



## **CARE, MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS**

### **FOR CAPPED SOLID DECKING & CAPPED HOLLOW DECKING**

#### **DIRT AND DEBRIS**

In most cases, occasional cleaning with soap and water is all that is needed to maintain the appearance of your decking.

To clean the affected area, begin by spraying it off with a hose to remove any loose debris. Next, use warm soapy water and a soft bristle brush to remove dirt and debris from the embossing pattern, scrubbing in the direction of the grain for best results.

#### **USING A PRESSURE WASHER (GENERAL CLEANING ISSUES)**

You can use a pressure washer with a fan attachment/adjustment and soap dispenser to remove dirt or mud from your decking, provided that the pressure washer has no greater than 3000 psi. To clean the deck, first spray it with soap and then use a soft bristle brush to gently scrub each deck board. Rinse each individual deck board with a fan tip nozzle that is no closer than 10 inches (approximately 25 cm) from the decking surface. After cleaning, be sure to rinse the decking surface thoroughly. If you leave dirty water to dry on the decking surface, a film may remain, so it's important to rinse the surface well.

#### **ISSUES WITH CONCRETE, CEMENT, MORTAR, OR STUCCO DUST**

When working with cement, concrete, mortar, or stucco, it is important to protect the decking at all times to prevent dust particles from settling on the surface. These particles can cause a reaction on the decking surface when exposed to heat or moisture, and can be difficult to remove. If particles do get on the decking surface, use a recommended concrete dissolver and be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

#### **HARD WATER STAINING**

Hard water is water with high amounts of mineral deposits like lime, silica and calcium. When the water dries, deposits are left behind, leaving unsightly spots on surfaces. This is not a defect of products but an issue with the water itself. Generally, these deposits can be cleaned with white vinegar on decking surfaces. Rinsing is required so care should be taken to not use hard water for

this purpose. If hard water must be used, dry with a cloth or use a blower to dry surfaces. In some cases, a deck brightener product may also be used to help clean hard water stains.

### **TANNING DUE TO DEBRIS**

To prepare the deck for treatment, start by removing all debris using a hose or broom. Once the deck surface is dry, you can apply a recommended deck "brightener" according to the manufacturer's instructions. Deck brighteners typically contain oxalic acid, which is effective in removing tannins as well.

### **ICE AND SNOW**

You can use a plastic shovel to remove snow from your deck. To melt snow and ice from the deck surface, use either calcium chloride or rock salt.

### **OIL, GREASE, AND FOOD**

All oil, grease, and food spills must be removed as soon as possible and at the latest within seven days. To remove, spray off with a hose and use warm, soapy water and a soft bristle brush. In cases where soap and water are not effective in removing grease, oil stains or food spills, all-purpose recommended cleaners, including for composite material, can be used to cut through grime without discoloration.

### **MOLD AND MILDEW**

If debris such as pollen and dirt is allowed to accumulate on the deck surface, it can create a biofilm that provides a food source for mold. To prevent this, it's important to clean your deck as often as needed. You can use a hose and warm, soapy water with a soft bristle brush to remove both the debris and the mold.

If mold is present, there are many commercial products available for cleaning. Make sure the product can be used on composite, then follow the manufacturer's instructions and use cleaners within their indicated shelf life. It is not recommended to mix different cleaning products together, as harmful chemical reactions could occur. Additionally, it is important to never mix bleach and acids.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **POTENTIAL HEAT SOURCES**

Composite decking has a tendency to retain heat when exposed to direct or reflective sunlight. Therefore, caution should be exercised when walking on it barefoot, and it may be necessary to wear footwear. Additionally, heat buildup from external sources could potentially damage the decking surfaces. Examples of such sources include reflected light from different types of glass (such as low-e glass), fire features, and under-deck waterproofing installations that do not provide at least 1.5 inches (4cm) of unobstructed ventilation.

### **LOW-E GLASS/REFLECTED HEAT**

Low-emissivity (Low-E) glass is designed to reflect sunlight outward and prevent heat gain inside the house. However, this reflective property can also lead to excessive heat buildup on the surface of composite decking. Such heat buildup can cause damage, including melting, sagging, warping, discoloration, increased expansion and contraction, and accelerated weathering.

If you have concerns about reducing this risk, we recommend contacting the manufacturer of the product containing the Low-E glass. They may be able to provide suggestions on how to reduce or eliminate the reflected heat.

### **GRILLS, FIRE FEATURES AND FIRE PITS**

When installing grills, it is important to assess their heat radiance and ensure they are located at a safe distance from all building materials, including decking and cladding. It's worth noting that not all grills are the same, and owners may need to reassess grill placement based on the amount of heat produced.

Fire features and fire pits are becoming more popular in outdoor living environments. However, it's essential to exercise caution when designing, installing, and using these features, as fire can potentially damage various building products, including decking and cladding. Taking proper precautions can help prevent any damage resulting from their use.

### **RUBBER MATS AND FLOWER POTS**

Welcome mats or grill mats that have a rubber, vinyl, or latex backing can leave marks on your composite decking. While these marks can generally be removed, we recommend using high-quality polypropylene or colorfast woven rugs to avoid the issue altogether. Flowerpots can also create potential problems if they sit directly on the deck surface, as moisture can become trapped underneath. Over time, this can result in the buildup of minerals and fertilizer/plant food, which can cause a white discoloration on the boards. To prevent this, we recommend using a plant stand or other structure to elevate the pot and allow for proper air flow underneath.

## **STATIC**

A dry or windy environment can create a temporary condition of static electricity on composite decking. Climate and site conditions can also influence the occurrence of static electricity. Additionally, heat pumps and dryer vents that are located close to or pointed toward the decking material can generate static electricity on the deck. Therefore, it's important to always position the dryer vents away from the deck. Over time, the effect of static electricity will naturally dissipate on the surface of the decking.

## **UNDER-DECK WATERPROOFING SYSTEMS**

Properly installed under-deck waterproofing systems can provide additional living or storage space. However, it's important to note that improper installations can restrict air flow and lead to the buildup of heat and/or humidity, which can result in unwanted consequences.

To ensure the required 1.5 inches (4cm) of unobstructed cross-ventilation and air flow is achieved, we recommend contacting the manufacturer of the specific under-deck waterproofing system for installation instructions. If the system has already been installed, you should seek methods to achieve the cross-ventilation requirement in order to avoid issues.

## **DOWNSPOUTS**

Direct downspouts and downspout extensions away from the composite decking to avoid water damage. Additionally, using spout guards can also help prevent water damage to the deck.