

Recommended Cleaning Instructions for Brick

Best Practice: Bucket & brush method

Procedure: Bucket & brush method with Prosoco's Sure Clean Vana Trol masonry cleaning solution mixed 1:8 with water or Enviro Klean Safety Clean mixed 1:3 with water. Review Prosoco's safety rules for handling and mixing cleaners.

Warning: Never use muriatic acid at any dilution; this will damage the brick & mortar. If other masonry products like stone or concrete are in the wall use the least aggressive cleaner or consult Prosoco. (800) 255-4255 or customercare@prosoco.com.

Dry brush wall as brick are laid to minimize thick patches of waste mortar on the wall. Clean the wall as soon as possible. The longer mortar is allowed to dry on the wall and the thicker the mortar clump the more difficult it is to remove this from the wall.

Cover the base of wall with plastic 24" high after the first 3 feet of brick are laid to prevent mud splatter until the wall is finished and the landscaping is installed. Some mud stains cannot be removed from brick. Hanging 1 mil plastic from below the flashing if the flashing is 24" above grade and removing it after landscaping is installed is a best practice.

Step 1: Test Panel; Use the recommended cleaning procedure on a sample test panel or area to see what happens.

Step 2: Protect surrounding surfaces, such as metal, glass, wood, limestone and cast stone surfaces. Mask windows, doors and areas with ornamental trim.

Step 3: Saturate the area to be cleaned with water.

Step 4: Starting at the bottom of the wall, apply cleaning solution with a long-handled, stiff fiber brush. Follow the cleaning manufacturer's recommendation for the amount of time the solution should be allowed to remain on the wall. Starting at the bottom of the wall allows the wall to stay saturated with water as you work up. Cleaning a 10 foot wide section of wall per man and working up the wall is the best practice.

Step 5: Scrub vigorously with the brush.

Step 6: Rinse thoroughly. Flush the walls with large amounts of clean water before they dry. If you do not flush the wall completely, white scum may form on the wall.

Mud, dirt and soil may be most easily cleaned off of new brick masonry with detergent or soap solutions. Try 1/2 cup of trisodium phosphate and 1/2 cup laundry detergent dissolved in a gallon of water.

Step 7: Rinse the wall thoroughly with clean water from top to bottom and make sure all the cleaning solution has been removed.

Alternate cleaning method: Pressurized Water

Warning: Pressurized water and cleaners can damage brick to the point that the brick have to be removed from the wall. If using a pressure washer always use a 45 degree sprayer tip & keep the tip at least 18 inches from the brick.

To save cleaning time some contractors use pressurized water to clean mortar from the wall. If not used carefully and within reasonable boundaries, water pressure cleaning can damage masonry. Hard fired brick can get water imbedded in the surface that permanently stains the brick. Also sand finishes on some units can be removed entirely by water pressure, resulting in a wall that looks different than its designer intended. Nozzle pressure in excess of 700 psi will damage brick units and erode mortar joints.

Note that pressurized cleaning can possibly change the appearance of light colored brick, sand molded brick, brick with glazed coatings and sand faced extruded brick.

Warning: Never use muriatic acid at any dilution; this will damage the brick & mortar. If other masonry products like stone or concrete are in the wall use the least acidic cleaner or consult all masonry suppliers.

Brush wall as brick are laid to minimize thick patches of waste mortar on the wall. Clean the wall as soon as possible. The longer mortar is allowed to dry on the wall and the thicker the mortar clump the more difficult it is to remove mortar from the wall.

Cover the base of wall with plastic 24" high after the first 3 feet of brick are laid to prevent mud splatter until the wall is finished and the landscaping is installed. Some mud stains cannot be removed from brick. Hanging 1 mil plastic from below the flashing if the flashing is 24" above grade and removing it after landscaping is installed is a best practice.

To clean brick masonry with pressurized water at your own risk; follow these procedures:

- Step 1: Test Panel; Use the recommended cleaning procedure on a sample test panel or area to see what happens.
- Step 2: Obtain the cleaning equipment and cleaning solution and test them on sample areas. Make sure the cleaning solution you are using is compatible with the equipment. Mix according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Step 3: Remove large particles by hand or with wooden paddles.
- Step 4: Saturate the brickwork to prevent it from absorbing the chemicals. Saturate at the same pressure as you clean the wall. Use a 45 degree sprayer tip from 18 inches or more for all pressure washing.
- Step 5: Apply the cleaning chemicals through the pressure cleaning unit at a lower pressure with a 45 degree nozzle tip from at least 18 inches from the wall.
- Step 6: Allow the solution to remain on the wall for about five minutes.
- Step 7: Starting at the bottom of the wall, rinse thoroughly. Flush the walls with large amounts of clean water before they dry using a 45 degree nozzle tip from 18 inches or more. Work your way up the wall. This keeps the base of the wall saturated as you work up the wall. All chemical run off from above will not absorb into the wet wall.
- Step 8: Clean an area 10 feet wide and work your way up the wall.

In either Brush & Bucket method or Pressurized water method if you clean the wall from the top down you risk leaving cleaning solution on the wall which can cause scumming, green vanadium staining, brown manganese staining, metallic staining or mineral staining.