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Caring for Windows

CLEANING AND PREVENTION OF GLASS SCRATCHING

Complaints to glass suppliers relating to scratched glass are common and claims are made suggesting that toughened glass scratches more easily than annealed glass. Frequently the cause is found to be inappropriate cleaning of the glass. It is also common for glass to be damaged because the builder has not taken adequate steps to protect the glass during construction. Ultimate Windows recommends the use of reputable professional glass cleaners. Professional glass cleaners have significant experience and access to equipment, materials and methods which the general public may not.

GUIDELINES FOR GLASS CLEANING

It is recommended that glass be protected from contamination caused by building materials and methods during construction as this will greatly simplify the glass cleaning task at the end of the project. If the glass is not protected during construction then the glass and frames should be cleaned frequently during construction. Construction dust, leachate from concrete and rusting from steel can contribute to the formation of mild chemicals, which may stain or otherwise damage the glass. Glass should be cleaned using only cleaning materials which are free of grit and debris (to avoid scratching and marking of the glass surface). Only detergents and cleaning solutions which are recommended for cleaning glass should be used. Mild detergents are preferable.

Extra care is necessary where high performance, special products and reflective glasses are installed. The coated surface can be susceptible to stains and scratches and therefore requires vigilance during the full construction process and specific cleaning procedure. Temporary screens should be installed if welding, sandblasting, floor sanding, cuffing or other potentially damaging construction practices takes place near the glass. Glass installations which are adjacent to concrete (eg concrete slab floors) require extra care and cleaning due to the abrasive nature of concrete dust. All tradesmen should be advised to be aware of damaging glass and windows and to leave in place any materials protecting the window or glass.

To clean, we recommend you simply wipe over the surface with a few drops of methylated spirits on a damp cloth, then polish the surface dry with a lint free cloth. Proprietary glass cleaners are not recommended as some of them can cause damage to the silver backing on mirrors and the interlay of laminated glass. Ensure that all cleaning cloths are free of any abrasive substances.

TOUGHENED GLASS

The cleaning of toughened glass requires special care. The glass surface opposite the standards compliance stamp may, as a consequence of the manufacturing process, have 'pickup' on the surface.

'Pickup' is a deposit of very small particles of glass which are fused to the glass surface. A cleaning method which does not dislodge these particles should be employed otherwise scratching of the glass surface may result. Blades or scrapers have been known to dislodge 'pickup' from the glass surface. A soft cloth, which will not dislodge 'pickup', should be used.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not use cleaners which contain Hydrofluoric or Phosphoric acid as they are corrosive to the glass surface.
- Do not clean the glass when the glass is hot or in direct sunlight.
- Do not allow cleaning solutions to contact the edges of Laminated glass, Insulating Glass Units or Mirrors.
- Do not store or place other material in contact with the glass. (This can damage the glass or create a heat trap leading to thermal breakage).
- Abrasive cleaners, powder based cleaners, scouring pads or other harsh materials should not be used to clean windows or other glass products. Some tapes or adhesives can stain or damage glass surfaces. Avoid using such materials unless they are known to be easily removed.

ADVICE FOR PAINTERS

Paint spots have been traditionally removed using a sharp razor blade. The use of a blade can in some cases cause damage to the glass. As an alternative, investigate solvents or graffiti removal materials, ensuring that they will not damage the glass. If a blade or scraper is used then the risk of damage can be reduced by using a scraper which has a clean edge and is held at an angle of 30 degrees to the glass.

However, surface coated, modified or tinted glass requires special care. Seek cleaning advice from your local glass merchant.

REMEMBER

- All windows must be installed in accordance with accepted good trade practice (and in accordance with supplied instructions where applicable), and maintained in accordance with these procedures or else the warranty shall be void.
- Keep wet cement, mortar and brick-cleaning acid from contact with timber, uPVC, glass or aluminum (particularly if the finish is anodized) before, during and after installation.
- Protect glass from contamination during construction as this will simplify the cleaning at the end of the project.
- If accidentally splashed, wash off immediately with clean water, otherwise permanent staining or damage may occur.
- Do not use acid to remove mortar stains on window frames.
- Hose down brickwork to remove residual cleaning acid which may leach out and cause damage to the finish
- Do not place windows directly onto green concrete slabs.
- Keep the tracks of sliding windows and doors clear of sand and cement droppings
- Clean up when the job is complete with mild detergent and rinse with clean water.