

# CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDE







## GENERAL CARE & DAMAGE PREVENTION

### MOLD REMOVAL

Mold formation is most prevalent in consistently wet, shaded areas. Spores from the natural environment are carried by the wind and commonly land on decks surfaces. It is important to note that the appearance of mold/mildew is a function of nature, not necessarily a deficiency with any of the material on which it grows. Periodic washing with soap/detergent and water will help remove surface dirt. This will also help prevent the buildup of pollen, debris, and spores that can cause and accelerate mold/mildew growth.

Caution: A pressure washer should not be used to “blast” mold/mildew or soils from a deck surface. The abrasive nature of the water stream can potentially damage the material by driving the spores into the material, which may create a more challenging problem to remediate. A pressure washer with a fan-tipped nozzle should be used only to lightly wet or rinse wood or composite deck surfaces.

There are many deck wash and exterior cleaning products available at retailers. It is important to make sure you use a cleaner specifically intended for your application. After selecting a product, be certain to read, understand, and follow all instructions supplied by the manufacturer. Some cleaning products and inhibitors may be more effective than others, depending on the environmental conditions your deck is subjected to. Additionally, it is always a good idea to test the cleaner in a small, inconspicuous area prior to applying it to the entire deck.

### MOLD INHIBITORS

With deck washes, there are several mold-inhibitor products available from paint stores, hardware stores, online outlets, and home centers to help prevent long-term mold/mildew growth. For any product selected, be certain to read, understand, and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer. Depending upon the environmental factors affecting your deck, some preventive cleaning products may be more effective than others. It may be necessary to try more than one product. For ongoing preventive maintenance, follow the manufacturer’s recommendation.



## DECK CARE

### CLEANING YOUR DECK

Periodic cleaning is recommended as needed to remove surface dirt. Clean with mild soap and water and use a soft brush to remove any dirt buildup. It is always a good idea to test the cleaner in a small, inconspicuous area prior to applying it to the entire deck.

### BASIC DECK CLEANING AGENTS

- Deck wash/cleaners usually contain sodium percarbonate and a detergent. Effective on normal dirt and grime, and bleaches out mold and mildew stains.
- Rust stains can be removed using oxalic acid cleaners.
- Grease stains can be removed using commercial degreasers containing propylene glycol, sodium hydroxide, and detergents.
- Spot removers/thinners can be used sparingly on particularly stubborn grease or oil stains but should be washed off immediately with water, as it will attack the grain pattern. These normally include petroleum distillates, xylene, methanol, acetone, or other organic solvents.

### POWER WASHING

Power washers can be used to clean Deckorators® decking products; however, a fan-tip nozzle should be used and the power washer should be set on the lowest setting. Keep end of nozzle at least 8” from the deck surface to avoid damage.

## **SNOW & ICE REMOVAL**

Care should be taken when removing snow from your deck to avoid damaging the deck surface. We recommend using a plastic snow shovel without a metal edge. A stiff-bristled push broom can work very well and minimizes lifting. Light snow can also be cleared using a leaf blower.

Do not attempt to break up or scrape ice from the deck surface; use ice melt products when needed. We are not aware of any adverse effects from the temporary use of ice melting products on Deckorators decking; however, we recommend using an ice melt product that is less harsh on the surface. These types of ice melt products may indicate "Safe for Pets" "will not harm concrete," or "will not kill grass". Ensure that after the ice and snow melts, you brush off any residual ice melt product.

## **SCUFF & SCRATCH PREVENTION**

Much like interior flooring, it is not recommended to drag furniture or other heavy objects across your deck boards; doing so may result in scratches to the decking surface.

## **PREVENTING HEAT DAMAGE**

It is not recommended to place hot items such as metal fire pits directly onto your decking. Extreme heat can cause damage to your deck boards.

# **POST CAP CARE**

## **CLEANING YOUR POST CAPS**

Periodic cleaning is recommended as needed to remove surface dirt. Clean with mild soap and water and use a soft brush to remove any dirt buildup. It is always a good idea to test the cleaner in a small, inconspicuous area prior to applying it to the entire post cap.

## **COPPER POST CAP PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

To maintain a shiny appearance, apply a car wax immediately after purchasing the post cap, and reapply every 3 to 6 months.

## **STAINLESS STEEL POST CAP PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

Stainless steel is an alloy of iron that contains more than 10% chromium. Stainless steel has a hard oxide coating that makes it resistant to stains. Corrosion and wear strip away this coating, causing the steel to rust. To maintain this coating, clean the post cap periodically with a mixture of vinegar and club soda.

