

Care & Maintenance of Cooke products

Taking care of the powder coated finish

Powder coating is not impervious to harsh solvents and many commercial cleaning solutions will damage these finishes. This damage accelerates staining, fading and ultimate failure of the powder coated finish. Cleaning with such chemicals can cut the life expectancy of the finish in half. Proper cleaning and maintenance may more than double or triple the coatings effective service life. Fabricated products that require the greatest decorative and protective value will require some sort of proactive maintenance and care. For high visibility projects such as architectural building applications it is wise to document and maintain records of the maintenance including the exact cleaning procedure, materials and frequency. These records may become useful in the event the finish fails to perform as expected.

Avoid using unfiltered tap water or ground water when cleaning the powder coated finish, and pay attention to where the wind blows the water from sprinkler systems. Unfiltered water often causes staining on outdoor products due to sulfur, iron oxide, chlorine, fluoride, and other minerals commonly found in hard water or ground water in certain states. Only filtered water should be used to clean and rinse powder coated products whenever possible.

Clean with mild soap and warm water

Products that have been powder coated should be cleaned with a soft brush or cloth, using mild soap and very warm water. Soaps that have emulsifiers that break down common stains and are scum free are the best to use. The exposed surfaces of powder coated products that are most critical should be cleaned weekly or bi-weekly. Simply wipe down the top surfaces and rinse with filtered water (not hard water). *(Reference AAMA 610)*

Commercial Cleaning Solutions

It is a common misconception that solvents, and other petroleum based chemicals, are

good cleaners for powder coated surfaces. Not true. These chemicals can be very detrimental to the organic polymer based finish. They may clean well for a time, but they clean by removing micro layers of the finish. After a while, it becomes impossible to clean the surface using this method. Additionally, the coating surface may become stiff and hard, and lose its barrier protective value. Compounding this problem the coating may begin to crack and prematurely lose gloss and fade the color. Physical aging of organic coated surfaces that are constantly exposed to weathering conditions is an inescapable process that is accelerated by the use of harsh chemicals.

Wax the Exposed Surface

Just as your car benefits from semi-annual applications of wax, so will the finished surfaces of products such as outdoor furniture, outdoor lighting fixtures, stairways, handrails, guardrails, and fences. Lightly wax the coated surfaces with a high grade, non-abrasive car wax that contain U.V blocker and/or U.V. inhibitors. Do not use compound waxes that contain abrasives and be sure to wipe off any residual wax. Wax that may remain on the coated surface could bake on in the ultra violet light from the heat of the sun and cause permanent staining.

Taking care of Stone

Warning: If your fire pit is making surrounding or nearby stone hot turn it down or off immediately. Your fire pit is not intended to be operated at maximum output for extended periods of time or in conditions other than temperate and calm weather. Large and or quick temperature variations will cause stone to crack.

Marble, granite, travertine, limestone and slate are quarried products. Stones are a natural honed or polished rock, not factory-made or fired. No two pieces are alike and there are inherent variances in all stone. These characteristics may be color and shade variations, irregular markings, voids, pitting, veins, and differences in density causing sheen variations. It is a standard practice to repair some of these variations by one or more of the following methods; waxing, grinding or filling. Due to normal wear, cracks and voids may appear; these can be readily repaired using floor grout and/or epoxy. All of these variations and characteristics are common and present, to some degree. However, these characteristics are part of the natural beauty of the stone and will not impair the function or wearing qualities of the material.

Preventative maintenance

To avoid damage caused by dirt sweep or vacuum regularly to prevent loose dirt from abrading your stone. A regular maintenance regimen will help your natural stone be

more resistant to scratching and wear. Natural stone, especially polished stone, is sensitive to harsh chemicals. We recommend wiping or mopping stone surfaces with warm water or a pH-balanced neutral cleaner. Rinse the surface thoroughly after washing and dry with a soft cloth. Change the rinse water frequently. Do not use scouring powders or creams; these products contain abrasives that may scratch the surface. Do not use vinegar or any cleaners containing acids or strong alkaline agents. Whether a stone product is sealed or unsealed, all spills must be cleaned up immediately to avoid possible staining and acid burns from citrus juices or acidic liquids. Acid-based foods, such as citrus or tomatoes, can etch into the polish of more delicate stones, like marble and onyx. Do not place hot items, such as pots and pans, on any stone. As a safety precaution, use coasters on countertops.

A quality impregnating sealer penetrates stone, allows the stone to breathe and permits more of the stone's natural beauty to shine through. Unsealed stone is more susceptible to absorbing moisture, dirt and cleaning chemicals. DCI LLC makes no recommendation for, or against applications to seal. Each job is unique and custom not only to the product selected, but to the application as well. The buyer should discuss with the contractor/builder the necessity of sealing.

Joints and laminated seams need to be inspected regularly and if separation or cracks start to form a stone restoration company should be contracted to repair and re-glue the joint. Direct sun is one of the worst conditions for filler, epoxy and glued, it will cause yellowing/discoloration. Cloth covers to protect products from the sun are recommended. An aftermarket service and maintenance program is best administered by a licensed stone restoration or fabrication company to repair cracks, fissures or imperfections. This is regular maintenance and should be done when issues arise which depends on the environment.

Care of Brushed Stainless Steel

Satin polished stainless steel finishes should be wiped clean with a mild soap and water solution, rinsed with clean water and wiped with a clean, dry cloth for occasional smudges. For periodic maintenance, satin stainless steel can be rubbed with an abrasive pad (such as a #9650 General Purpose Rubbing Pad by 3M). The finish should always be rubbed in the same direction as the grain texture. Do not use circular motions when polishing or cleaning.

Care of Brushed Aluminum

Brushed Aluminum finishes should be wiped clean with a mild soap and water solution, rinsed with clean water and wiped with a clean, dry cloth for occasional smudges. Sometimes dark stains can occur most commonly from moisture under a cloth cover for extended time. Bar Keepers friend and a pad can be used to remove stains. If deep

scratches, dings or stains happen a 80-120 grit flap disk on a 4" angle grinder can be used to sand out and restore brush pattern. Note some brushed aluminum item have a clear powder coat and should follow the care for powder coated surfaces.

Care of Fire pit

The Fire pit area should be kept clean from dirt and debris. Blowing or dustings are common techniques for cleaning. If fire pit glass becomes contaminated with dirt, soot, food, drinks or other materials it can be washed with mild soap and water. Removing the glass and washing it in a wash basket that allows water to drain may be the most effective practice, use filtered water (not hard water).

Fire pit controls, hoses and fittings should be routinely inspected for leaking or damage during the removal and installation of propane tanks. It is recommended that a certified NFI technician should perform an annual maintenance inspection of all fire pit components.

Care of Cloth covers

Do not use a Power Washer of any sort. Brush off any light dirt thoroughly wet down.

Clean with a mild soap solution such as Ivory or Dreft.

Work in mild soap solution with a soft brush.

Rinse thoroughly with clear water and let dry completely before folding back up.

Care of other Materials

Other materials purchased from DCI LLC such as but not limited to fire logs, cushions, tanks and accessories should be cared for using the best-known practices recommended by the manufacture or industry specific agency or professional.

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