

INTRODUCTION

The Coil Coating process for metal is designed to give a long-lasting finish that needs only periodic maintenance. Typical “steel” substrates are be Hot Dipped Galvanized (HDG), Galvalume® or Zinalume ® Zinc Aluminum alloy coated steel (ZAL or GAL) or Cold Rolled steel (CRS). Aluminum is also commonly used.

These substrates are chemically cleaned and pre-treated then immediately coated to ensure the freshest surface possible for best adhesion and corrosion resistance. Special thermally catalyzed (heat cured) coatings are applied by direct roll coating and baking at high temperatures. For exterior building components, this process results in a finish that is quite hard and resistant to deterioration by weather. It’s just not easy to keep surfaces clean, but simple to restore the original appearance with minimal effort.

CLEANING OF PRE-PAINTED SURFACES

The durability of the pre-painted metal finish is a combined result from the thorough cleaning, coating technology and baked-on curing. Designed to last for many years, periodic maintenance is necessary to keep the appearance looking good.

I. Dirt and Similar Surface Contaminates

It is certainly tough to keep things clean so periodic washing of the pre-painted metal may be desirable. Pre-paint is formulated to resist most mild cleaners and fresh water. The simplest solution of detergent in fresh warm water is best. Detergents like Tide® with less than 0.5% phosphate can be mixed at about one cup per five gallons of water. Using a sponge, soft cloth, or soft bristle brush clean an area then rinse immediately with fresh water, repeat as necessary. Take care not to scratch the painted surface.

II. Chalking

All paints exposed to direct sunlight will slowly degrade over the years losing gloss and leaving a powdery “Chalk”. Normally, rain and weather clean up the loose particles. Unsightly chalk can be cleaned as if it were Dirt per “Section I”, with a mild soapy wash. Take care to rinse well and protect concrete or appearance critical surfaces below the pre-paint from staining.

III. Mold, Mildew

In warm humid climates, mold and mildew can grow on the pre-painted surface. If left on for extended periods, these spores will penetrate the coating reducing its life. Mix one cup of mild soap, like Ivory®, and one gallon of bleach into five gallons of water. Wash the surface with a sponge or soft bristle brush for stubborn stains, taking care to not scratch the paint finish, and rinse with fresh water. Take care with this solution to protect your eyes, skin etc. and surrounding areas that may be bleach sensitive, plants, carpet, cloth, etc.

IV. Grease, Oil, Wax, Etc.

Cleaning with detergent and water, as in "Section I" should be tried first. Small areas can be cleaned with commercial kitchen cleaners, like Fantastic®. Large areas may require a commercial grease remover like Simple Green® in a solution of water. A less desirable alternative is to wipe with solvent like Xylene or Naphtha. Use plenty of clean cloths to avoid recontamination of the surface or just moving the grease around. Observe all precautions for personal safety and fire hazards. Solvent wiping can affect the long-term durability of the pre-painted metal by softening or removing paint film and dulling the gloss.

V. Things to Avoid

To retain the original film integrity of the pre-paint finish, avoid damaging the surface. Stiff bristle brushes, wire brushes, abrasive cleansers do more harm than good. Acid based cleaners like CLR® or high phosphate containing detergents may damage the finish. Strong commercial cleaners should be tested in a small area to determine if they cause any adverse effects.

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