

Cleaning and Maintenance Information - Cladding & Decking

Timber cladding and decking provide an attractive and durable external finish. Left uncoated the wood will weather naturally over time to grey, and this is a popular option for many projects.

Like all external finishes, timber cladding/decking will require periodic cleaning and maintenance to preserve its optimal condition and appearance.

Regular cleaning of spiderwebs and light surface dirt can be done easily with a soft brush and water as part of a normal maintenance program.

For light accumulations of surface dirt, a mild detergent solution can be used, and heavier accumulations can normally be dealt with by using a stiffer brush. Decking and low level surfaces can be more susceptible to higher accumulations of surface dirt, stain fungi, algae growth etc, and can require more frequent cleaning/maintenance.

*We do not recommend the use of pressure washes for maintenance cleaning under normal circumstances.

Decking / low level surfaces

Keeping decking clean will not only make the deck look better and last longer, but it will also be less prone to being slippery underfoot.

It is recommended that decking should be thoroughly cleaned every spring, or more frequently if local environmental conditions are contributing to high dirt/debris e.g. heavily wooded areas.



Left: Sodium Percarbonate / Middle: Osmo Wood Reviver Gel / Right: Not yet cleaned

There are a couple of methods for thoroughly cleaning a deck depending on the finish the owner wants to achieve.

Sodium percarbonate

Sodium percarbonate (aka Oxygen Bleach) is sold in a granulated form from many online vendors and can be

mixed with warm water to make an effective cleaning solution for many applications.

Please follow the manufacturer's guidelines for dilution ratios and PPE.

For timber application the normal practice is to apply the solution liberally, leave to soak for 10mins, then scrub with a medium - stiff brush and rinse off with a hose.

Used on weathered wood surfaces it is effective in removing stubborn dirt buildup and discolouration, and leaves the weathered grey tone of the wood largely unaffected (if a little lighter) after cleaning*

**Immediately after cleaning the surface can be a little patchy with some loose fibres. This will settle back down after a few weeks.*

Osmo Wood Reviver Gel

For clients wishing to refresh their decking / cladding, Osmo Wood Reviver Gel is a powerful cleaning agent.

The gel addresses various potential causes of localised staining, while removing the fine surface layer of weathered grey material and accumulated dirt, exposing fresh wood below. *



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Osmo Wood Reviver Gel can be purchased on our online shop.

Stain fungi

The occurrence of stain fungi is a normal part of the weathering process and contributes to the overall grey colour of weathered timber over time.

Stain fungi feeds on the starches and sugars which exude from the timber surface during the first few years of the wood's service life. Surface dirt from nearby plant debris and insect life can also provide a fuel source for the fungi. In certain situations, e.g. in sheltered or damp areas, or in

close proximity to woodland and other vegetation, timber can be more susceptible to more rapid or extensive onset of stain fungi.

Stain fungi tends to appear as dark spots or areas on the timber and is usually triggered by damp or humid conditions in its early stages.



*For more intense stain fungi blooms it is recommended to check that the area in question has adequate ventilation and drainage to the cavity, and there is not an undiagnosed water leak / runoff onto the timber.

Assuming that the cladding is well drained and ventilated, and there are no untoward moisture issues then keeping the cladding clean will be all that is required.

It is important to note that while stain fungi can be unsightly it does not compromise the durability or performance of the timber.

Once the sugars and starches in the surface have been exhausted, and barring external fuel sources from plant debris etc the fungi will die off.

For faster treatment of stain fungi a fungicidal wash can be applied, or the surface can be cleaned with a solution of sodium percarbonate (*) / Osmo Wood reviver Gel and a medium - stiff brush.

Once the stain fungi has gone, residual stains will normally fade as the timber weathers, and in the summer months there will be further diminution as photo bleaching occurs.

Algae growth

Accumulations of surface dirt and debris combined with damp conditions can provide a suitable environment for algae to thrive.

Correct ventilation and detailing to avoid waterlogging, and regular cleaning of surface dirt and debris should avoid the occurrence of algae growth.

If algae growth has occurred it can be cleaned with a medium -stiff brush and a dilute solution of sodium percarbonate (*) / Osmo Wood reviver Gel.

Extractive tidemarks / water staining

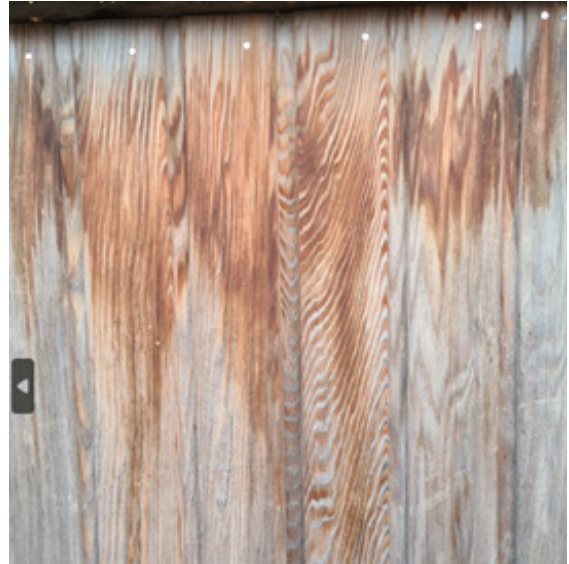
Wood contains a range of naturally occurring water soluble chemicals known as extractives.

Extractives include tannins, polyphenols, and other

components, many of which contribute to the colour of the wood.

Tidemarks / Watermarks

As timber weathers, and in situations where building design or detailing causes some areas to be more sheltered than others, the leaching of extractives can cause differential weathering, uneven patches or 'tidemarks' to develop in some situations.



Plant pots can trap water and should not be placed directly on decking – use pot feet!

In most situations, and depending on exposure, these areas will weather more slowly and balance out over time.

In some situations, the tidemarks or water stains may never fully weather out.

Undesirable tidemarks or water marks can be cleaned with Osmo Wood Reviver Gel, or a solution of oxalic acid for instances of heavy staining.

Metal staining

Timber is inherently slightly acidic, and as such can react and cause staining with certain metals.

To avoid staining around fixing points stainless steel fixings of at least A2 (304) grade should be used for

cladding and decking under normal conditions.

In proximity to saltwater, chlorine, or in areas where grit/salt may be used in winter A4 (316) grade stainless steel fixings should be used.

If incorrect fixings are used, then it can lead to leeching.

Where leeching has occurred a solution of oxalic acid can be used to neutralise the stains, and the fixing can be replaced with a more suitable steel grade.

