How often should you wash a PEI build plate?

Asked 3D Content Team
Published September 23, 2026 · Last verified September 23, 2026

Abstract. Wash it when prints stop sticking, not on a schedule. Prusa wipes with about 90% IPA and saves soap for a last resort; neither maker allows acetone on textured PEI.

Keywords: build-plates, bed-adhesion

1 How often should you wash a PEI build plate?

Wash it when prints stop sticking, not on a schedule. Prusa wipes its textured sheet with about 90% isopropyl alcohol and keeps a dish-soap wash as a last resort, because the sheet is not waterproof. Bambu Lab uses dish soap and water as its normal clean for textured PEI (polyetherimide). Neither maker allows acetone on it.

1.1 The routine

Neither maker sets an interval. Prusa says that as long as you keep hands and dirty tools off the surface, "you don't have to clean it before every print". Bambu Lab only says to clean "regularly" and "periodically". What both do give is a step for each situation, and their steps differ.

Table 1. The routine

When	Prusa, textured sheet	Bambu Lab, Textured PEI Plate
Between prints	Only if the surface was touched. Wipe with about 90% IPA (isopropyl alcohol) or denatured alcohol on a paper towel, sheet cold	No wipe step given. Handle the plate by its sides
Adhesion drops	A few drops of dish soap in warm water, "not hot!", without submerging the sheet. "Should not be done often"	Wet the plate, add dish detergent, scrub with a sponge, plastic brush or scouring pad, rinse and dry with a paper towel
A wash no longer helps	Nothing textured-specific. Recheck the first-layer height	Rub with fine sandpaper or steel wool, clean off the dust, or flip to the other side
Never	Acetone, including solvents that may contain it such as nail polish remover or brake cleaner. Anything made for skin. ABS juice	Acetone. Detergent with oils or moisturizers

Prusa's column draws on its textured steel sheet and first-layer articles. Bambu Lab's comes from its cleaning and troubleshooting guides. One mismatch: Bambu Lab's filament guide says "hot water" for the same wash its cleaning guide does with warm water.

1.2 Why

Both makers blame much the same dirt. Bambu Lab lists dust from the air and "sweat and oil from fingers" picked up while you pull parts off. You can't see it on the plate, but it shows up as marks in the first layer. Prusa adds sugars and oils that alcohol won't dissolve, and those are what its soap wash is for.

Where they split is the first step. Bambu Lab reaches for detergent because on a textured plate "alcohol might just spread the oils", and scrubbing works the detergent down into the grooves. Prusa cleans the same kind of surface with alcohol and rations soap, since its textured sheet "is not waterproof". Its satin sheet page also says not to leave a sheet wet.

On acetone they agree. It "will deteriorate the surface" of a textured sheet, per Prusa, and Bambu Lab warns it "will damage the PEI surface". Smooth PEI is different. Prusa allows acetone on its smooth sheet 1 to 2 times a month when alcohol isn't enough, but warns that heavy use makes PEI brittle and that acetone shouldn't come right before a PETG print.

1.3 How to check it on your own plate

Test the surface first. Wash only when a test fails.

1. **Look at the last first layer.** Bambu Lab's guide shows fingerprints that are hard to spot on the plate but plain in the first layer. If the marks line up with where you grab the plate, clean it.
2. **Run water over the plate.** Beads mean grease. A thin, even film means the surface is clean. This check comes from Bambu Lab.
3. **Wipe or wash to match your maker.** On a Prusa textured sheet, wipe with about 90% IPA while it is cold, and wash with soap only if that fails. On a Bambu Lab plate, scrub with dish detergent, rinse and dry.
4. **Print again before doing anything harsher.** If parts still lift, Bambu Lab's next steps are a slightly higher bed temperature, a brim, or a first layer of 0.5 mm line width

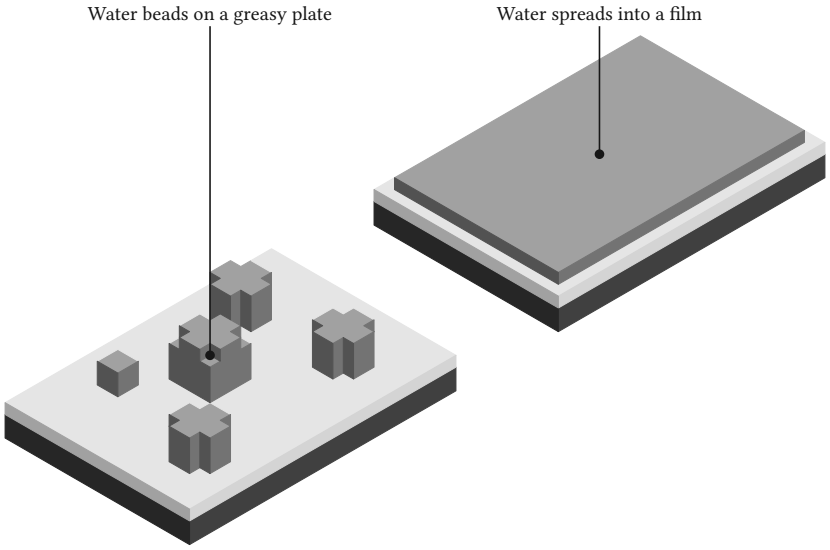


Figure 1. Bambu Lab's check. On the left, water pulls into beads, a sign of poor adhesion. On the right, it spreads into a thin film, which means the plate is clean.

and 0.25 mm height. After that, try the other side of the plate.

Shiny spots left by the nozzle or a tool are cosmetic, and Prusa says they don't affect adhesion. Bambu Lab likewise treats wear in the nozzle-wipe area of its plates as normal.

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Cite as: Asked 3D. "How often should you wash a PEI build plate?." September 23, 2026. https://asked3d.com/answers/how-often-wash-pei-plate. Last verified September 23, 2026.