

Fiberon® - Care and Maintenance

Professional and Classic Composite Decking

Important Considerations

- Ensure minimum 6 in. ventilation under deck substructure and required spacing between decking boards.
- Improve drainage or grade soil to eliminate standing water under decks.
- Direct downspouts, downspout extensions and splash guards away from decks.
- Position dryer vents away from decks.
- Maintain a deck that is dry and clean.
- Clean your deck as often as needed, at least twice each year.
- Use extreme caution with pressure washers and use at pressures less than 1,500 psi at 12 in. above deck surface. Pressure washing is not recommended when mold/mildew are present on the deck.
- Keep debris out of gaps between the decking boards so rain showers can remove pollen and organic debris between cleanings.
- Minimize the use of wet mulch up against the deck structure.
- Items stored directly on top of the deck surface, such as flower pots, prohibit water evaporation and can cause some staining of the deck surface.
- Use of wrought iron railing or other carbon steel materials in contact with or above an uncapped composite deck surface may cause dark extractive staining.

Ventilation

Make sure there is adequate and unobstructed air flow under the deck to prevent excessive water absorption. Improve drainage or grade flat areas where standing water may gather. For decks with limited ventilation, 6 in. of clear ventilation is required beneath substructure.

Mind the Gap

If the gap between decking boards is less than 3/16 in., organic debris such as leaves, seeds or pollen can settle on the deck and clog gaps. Water can pool, steeping organic debris that forms a “tea” or of tannin which may stain your deck. This organic debris is a strong food source for mold. Keeping the gap clean is the easiest way to keep the deck clean. If gapping becomes clogged, use a garden hose, a spatula, putty knife or similar tool to remove debris.

Clean Your Deck

Clean your deck as often as needed, at least twice each year to remove pollen, organic debris, dirt or stains. Generally, a broom or a blower will work better than a hose for removing scattered organic materials like leaves. For general cleaning, use soap and water or mild household cleaners.

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, 12in. above deck. In the wrong hands, your composite deck 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 deck cleaner designed specifically for your type of decking. 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 deck.

Important Ladder Usage Safety Instructions

When using a ladder, place the ladder on a piece of 3/4 in. plywood firmly secured to the deck surface to disperse the load of the ladder’s feet to nearby underlying joists. Drill fasteners downward through the top of the plywood sheet, into the deck board gaps and into the joists to keep the plywood from slipping. This avoids leaving holes in your decking once the plywood sheet is removed. Be sure to follow the ladder manufacturer’s instructions and safety tips.

Mold and Mildew

Different climates experience varying degrees of mold & mildew growth depending on the amount of moisture, heat, and food sources present. Molds grow on decaying organic material such as wood, leaf decay and pollen. To minimize mold on your decking, clean your deck at least twice each year, or as often as needed. Prudent removal of leaves, debris, and other organic materials is the goal.

If mold is present on your deck, there are many commercial products available for cleaning. For best results, be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions, including using cleaners within their stated shelf life. Do not mix recommended cleaning products together as harmful chemical reactions could occur, and NEVER mix bleach and acids. To maximize application coverage, remove excessive organic growth or clumps prior to applying. Spray surface to be treated when surface is DRY and rain is not predicted for 12 hours or longer. Fiberon recommends the following commercial cleaners:

For thorough cleaning:

- Collier Manufacturing 30 SECONDS® Outdoor Cleaner® (contents: Sodium Hypochlorite (bleach), Trisodium Phosphate, inert ingredients): be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions:
- Apply 30 SECONDS Outdoor Cleaner® when the surface is DRY.
- Keep surface wet with the product for 4-5 minutes.
- Foaming will occur during cleaning, and will appear dirty while cleaning.
- Brush the surface if necessary, to loosen stubborn build up.
- Prior to rinsing, re-application may be necessary where heavy build up occurs.
- Using a garden hose, thoroughly rinse with water, and allow to thoroughly dry.
- Continue to reapply 30 SECONDS® Outdoor Cleaner® in multiple applications until solution sprayed onto surface stays clear & white.
- Using a garden hose, thoroughly rinse with water, and allow to thoroughly dry.

