

Care and Maintenance of Aluminium

Mill finish (untreated)

External applications

When used externally mill finish aluminium requires regular cleaning to maintain a relatively good standard of appearance. The frequency and cleaning method suggested is dependent on the severity of the environment concerned.

If a cleaning programme is adopted from the date of installation the surfaces concerned will respond to the following treatment:

- Remove any grease or oil deposits with organic solvent such as white spirit.
- Swab down with a diluted solution of mild detergent followed by rinsing with clean cold water.



To retain a reasonable surface appearance, frequency of cleaning will vary from once or twice a year in rural areas; to three or four times per year in mild industrial areas; to once monthly in severely polluted or marine environments.

Cleaning long established but neglected installations of aluminium will probably require one or more of the following methods, depending on the severity of the surface contamination.

- Bristle brush and dilute detergent e.g. Fairy Liquid
- Polishing compounds e.g. Brasso
- Nylon pad impregnated with abrasives e.g. Scotchbrite
- Steel wool in conjunction with dilute detergent

Internal applications

Mill finish surfaces should be degreased with white spirit, followed by cleaning with mild detergent and rinsing with clean cold water. Wipe over with a dry soft cloth.

Anodised finish

External applications

The smoothness and hardness of anodised surfaces makes for ease of cleaning. After product installation it is advisable to undertake the following procedure:

- Remove any grease or deposits with organic solvent, such as white spirit.
- Swab down with a diluted solution of mild detergent followed by rinsing with cold clean water.
- After drying, apply furniture cream or wax, to maintain the highest quality surface finish. As with mill finish aluminium, the frequency of cleaning anodised surfaces in the external environment will vary depending on atmospheric conditions. In severely polluted or marine environments cleaning on a regular basis is advised.

Fascia claddings, shop fronts, profiles, etc., should be washed over every three months or so, to help maintain the integrity of surface finish.

Anodised surfaces which have been neglected for considerable periods of time will often require a more aggressive cleaning procedure. Unfortunately abrasive cleaning does cause some removal of the anodic film and the objective is to minimise the amount of abrasive cleaning to achieve the desired standard finish.

Internal applications

After the initial cleaning and protective programme has been adopted for anodised surfaces, (as outlined in the external applications section), a regular wipe over with a soft cloth, to remove finger marks and dirt deposits will maintain the lustre of anodised aluminium indefinitely.

Polyester powder coated finish

External applications

Fusion bonded polyester powder coated surfaces will enjoy many years of good service if regularly maintained.

For external applications, suggested cleaning intervals will vary between once every three months in harsh industrial or marine environments and up to once yearly in rural atmospheres.

After removing any grease or oil deposits with a white spirit solution, use a mild diluted detergent to wash over and rinse with cold clean water.

Dry off with a soft cloth.

Abrasive cleaning agents or materials should not be used as surface scratching may occur.

Internal applications

After initial cleaning a regular wipe over with a soft cloth, to remove finger and dirt deposits, is all that is normally required to maintain good surface appearance.

Polished finish

Internal applications

These finishes are relatively fine and should therefore be lightly cleaned with the utmost care, avoiding abrasive cleaning agents. Vigorous rubbing should be avoided.

It is suggested that a small, preferably unseen area of the finished surface is tested with an intended cleaning agent and technique, before undertaking the main cleaning activities.

Regular wiping with a soft cloth will reduce the necessity for more stringent and possibly harmful action, if dirt and grease deposits are allowed to collect on the surface.

Notes

1. *The products referenced in this information sheet are understood to be suitable for aluminum. However, no endorsement of the products or their manufacturers is implied and it is acknowledged that other manufacturing companies may provide products of equal or better quality.*

Cleaning agents should be approved for use under the relevant national environmental regulations and, in addition, prepared and used in accordance with the manufacturers or suppliers' health & safety instructions. Solvents should not be used in enclosed areas.



Unit 2, Fowler Road, West Pitkerro Industrial Estate, Dundee, DD5 3RU

t: +44 (0) 1382 773910

e: info@mt-uk.com

www.mt-uk.com

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