

## Keeping it clean

A lot of thought, effort and care is put into designing and making your products. So taking care of them once they are coated just makes sense. Your powder coated products can continue to look great for a long time – with a few easy tips on caring and maintaining them.

Many powder coated products are exposed to the elements, and over time it may begin to show, for example with loss of gloss, chalking and sometimes a slight color change. However a simple regular clean will minimize the effects of weathering and will remove dirt, grime and other build-up, which is detrimental to all powder coatings.

Products that are outdoors such as architectural coatings or outdoor furniture will need cleaning from time to time. How often you clean them depends on a few factors, such as

- The geographical location of your building.
- The environment surrounding the products e.g. marine, industrial, alkaline or acidic, etc.
- The levels of atmospheric pollution including salts.
- Prevailing winds and the possibility of air borne debris causing erosive wear of the coating, for example, sand causing abrasion.
- Long term, a change in the environmental circumstances during the lifetime of the building e.g. if rural became industrial, can also affect the atmosphere and thus the wear on the coating.

Clearly the environment the product or building is in is a key factor in the frequency of cleaning required. In many environments high corrosivity levels, such as industrial or marine, normal cleaning frequency should be at a minimum of six monthly intervals.

You might not think it at first, but sheltered areas can be more at risk of coating degradation than exposed areas. This is because wind-blown salt and other pollutants may adhere to the surface and will not be cleaned away with rainfall. These areas should be inspected and cleaned if necessary on a more regular basis. Where the atmosphere is deemed to be non-hazardous, e.g. rural or 'normal' urban environments, then the period between cleaning can be extended up to a maximum of 24 months depending

Therefore, to really protect your product, start early. You can start cleaning at the time the products are installed, ensuring that construction materials such as concrete, plaster and paint splashes are removed before they have a chance to dry. If these materials aren't removed at this early stage, it is almost guaranteed that aggressive cleaning materials and techniques will be used to remove them, and that can cause potential damage to the powder coated surface.

The best method of cleaning is simple: regular washing of the coating using a solution of warm water and non-abrasive, pH neutral detergent solution. Make sure you thoroughly rinse the surfaces after cleaning to remove all residues. You can use a soft cloth, sponge or a soft natural bristle brush. In fact, cleaning of powder coated sections can be conveniently carried out at the same time as window cleaning.

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