

Important Considerations

- Ensure a minimum of 1.5 inches (4 cm) required ventilation under deck and required spacing between decking boards. See ventilation requirements below.
- 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 3,000 psi (20684.3 kPa) at 10 inches (25 cm) above deck surface.
- Keep debris out of gaps between the decking boards so rain showers can remove pollen and organic debris between cleanings.
- Minimize 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 on the deck surface.

Ventilation

Make sure there is adequate and unobstructed air flow under 50% of the deck. Allow a minimum of 1.5 inches (4 cm) between bottom of joist and the ground. Water must be able to flow away from under the deck. Improve drainage or grade flat areas where standing water may gather. Do not install decking directly to an existing or solid surface.

Sleeper Installation

Minimum joist height is 1.5 inches (4 cm), installed level, in direction of water runoff and directly to a solid sub-structure. Create adequate ventilation for the deck by widening side-to-side spacing between boards to ¼ inch (6 cm) with a maximum of 3/8 inch (9.5 mm) gap. The deck design must allow unrestricted air flow under the deck at the open joist ends for ventilation and drainage.

Mind the Gap

If the gap between decking boards is less than 3/16 inch (4.8 mm), 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 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.

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.

Masonry Construction

It is important to protect decking during masonry construction. White or hazy residue from mineral deposits (efflorescence) can leach out of stone and masonry material after water evaporates, leaving the deposits behind. Minerals from soils in certain arid and mountainous environments can also cause a hazing affect when deposited on the deck surface. To prevent this, either cover the decking surface completely and securely during the construction phase or wait to install the decking until after masonry construction has been completed. To minimize this effect during masonry construction, keep materials dry and allow masonry and cement to cure properly. For mineral deposits left on the decking surface, periodic cleaning is required. Fibron developed Fibron Composite Deck Cleaner specifically for use in cleaning dirt, clay, mud, soil, mineral deposits, and masonry and stucco residue. Use the Fibron Composite Deck Cleaner with a soft, brass bristle brush to clean, repeating the process as needed. Be sure to follow the label instructions. Do not mix recommended cleaning products together as harmful chemical reactions could occur.

NOTE: Do not use any type of brass bristle brush to clean Symmetry Decking, as surface scratching may result. Instead, use a soft nylon deck brush with Fibron Composite Deck Cleaner, soap, 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. Thoroughly rinse off with a garden hose. Skilled professionals may use a pressure washer with wide fan tips, at low pressures under 3,000 psi (20684.3 kPa) and at safe distances, 10 inches (25 cm) 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.

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. Do not mix recommended cleaning products together as harmful chemical reactions could occur. Never mix bleach and acids.

[Collier Manufacturing 30-Seconds® Outdoor Cleaner and 30-Seconds® Spray & Walk Away](#) are heavy duty, mildly alkaline chlorinated mold and mildew removers/cleaners that are biodegradable once rinsed into the soil. Both have been tested and perform very well in removing mold and mildew and retarding its return.

For more information on cleaning mold and mildew, see Fibron Technical Bulletin # 13 at this link, fiberondecking.com/resources/literature.

Salt and Calcium Chloride

Buildup 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 3,000 psi (20684.3 kPa) and at safe distances, 10 inches (25 cm) 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 Fibron decking product.

Static

Dry or windy environments may create a temporary condition of static electricity, which will vary depending on climate and site conditions. Heat pumps and dryer vents that are close to, or pointed toward the decking material, can also generate static electricity on the deck.

Rubber Mats

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

Important Ladder Usage Safety Instructions

When using a ladder, place the ladder on a piece of ¾ inch 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.

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 Fibron 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 1.5 inches (4 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-up on the surface of Fibron 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 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 1.5 inches (4 cm) of unobstructed ventilation is achieved for Fibron 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 Fibron decking. Improperly installed fire features and fire pits can cause damage to the surface of Fibron 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.

Fibron Paramount Decking

Recommended cleaners include Simple Green and Krud Kutter Cleaner Degreaser. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and test in an inconspicuous area to make sure cleaner does not harm the decking surface. Avoid the use of rubber, vinyl or polypropylene products on Paramount Decking as a reaction could occur resulting in discoloration under the product. Use colorfast woven rugs only. Certain chemical ingredients in products such as insect repellent and sunblock could cause a reaction and result in a stain on the decking surface.