



# Cleaning RainBloc<sup>®</sup> Masonry

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Masonry containing RainBloc<sup>®</sup> Integral Water-Repellents offers outstanding beauty and performance. Proper cleaning after construction and throughout its life can help preserve the architectural masonry's inherent beauty and appeal. While the overall maintenance requirements of a well-designed and constructed RainBloc<sup>®</sup> masonry wall are minimal, surface contamination such as mortar splashes or smears, construction dirt or other stains can detract from the building appearance. Proper cleaning can remove contaminants and give the masonry a more appealing appearance.

Industry guidelines and best practices for cleaning masonry are available in NCMA TEK 8-4A, *Cleaning Concrete Masonry*. As detailed in TEK 8-4A, the first step is to take care during construction to minimize surface contamination.

Masonry cleaners, by nature, will remove at least some cement paste from the surface which can expose more aggregate and alter the surface appearance. The key to any successful cleaning is to find the *least* aggressive cleaning method that will effectively remove the contamination while leaving the surface of the masonry as unaltered as possible.

It is highly recommended that the cleaning procedure be tried on a sample panel or inconspicuous section of the building to assess the effectiveness of the procedure and its affect on overall surface appearance. Once the results of the test panel are approved by the involved parties, it is important that the exact same procedure be used on the entire building to ensure the most uniform appearance possible.

For cleaning masonry containing RainBloc<sup>®</sup>, we recommend that a commercially available masonry detergent-based cleaner be used. These cleaners contain surfactants that can help loosen and remove contaminants from the surface. While these cleaners typically also contain acid, the acid is buffered to help minimize damage to the masonry surface when they are properly diluted.

## **WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING CLEANING PROCEDURE:**

1. Thoroughly pre-wet the masonry surface with clean water using low pressure spray (30 to 50 psi).
2. Liberally apply the diluted cleaning solution to the surface with low pressure spray (30 to 50 psi).
3. If feasible, scrub the surface with a soft bristled masonry washing brush to help the masonry cleaner loosen the contamination from the surface. This mechanical action allows the use of the most dilute cleaning solution possible.
4. Allow the solution to remain on the wall for 1 – 3 minutes. Do not let the cleaning solution dry on the masonry.
5. Reapply the masonry cleaner if necessary.
6. Rinse the treated masonry thoroughly with fresh water using low pressure (30 to 50 psi).
7. While discouraged, if high pressure (400 – 600 psi) rinsing is necessary after the initial low pressure rinse, minimize the amount of water forced into the masonry by using a wide-flange tip held at a 45° angle and at least 12 inches from the surface.
8. Consult the cleaner manufacturer's instructions for additional information and safety precautions.

9. For optimum results it is very important to use the exact same procedure on all of the
10. masonry including cleaner dilution rate, scrubbing procedure, dwell time, re-application and rinsing procedures.

### **IT IS IMPORTANT TO HEED THE FOLLOWING WARNINGS:**

1. Use the most diluted masonry cleaning solution that will effectively clean the surface.
2. Do not use generic acid cleaners.
3. Make sure the masonry surface has been pre-wetted with low pressure fresh water before applying masonry cleaning solution.
4. Do not use high pressure to apply the masonry cleaning solution.
5. Do not rinse the surface with high pressure water without first rinsing the surface with low pressure water.
6. Failure to heed these warning can cause severe acid attack on the surface and force acid deep into the masonry which will alter the appearance of the masonry and can affect the water-repellency and porosity of the masonry.

In summary, cleaning of masonry containing RainBloc® can enhance the beauty of the finished masonry by helping to remove surface contamination and restore a uniform appearance to the wall surface. It is important to take care during construction to minimize staining and to find the cleaning procedure that is least aggressive while effectively cleaning the masonry surface. Once this method is established on a test area, it is important to use the exact same procedure on all of the masonry.

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