

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Procedure for Cleaning Finish & Removing Efflorescence in EIFS and Stucco

INTRODUCTION

EIFS, stucco and other cladding with Parex finish may require periodic cleaning to refresh the surface appearance. Clean surfaces are also needed prior to recoating EIFS or stucco that incorporate an acrylic finish. The procedures below describe methods that can be used for general cleaning of EIFS and stucco or the removal of efflorescence from the acrylic finish surface.

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL PURPOSE CLEANING

1. Evaluate the surface to be cleaned and the nature of material that needs to be removed. Select an appropriate cleaning solution for the soiling condition (dirt, mold, etc.).
2. Test the cleaning solution on a small inconspicuous area to ensure that it provides the desired results.
3. Prepare the surface for cleaning by thoroughly rinsing the wall with clean water to remove surface particles and to wet the surface to be cleaned. It is recommended to keep lower elevations wet to prevent run-off from above from causing streaking.
4. To remove ordinary dirt and environmental contaminants, Parex finish may be cleaned with a mild household detergent solution or commercial grade cleaner. A generic cleaning solution typically would be 1-2 cups of trisodium phosphate (TSP) to 1 gallon of warm water. Other EIFS and stucco safe cleaners are available from the suppliers listed at the end of this document.
5. To kill mold or mildew, apply a solution of 1 part bleach and 20 parts water to the wall or other biocide that is safe for acrylic type finishes.
6. Spray or brush the cleaning solution onto the wall. If spraying, use low pressure spray to avoid driving dirt into textured surfaces. The chemicals provide the cleaning, not the water pressure. Allow the solution to soak the wall for approximately 15 minutes, but do not allow the cleaning solution to dry on the wall. Scrub the wall with a soft bristle brush to loosen heavy deposits.

7. Rinse the wall thoroughly with clean water to remove traces of loosened dirt and cleaning solution. All wall areas below the cleaned area should be rinsed thoroughly to completely flush the cleaning solution.

PROCEDURE FOR REMOVING EFFLORESCENCE

NOTE: Efflorescence is caused by the migration of soluble salts present in Portland cement. It occurs when water dissolves hydrated calcium hydroxide, migrates to the surface, and leaves a deposit when the water evaporates. This results in a white, chalky, and discolored appearance on the surface of the finish. It is an aesthetic rather than a performance issue and neither caused nor prevented by Parex finish.

1. Efflorescence can usually be removed by dry brushing the finish surface followed by flushing with clean water or with a light wash with an acidic cleaner that has been formulated for this purpose. Ensure the cleaner is safe for acrylic type finishes and follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution prior to application.
2. Test the cleaning solution on a small inconspicuous area to ensure that it provides the desired results.
3. Follow general cleaning instructions outlined above when applying this type of cleaner.

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONDITIONS

- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for dilution of concentrated cleaning solutions.
- Use a bleach solution to remove mold. Bleach is needed to kill micro-organisms that form mold and mildew. Avoid phosphate-based cleaners when cleaning mold and mildew.
- Always test the cleaning solution on a small inconspicuous area.
- Evaluate alternate cleaners to remove stains that do not respond to detergents. Consult the cleaning solution's manufacturer's recommendations. Use the least aggressive means that provides desired results.

- Check local regulatory requirements for disposal of wastewater and cleaning solutions.
- Never use water pressure more than 500 psi or allow pressure nozzles to come within 2 feet of the wall. Excessive pressure may damage textured finishes and EIFS lamina. Use fan type tips (30-45° or greater) on the pressure washer.
- Frequent power-washing should be avoided, it may result in premature deterioration of the Parex finish.
- Cleaning solutions should not be allowed to dry on the wall. They may form deposits that can be difficult to remove.
- Protect surrounding surfaces not intended for cleaning from splashes or wind drift. Protect landscape and grass as required by the cleaning solution's manufacturer for recommendations.
- Consider the air and surface temperature prior to cleaning and consult the cleaning solution's manufacturer for recommendations.
- Abrasion can damage finishes and sealants. Do not scrub excessively or use wire brushes.
- Trisodium phosphate detergent is a food source for mold. Do not use trisodium phosphate detergent without bleach in hot humid climates. Mold must be removed with bleach, or it will return.
- Do not allow detergents of any kind to come in contact with hydrophobic coatings and finishes such as SikaWall Premium Hydrophobic Coating. Detergents can deactivate the antisoiling properties of hydrophobic coatings and finishes.
- Steam or hot water should not be used to clean EIFS or acrylic finishes over stucco.
- Do not apply solvents or solvent-based cleaners to EIFS or acrylic finishes over stucco.

CLEANING SOLUTION SUPPLIERS

Demand Products –

www.demandproducts.com

EaCoChem – www.eacochem.com

ShoreBest – www.shorebest.com

Wind-Lock Corporation –

www.wind-lock.com

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