



INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR STAINLESS STEEL RAILING SYSTEM MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are to give building owners, developers and facility managers advice on efficient, cost-effective cleaning that will allow them to take advantage of the corrosion resistant properties of stainless-steel railing systems.

Stainless steel railings are corrosion resistant because the alloying elements in stainless form a thin, transparent “passive layer” on the surface. Although this protective passive layer is only a few atoms thick, it instantaneously reforms in the presence of oxygen from air or water, so even if the material is scratched or damaged the passive layer continues protecting the surface from corrosion.

Interior Railing Systems:

1. Introduction

Routine maintenance and cleaning is needed to keep stainless steel surfaces in good condition so that the aesthetic appearance and corrosion resistance are not compromised.

2. Maintenance instructions:

- a. General cleaning to remove fingerprints and other marks generated from daily use of railings:
 - i. Frequency - As needed
 - ii. Mild soap and water or glass cleaner and a clean cotton cloth or chamois – dry completely
- b. Cleaning to remove oil, grease or residue left from other cleaning materials, i.e., floor cleaning or polishing detergents:
 - i. Frequency – It is important to remove residue from other cleaning materials as soon as possible
 - ii. Use alcohol-based products, including methylated spirit and isopropyl alcohol or other solvents such as acetone. Apply cleaning solvent several times with a clean, non-scratching cotton cloth until all traces of the partially dissolved oil/grease/residue are removed. Use Scotch Brite if needed. Rinse the area well with mild soap and water and dry completely.
- c. Cleaning to remove paint or graffiti:
 - i. Frequency – As needed
 - ii. Paint and graffiti can be treated with proprietary alkaline or solvent-based paint strippers. Apply cleaning solvent several times with a clean, non-scratching cotton cloth until all traces of the paint is removed. Use Scotch Brite if needed. Rinse the area well with mild soap and water and dry completely.

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3. DO NOT USE:

- a. Chloride-containing cleansers, especially those containing hydrochloric acid or bleach
- b. Hypochlorite bleaches: if applied accidentally or spilt on stainless steel surfaces, should be rinsed off immediately with liberal amounts of fresh water
- c. Muriatic acid (commonly used to clean up tile/concrete installations)
- d. Silver-cleaners
- e. Scouring powders
- f. Hard scrapers or knives
- g. Non-stainless steel based scouring pads, cleaning wool or wire brushes
- h. To avoid "cross-contamination" from iron particles, ensure that cleaning utensils have not been used for "ordinary" (i.e., carbon) steel before.

Exterior Railing Systems:

1. Introduction

Stainless steel railings are very resistant to rust; however, this does not mean that they are impervious to it. Stainless steel railings located outdoors must be kept clean from the contaminants indigenous to the environments they are installed in. Specific maintenance considerations should be given during routine cleaning to ensure that accumulation of contaminants are removed in marine atmospheres, environments laden with industrial pollutants, areas that are exposed to salt spray from road de-icing salt and/or atmospheric dirt and traffic film.

2. Maintenance instructions:

- a. General cleaning to remove fingerprints and other marks generated from daily use of railings:
 - i. Frequency - As needed
 - ii. Mild soap and water or Glass cleaner and a clean cotton cloth or chamois – dry completely
- b. Cleaning to remove oil, grease or residue left from other cleaning materials, i.e. floor cleaning or polishing detergents:
 - i. Frequency –It is important to remove residue from other cleaning materials as soon as possible
 - ii. Use alcohol-based products, including methylated spirit and isopropyl alcohol or other solvents such as acetone. These products are not a corrosion hazard to stainless steel. Apply cleaning solvent several times with a clean, non-scratching cotton cloth until all

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traces of the partially dissolved oil/grease/residue are removed. Use Scotch Brite if needed. Rinse the area well with mild soap and water and dry completely.

- c. Cleaning to remove paint or graffiti:
 - i. Frequency – As needed
 - ii. Paint and graffiti can be treated with proprietary alkaline or solvent-based paint strippers. Apply cleaning solvent several times with a clean, non-scratching cotton cloth, until all traces of the paint are removed. Use Scotch Brite if needed. Rinse the area well with mild soap and water and dry completely.
- d. Stains caused by exposure to marine or de-ice salt, industrial atmospheres, or traffic film contamination. All can cause brown staining to appear or the appearance of crystalized salt.
 - i. Frequency – Dependent upon the severity of soiling and deposit build up, the maintenance schedule should be altered to meet the needs of the environmental condition.
 - ii. Use a clean cotton cloth with a proprietary stainless-steel cleaner containing phosphoric acid to remove contamination. After contamination is removed, rinse with mild soap and water and dry completely. Use Scotch Brite if needed. It is advisable that the entire surface of the railing is treated so that a patchy appearance is avoided.

3. DO NOT USE:

- a. Chloride-containing cleansers, especially those containing hydrochloric acid or bleach
- b. Hypochlorite bleaches: if applied accidentally or spilt on stainless steel surfaces, should be rinsed off immediately with liberal amounts of fresh water
- c. Muriatic acid (commonly used to clean up tile/concrete installations)
- d. Silver-cleaners
- e. Scouring powers
- f. Hard scrapers or knives
- g. Non-stainless steel based scouring pads, cleaning wool or wire brushes
- h. To avoid "cross-contamination" from iron particles, ensure that cleaning utensils have not been used for "ordinary" (i.e., carbon) steel before.

Before commencing any maintenance task, ensure that you have received the appropriate health and safety literature from the supplier and fully understand it. If in doubt, seek further advice.