Chaining two or three kegs of the same product together allows all of the chained kegs to be emptied before beer stops flowing.

The first keg in the series will be tapped with a normal coupler. The second (and subsequent) kegs in the series require that the Thomas valve be removed from the gas side of the coupler.

Tap the first keg with the normal coupler. Instead of sending the beer line from this first coupler to the bar faucet, connect it to the CO_2 inlet on the second keg's coupler. Subsequent kegs can be attached the same way.

When pressurized and pouring, beer flows from the first keg to the second and on to the third before it travels to the faucet. Once set, this arrangement will pour the contents of all the chained kegs before it runs empty.

Kegs linked in series



A series arrangement should only be used in accounts that will "turn," or empty kegs rapidly. The account needs to completely empty the entire series on a regular basis. Failure to empty the series completely leaves old beer in the system. The diagrams below illustrate the progressive emptying of chained kegs. ■