

Cleaning your Composite Fence

Dirt and Grime

Dislodge accumulated dirt with a broom or by using soap and water and a non-metal scrub brush. Scrubbing in the direction of the grain is best. Thoroughly rinse off with a garden hose. Skilled professionals may use a pressure washer with wide fan tips, at low pressures, under 1,500 psi, and at safe distances, 12" above surface. In the wrong hands, your composite fence can be damaged. Exercise extreme caution.

Oil and Grease Stains

Speedy clean up is best. To clean grease and oil stains that soap and water cannot remove, some all purpose cleaners, such as Fantastik, will cut through grease and grime, or use a commercial composite cleaner designed specifically for this type of fencing. De-Solv-It Citrus Solution is effective in removing tar, asphalt, oil, grease and chewing gum. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations and test in an inconspicuous area prior to cleaning the entire fence.

Mold and Mildew

Mold and mildew are common environmental conditions. Molds grow on decaying organic material such as wood, leaf decay and pollen. Tiny and lightweight, mold spores travel easily through the air. Different climates experience varying degrees of these conditions depending on the amount of moisture and heat present.

To thrive, mold and mildew need air, water, elevated temperatures and a food source. There is no way to eliminate all these conditions in the environment. A wide variety of building materials including concrete, wood products, vinyl siding and many others are subject to potential mold growth.

To minimize mold on your fencing, clean your fence as often as needed, at least twice each year. Climate conditions vary in different regions of the country and may necessitate more periodic cleaning. Removal of leaves, debris, and other organic materials that provide a food source for mold development is important. If mold is present on your fence, there are many commercial products available for cleaning mold.

We recommend the following commercial cleaners. For best results, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions and use cleaners within their stated shelf life. Do not mix recommended cleaning products together as harmful chemical reactions could occur. Never mix bleach and acids.

- Collier Manufacturing 30-Seconds® Outdoor Cleaner & 30-Seconds® Spray & Walk Away are heavy duty, mildly alkaline chlorinated mold and mildew removers/ cleaners that are biodegradable once rinsed into the soil, and have been tested to perform very well in removing mold & mildew, and retarding its return.
- Composite Deck Cleaner & Enhancer by Expert Chemical Company is a heavy duty, mildly alkaline chlorinated mold and mildew remover/ cleaner that is biodegradable once rinsed into the soil.

Fiberon tested with excellent results, a coating option for areas in the country with high mold prone environments. Using the 30-day ASTM D3273 mold test, there was no mold growth after applying the

weatherproofing finish. We have found the following coating effective on uncapped composite boards when applied and maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.

- Behr Premium Transparent Deck, Fence, & Siding Weatherproofing Wood Finish at <http://www.behr.com>.

For more information on cleaning mold and mildew, see Fiberon Technical Bulletin # 13 at this link, <http://www.fiberondecking.com/design/literatureCenter>.

Tannin Stains

Tannins naturally occur in all wood species and sometimes migrate to the surface where wood fibers are exposed to sun and water. Tannin stains tend to disappear naturally after removal of standing water under mats, flower pots or umbrella stands where water is trapped for longer periods of time.

To hasten removal of tannin stains, use a commercial composite cleaner designed specifically for this type of fencing, strictly following the manufacturer's instructions. One effective treatment is a mixture of one cup TSP (Tri-sodium phosphate), one cup bleach and one gallon warm water, applied with a long-handled deck brush. To help protect landscaping, we recommend wetting down landscaping prior to treatment.

Salt and Calcium Chloride

Build up of salt and calcium chloride is easily removed with enough water and perhaps a light scrub. Use a garden hose or sprayer. If using a pressure washer, use at low pressures under 1,500 psi and at safe distances, 12" from surface, to avoid damage.

Construction Chalk

Colored chalk, used in construction for marking straight lines prior to cutting, is permanent on most surfaces. Contact the manufacturer of the specific brand and color of chalk for a cleaning solution that may prove effective. The best advice is to avoid colored chalk, using workable alternatives such as white chalk or baby powder.