After Cleaning and Seasonally before mold or mildew colonize, (i.e. Spring & Fall application):

- Collier Manufacturing 30 SECONDS® Spray & Walk Away®: 30 SECONDS® Spray & Walk Away® does not show immediate results, but works as a treatment, killing the growth slowly and effectively over time without damaging the surface. Some lichen and moss may take a week to remove or show signs of decay. If the surface to be treated is not fully exposed to rainfall or is vertical, then some additional wetting of the surface may be required. Reapplication may be required where heavy growth persists. Do not repeat treatment more than (6) times per year. Shake contents before use and be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions:
- Mix one part to five parts water (1:5 mix ratio). 1 gallon makes 6 gallons and treats approximately 1000 sq. ft. (depending on the mold growth and porosity of the surface).
- Thoroughly saturate surfaces to be treated.
- After use, clean and flush applicator thoroughly with water. If you prefer immediate results, we recommend 30 SECONDS® Outdoor Cleaner®.

Coating Options

For environments of the country prone to high mold growth, there are several options available for clean & uncapped composite decking. Prior to coating, properly clean the decking, rinse thoroughly with water & hose, and allow to completely dry. Sweep off any debris, pollen, etc. Coating should be applied within 1 week of cleaning for best results. Fiberon has found the following coating effective on uncapped composite boards by sealing the wood composite surface when applied and maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.

- Behr Premium Transparent Deck, Fence, & Siding Weatherproofing Wood Finish at <http://www.behr.com>.
- A transparent stain, this product can darken & rejuvenate the faded deck color. Please test in an inconspicuous area prior to full application.
- Proper application can last up to 4 years on decks, and 6 years on fencing.
- Behr Premium Solid Color Deck, Fence & Siding Weatherproofing Wood Stain
- A solid colored stain offered in all Fiberon composite decking solid colors.
- Proper application can last up to 10 years on decks, and 25 years on fencing.

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 deck cleaner designed specifically for your type of decking, strictly following the manufacturer's instructions. One effective treatment is a mixture of one cup TSP, one cup bleach and one gallon warm water, applied with a long-handled deck. To help protect landscaping, we recommend wetting down landscaping prior to treatment.

Salt and Calcium Chloride

Build up of salt and calcium chloride from snow and ice removal 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 in. above deck, to avoid damaging your deck. Never use METAL shovels or sharp edged tools to remove snow and ice on the surface of any Fiberon composite or PVC decking product.

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.

Fire and Unusual Heat Sources

Composite decking will retain heat when exposed to direct or reflective sunlight. Exercise caution if walking barefoot as footwear may be required. Fire and unusual sources of heat and heat build-up can possibly damage Fiberon decking surfaces. Examples would include fire, reflected light from different types of glass (ex. low-e glass), fire features and under-deck waterproofing installations that do not provide the 6 in. (15 cm) of unobstructed net free ventilation.

• Low-E Glass/Reflected Heat

Low-emissivity glass is designed to prevent heat gain inside the house by reflecting sunlight outward. This reflective property can result in excessive heat build on the surface of Fiberon decking. The properties that Low-E glass employs to prevent passive heat gain within a structure can result in unusual heat build-up on exterior surfaces.

When the sunlight is reflected and concentrated it can harm a range of building materials that include doors, windows, siding, trim and decking. Damage caused to these products can include melting, sagging, warping, discoloration, increased expansion and contraction, and accelerated weathering.

If you have questions on how to reduce this risk, contact the manufacturer of the product which contains the Low-E glass for suggestions on how to reduce or eliminate the reflected heat.

• Under-deck waterproofing systems

Under-deck waterproofing systems, properly installed, can provide additional living or storage space. Improper installations are those that restrict air flow and result in build-up of heat and/or humidity which can result in unwanted consequences. Contact the manufacturer of the specific under-deck waterproofing system for installation instructions to ensure the required 6 in. (15 cm) of unobstructed ventilation is achieved for Fiberon decking. If already installed, seek methods to achieve the ventilation requirement.

• Fire Features/Fire Pits

Fire features and fire pits are increasingly popular in outdoor living environments. Fire can damage many building products including Fiberon decking. Improperly installed fire features and fire pits can cause damage to the surface of Fiberon decking via direct exposure to the flame or excessive radiated heat. Proper caution should be taken when designing, installing and using these features to ensure damage does not result.

Static

Dry or windy environments may create a temporary condition of static electricity, which will vary depending on climate and site conditions.

For further information, contact:

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