
TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Cleaning & Maintaining Your Vinyl Windows

Caution: Do not use harmful cleaners on PVC (vinyl) and Laminated PVC Products

Maintaining the original color characteristics and retaining resistance to cracking are critical to years of problem free performance of PVC products such as vinyl windows and doors, and vinyl siding. Color retention, impact resistance and laminate film are significantly harmed by even minor exposure to cleaners containing certain chemicals, or solvents.

Typical symptoms of harmful chemical exposure include: dark splotches, streaking, heavy yellowing, surface hazing, brittleness, cracking and distortion.

Especially harmful to PVC products are those chemical agents that originate from the same basic chemistry as that of the PVC; specifically, petroleum and its derivatives. Examples of these (commonly referred to as organic solvents) are methylethylketone (MEK), acetone (Dimethyl ketone), benzene or other aromatics like xylenes/ toluene, and ethers such as tetrahydrofuran (THF) or other similar chemicals known as petroleum ethers or distillates.

Check the label. Cleaners containing these or other similar harmful chemicals should never be used on or near PVC or Laminated PVC products. Immediate and permanent damage can occur.

CLEANING PVC PROFILES:

1. Never use any cleaners or thinners which contain organic solvents or petroleum ethers at any time before, during, or after the manufacturing and installation of PVC products.
2. See Suggested Cleaners list below. These products are excellent for cleaning and wiping dirt and handprints from PVC surfaces. Usually soap based cleaners that use surfactants that are water soluble are safe. These types of cleaners allow the vinyl to retain both color and crack resistance because they do not react with or dissolve the surface of the PVC.
3. All cleaners should first be pre-tested by submersing a scrap of PVC for at least 48 hours. Compared to the original, the test part should be the same color and not be softened or changed in any way.

Suggested Cleaners:

1. Dawn®
2. Fantastic®
3. Murphy® Oil Soap
4. Windex®
5. Lysol®
6. Simple Green®

Further Reading:

Additional information on caring for vinyl windows can be found on the FGIA website:

<https://fgiaonline.org/homeowners>

CLEANING LAMINATED PROFILES:

1. Laminated profiles can be cleaned using a damp cloth and standard household cleaning agents, as listed above, excluding abrasive products.
2. **Laminate film is NOT resistant to high polar organic solvents** (e.g., acetone, ethyl acetate, dimethylformamide, dimethylacetamide, fuming sulfuric acid, amines, and basic liquids with $\text{pH} > 12$).

Click for more information from Renolit on cleaning laminates:

http://img03.en25.com/Web/DeceuninckNorthAmerica/%7B593ff9c2-c932-4f47-acdb-2bc53b09b843%7D_EXOFOL_FX_Prod_Spec_Renolit_Jan_2015.pdf

Please Note:

Frequently, manufacturers of cleaners do not include a full description of the ingredients. A complete list of ingredients can be found in the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) of the cleaner which may be obtained from the manufacturer. Please consult the MSDS before using a cleaner on laminate film or vinyl products.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your Dealer Sales Manager.