

Care and Maintenance

Important Considerations

- Ensure minimum 6" ventilation under deck 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" 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.
- Place a vinyl-backed splatter guard mat underneath your grill.
- 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" of clear ventilation is required.

Mind the Gap

If the gap between decking boards is less than 3/16", 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

Composite decking materials are pretty resilient. Clean your deck as often as needed, at least twice each year to remove pollen, organic debris, dirt or stains. For decking in areas with high gypsum content soils, we recommend a citric acid based cleaning solution for the initial and subsequent cleanings. For decking in areas with primarily clay soils, we recommend a mild vinegar-based cleaning solution, or a mild dish washing detergent solution for the initial and subsequent cleanings.

Dirt and Grime

Generally, a broom or a blower will work better than a hose for removing scattered organic materials like leaves. Over time, especially with kids and pets, the deck may become soiled.

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 deck. In the wrong hands, your composite deck can be damaged. Exercise extreme caution.

Tannin Stains

Tannins naturally occur in all wood species and sometimes migrate to the surface in uncapped composite decking where surface wood fibers are exposed to sun and water. Tannin stains resolve themselves over time. Depending on the season this can take several weeks to several months. Once tannin stains disappear after the weathering process is complete, they do not re-appear. To hasten removal of tannin stains, use a commercial deck cleaner designed specifically for your type of decking, strictly following the manufacturer's instructions.

Oil and Grease Stains

Speedy clean up is best. To clean up grease and oil stains that soap and water cannot remove, use a commercial deck cleaner designed specifically for your type of decking. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations and test in an inconspicuous area prior to cleaning the entire deck. Install a splash guard mat under your grill to help protect your deck from grease stains.

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.

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" 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.

Rubber Mats

Welcome mats or grill mats with a rubber or latex backing can mark your deck. The marks can be removed, but to avoid them, use vinyl-backed mats or colorfast woven rugs.

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 decking, clean your deck 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 deck, 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.

- Composite Deck Cleaner & Enhancer by Expert Chemical Company; heavy duty, mildly alkaline chlorinated mold and mildew remover/cleaner; <http://www.expertchemicalinc.com/>
- 30 Seconds® Outdoor Cleaner by Collier Manufacturing, LLC; safe to use around lawn and plants when used as directed and is biodegradable once rinsed into the soil; <http://www.30seconds.net/>