## **GLASS POST CAP PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

Stainless steel is an alloy of iron that contains more than 10% chromium. Stainless steel has a hard oxide coating that makes it resistant to stains. Corrosion and wear strip away this coating, causing the steel to rust. To maintain this coating, clean the post cap periodically with a mixture of vinegar and club soda.

## **WOOD POST CAP PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

As with all wood products, we recommend that you coat the wood post caps with a high-quality exterior finish to preserve the wood's natural beauty and ensure a lifetime of enjoyment. Apply to all wood areas, including the underside of the cap, before installation.

# **RAILING CARE**

## **CLEANING YOUR RAILING**

Periodic washing with soap/detergent and water will help remove surface dirt. It is always a good idea to test the cleaner in a small, inconspicuous area prior to applying it to the entire railing system. A pressure washer should not be used to "blast" soils from the railing surface. A pressure washer with a fan-tipped nozzle should be used only to lightly wet or rinse a railing surface.

Cleaning your Aluminum Railing or Balusters will minimize the effects of weathering as well as remove soiling agents to enhance the appearance of your railing. Disregarding the following care and cleaning guidelines may void the Deckorators ALX Railing and Baluster limited warranty. For warranty claims where the product is installed within one mile of coastal salt water, you are required to follow the cleaning guidelines and frequency below, and keep a log detailing each cleaning date, method used and detergent used.

1. For Railing or Balusters located within one mile of coastal salt water, cleaning is required every three months.
2. For Railing or Balusters located more than one mile from coastal salt water, cleaning is recommended every six months or at a minimum, annually. The amount of surface soiling on your railing will vary depending on geographic area and environmental conditions. Cleaning may need to be more frequent to restore and maintain the desired appearance in your area.

## DETERGENTS

Most mild soaps and detergents ruled safe for bare hands are acceptable for coated aluminum. Do not use any type of soap or detergent that recommends gloves or respirators for personal protection. Do not use any soap or detergent that could damage a painted finish. For example, never use aggressive alkaline or acid cleaners, strong solvents, or abrasive cleaners that could damage the surface.

The best time to clean the railing or balusters is in mild temperatures and when the metal is shaded. Do not attempt to clean hot, sun-baked metal surfaces. Also avoid cleaning in freezing temperatures or when the metal is cold enough to cause condensation.

## HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wet the Deckorators ALX Railing and/or balusters with clean water.
2. Wipe down all surfaces with a non-abrasive sponge or soft cloth using a mild detergent cleaning solution.
3. For best results start at the top of the railing or balusters and work downward.
4. Thoroughly rinse the railing or balusters with clean water to remove all cleaning solution and residue. In areas where water has high mineral content, we recommend drying with a soft lint-free cloth or chamois to avoid spotting.

## PRESSURE WASHING INSTRUCTIONS

1. A mild detergent cleaning solution is recommended as a medium to carry away dirt.
2. Use moderate pressure and a fan tip nozzle. Do not exceed 1,000 PSI and keep nozzle tip at least 18" from your railing or balusters.
3. Wash all exposed surfaces.
4. Thoroughly rinse with clean water to remove all cleaning solution and residue. In areas where water has high mineral content, we recommend drying with a soft lint-free cloth or chamois to avoid spotting.

## CABLE RAILING PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Use warm water and mild soap when cleaning. Avoid harsh solutions or abrasive cleaning materials, including but not limited to: alkaline or acidic cleaners or solutions containing trisodium phosphate, phosphoric acid, hydrochloric acid, hydrofluoric acid, fluorides or similar compounds. Avoid using power-cleaning tools. Clean the fittings and cable after installation and every 6 months thereafter.

## ALX RAILING PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

We recommend checking and cleaning your ALX Aluminum Railing once per year in normal environments. In more hazardous environments or if heavy soiling occurs, more regular cleaning may be required. To clean, wash the railing with a solution of warm water and mild detergent and rinse to remove all residues. The railing should be cleaned using a soft cloth or sponge. Test the cleaner in a small, inconspicuous area prior to applying it to the entire railing system to ensure that no color change or damage will occur.

## ALX RAILING AND BALUSTER MAINTENANCE LOG

Please use this log to document your cleaning. Failure to keep a record of each cleaning will void the Deckorators ALX Railing and Baluster limited warranty for installations within one mile of coastal salt water.

Date of cleaning	Cleaning method	Detergent brand	Amount of Detergent used	Pressure washer brand and model, if applicable	PSI, if applicable