

Project Sheet Brick Cleaning

Some clay bricks, particularly light coloured, are susceptible to 'acid burn'. This can leave a dark brown stain on the brick face and is usually caused by incorrect acid cleaning.

The recommended method of cleaning lighter coloured brickwork is suggested below. *However before you start you should be thoroughly conversant with all the necessary safety procedures when dealing with hazardous chemicals – refer CBPI website at www.claybrick.com.au*

CAUTION: Hydrochloric acid is extremely corrosive. Avoid splashing the acid on any areas surrounding the brickwork. It is advisable to wear rubber gloves, protective glasses, protective clothing and avoid breathing the vapours when using any chemicals. High strength hydrochloric acid solutions are likely to discolour the brickwork.



- 1 Bricklayers should always work clean to ensure minimal mortar stains need to be removed. The majority of mortar residues and smears should be cleaned during bricklaying, before they set.
- 2 Mask and protect adjacent metal, glass, wood and plastic surfaces as recommended by the product manufacturers.
- 3 Before you start to clean, remove all mortar 'dags' with a wooden scraper, brick or chisel.
- 4 Work a small area at a time, and wherever possible avoid cleaning in direct sunlight. Start at the top of the wall, working across and down.
- 5 Saturate the wall thoroughly with water before applying the acid solution.
- 6 If vanadium salts have appeared on the brickwork the use of hydrochloric acid may turn the salts black and make them more difficult to remove. It is essential that any vanadium salts evident, before the brick cleaning process commences, be removed and before hydrochloric acid is applied.
- 7 The more water on the masonry, even that used in the cleaning process, may induce further efflorescing of the salts to the surface, depending on the amount within the brick.
- 8 Ensure the correct cleaning mix is used: 1 part hydrochloric acid to 20 parts water.
- 9 Brush on the cleaning solution with a masonry cleaning brush, soft broom or a low-pressure (40psi max.) sprayer. Allow the cleaning solution to remain on the wall for 3 to 6 minutes.
- 10 Wash off the cleaning solution thoroughly. Never allow the brickwork to dry out with the acid solution still on the bricks. Pressure cleaning equipment can be used to rinse the wall if the following precautions are adhered to:
 - Keep the pressure low – up to 1,000psi (6,800kPa).
 - Use a wide fan spray nozzle.
 - The nozzle should be no closer than 500mm from the wall at all times.
 - The mortar should be at least three days old prior to pressure cleaning.
 - If the mortar joint or bricks are showing damage then the pressure is too high or the nozzle is too close to the wall.
- 11 To ensure complete neutralisation and removal of the acid a dilute solution of 250g bicarbonate-of-soda (baking soda) in 4 litres of water should be applied to the wall after cleaning. Leave this on the wall.

For helpful advice and technical information refer to the Clay Brick and Paver Institute (CBPI) Cleaning Clay Masonry Code of Practice which is available from the CBPI website at www.claybrick.com.au

Proprietary masonry cleaning solutions are available. The manufacturer's recommendations must be strictly adhered to when using these products.

For further information and product displays contact your nearest Boral Selection Centre or distributor. Boral Bricks can be contacted on 13 30 35.

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