

Bagpipe Hygiene

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There has been a lot of talk on the internet lately about a fungal infection contracted through a using a synthetic pipe bag that was contaminated. Although this is rare it is an issue we should all think about. I have seen (and smelled) some pretty awful bagpipes over the years. This is not only detrimental to the performance and tone of the instrument but could also damage your health. Whilst cases are rare, it is obviously important to understand that a warm moist environment such as a pipe bag will grow all sorts of nasties.

Hide bags

Hide bags are usually sealed (they have no zip to open them). Every so often they require seasoning to dress the leather on the inside of the bag. This seasoning will usually contain some agent that will retard growth inside the bag. It is good practice the rinse the old seasoning from the inside of the bag before re-dressing the bag. A regular routine to season a bag is a good idea as some can go a very long time without seasoning. Airing the bag if it gets too wet is a good practice as well.

Synthetic and Composite Bags

Most synthetic bags have a zip so they can be opened to access and Moisture Control System inside the bag. It is a good practice to wash the inside of the bag occasionally with warm water and a little detergent. Be careful not to use any alcohol based substances or any liquid that may deteriorate the glue used to manufacture the bag. Ensure you rinse the bag thoroughly and dry it. Lubricate the zip and then clean the stocks with some bore oil like "[The Makers Choice Bore Oil](#)" that is specially formulated for the bagpipe.

Open the bag after playing and let the inside dry. Also empty any water trap. Obviously putting a wet bag away in a pipe box is a recipe for disaster.



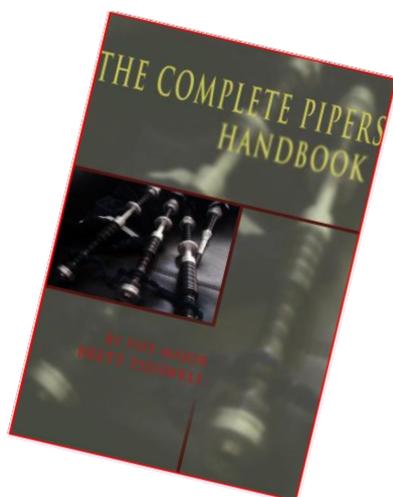
The Makers Choice Bore Oil

Blowpipe, Mouthpiece and Water Trap

These can all be pulled apart. The mouthpiece is threaded onto the blowpipe and will come apart. If the mouthpiece is plastic it can be washed and scrubbed out with a stiff brush. Do not get it wet if it has an ivory bulb. The blowpipe can be pulled through and cleaned using good quality bore oil. Most water traps can be pulled apart emptied and cleaned with a brush or using an [oiling rod](#) with a clean cloth.

Conclusion

There is little chance of contracting some illness from your bagpipe if it is kept in good condition. A book like "[The Complete Pipers Handbook](#)" will give excellent advice on maintaining and setting up a bagpipe in pristine condition. Keep everything dry and clean.



The Complete Pipers Handbook for all the advice you need to keep your pipe in great condition

Our suggestions are:

- Empty and dry your water trap after playing.
- If using a synthetic bag open it and dry it out after playing.
- Clean your bag using a small amount of detergent then rinse and dry.
- If using a hide bag use a good quality bag dressing on a regular basis.
- Anything that looks mouldy clean or replace.
- Clean your mouthpiece, blowpipe and water trap regularly.
- Look for any signs of mould and clean it.

You can visit the [School of Piping Shop](http://www.schoolofpiping.com) for any products like The Makers Choice Bore Oil, cleaning brushes and rods, or The Complete Pipers Handbook. It is good practice to be well prepared and informed. We are only too happy to help.



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