KEEBSCOUT RESEARCH · AUGUST 2026

Switch Materials Report 2026

We grouped the materials of **227 switches** into families and a clear recipe emerges: a **POM stem** (93% of the 168 switches that publish one), a polycarbonate top (63% of published tops), and a nylon-family bottom (76% of published bottoms). Lubrication has gone mainstream too: **82% of switches** with a published lube status leave the factory pre-lubed, at a $0.40 median against $0.35 unlubed.

93%
of published stems are POM

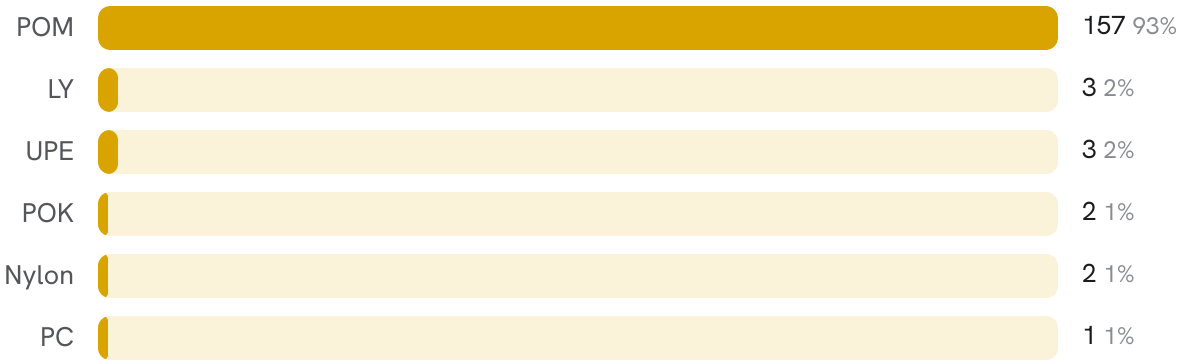
63%
of tops are polycarbonate

76%
of bottoms are nylon-family

82%
ship factory-lubed

POM owns the stem

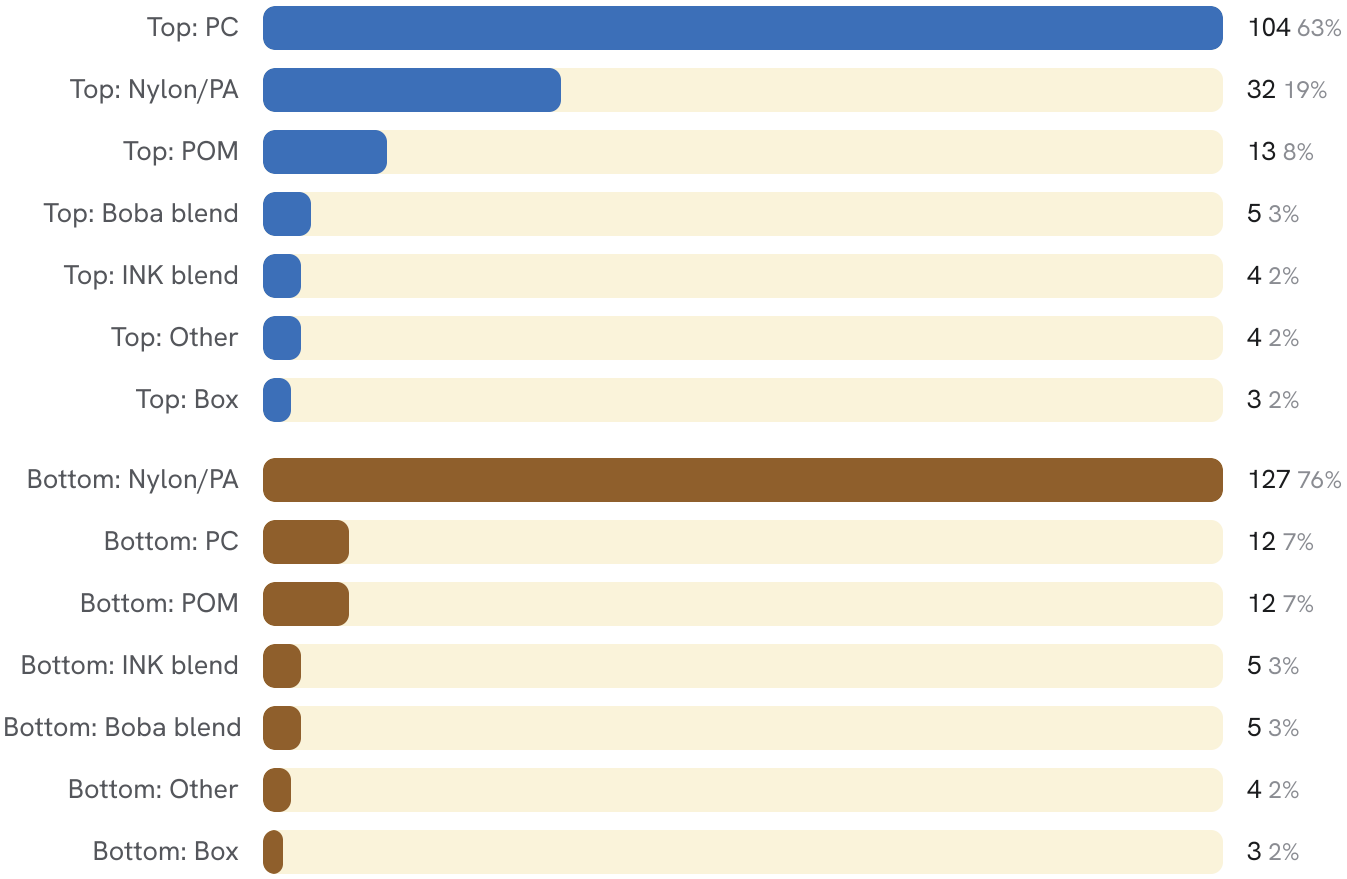
The stem is the part that moves, and the market has standardized on POM, a self-lubricating plastic that smooths travel without mods. 157 of 168 switches with a published stem material use it (93%), counting blends and dampened variants. Everything else, LY, POK, UPE, nylon, plain PC, fights over the remainder, mostly as brand-specific recipes chasing a particular sound.



Switches with a published stem material, n=168; blends grouped into their base family.

Clear tops, nylon bottoms

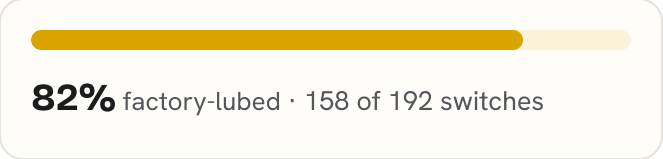
The housing recipe is just as settled. Polycarbonate dominates top housings at 63%, partly because it is rigid and partly because RGB boards need a translucent top. Bottom housings flip to nylon-family plastics at 76%: softer, deeper-sounding, and cheaper to mold. The classic "thock" recipe, PC over nylon with a POM stem, is simply what most switches now are.



Published top housings n=165, bottom housings n=168.

Factory lube is now standard practice

Hand-lubing switches used to be the rite of passage that separated casuals from enthusiasts. The factories absorbed it: 158 of 192 switches with a published lube status (82%) ship pre-lubed. The practice has spread so far downmarket that it barely moves the price anymore: a $0.40 median for lubed switches against $0.35 for unlubed ones.



Materials and lube status for every entry live in the switch database; feel differences are covered in the switch types guide.

Methodology and citation

Every figure is computed live from the KeebScout switch database (227 switches as of August 2026; 168 publish a stem material, 165 a top housing, 168 a bottom housing, and 192 a lube status). Specs are normalized to one schema and units, and unpublished fields are excluded rather than guessed, with the sample size noted wherever a spec is missing. Prices are the listed US retail price where available. Nothing here is weighted by sales, sponsorship, or affiliate payouts, because the database is not; the full method is on the about page. As the database grows, these numbers update on their own.

CITE THIS PAPER

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Free to quote and link with attribution. The raw comparison lives in the keyboard database and switch database, and every paper in this series is listed on the research index.