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Technical Bulletin
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New Zealand Steel

Maintenance of COLORSTEEL® and ZINCALUME® products

Introduction

The paint system on all COLORSTEEL® and ZINCALUME® products and the metallic coating on ZINCALUME® aluminium/zinc/magnesium alloy-coated steel are highly durable and decorative finishes. Simple maintenance of these finishes by regular washing with clean fresh water will enhance the service life of the product and help maintain the appearance.

“Unwashed areas” are areas on a building that are sheltered from general rain washing.

Condensation can be absorbed by the dust and dirt that build up in these areas, leading to dissolution of potentially aggressive compounds that may initiate corrosion. The associated effect is exacerbated in the vicinity of a salt marine influence, where the buildup includes marine salts and/or other pollutants (e.g. industrial fall out). Regular cleaning of COLORSTEEL® and ZINCALUME® products in unwashed areas is required. Examples of applications requiring cleaning include, but are not limited to, fascia, wall cladding under eaves, garage doors, and the underside of eave gutters, carports and patios. **Washing should be done six monthly as a minimum**, or three monthly in locations such as coastal areas where marine salt spray is prevalent, or in areas where high levels of airborne dust/dirt or industrial fallout occur.

Cleaning

It is good practice to establish a regular routine for washing exterior BlueScope coated steel products. Water restrictions permitting (check with your local council), garage doors can be washed with fresh water at the same time as your car is being washed. Gutters, fascia and eaves can be washed when windows are being cleaned. COLORSTEEL® fencing can be washed when watering the garden.

In cases where regular maintenance using fresh water does not remove all dirt from the surface of the product, or local water regulations prohibit the use of a mains water hose, the following procedure should be followed using water obtained from a locally approved source:

- Wash the surface with a mild solution of pure soap or non-abrasive dish washing kitchen detergent in warm water. Washing should be conducted with a sponge, soft cloth or soft bristle nylon brush (no abrasive scourers, steel wool etc.), and be performed gently to reduce the possibility of scuffing the product surface.
- Thoroughly rinse the surface with fresh water immediately after cleaning to remove traces of detergent.
- Dirt and marks may look different depending on the colour or finish of your BlueScope product. Repeat cleaning steps above if required.
- For advice on dirt or other material not removed by soap or detergent, contact info@colorsteel.co.nz or 0800 697 833.

Note

1. New Zealand Steel does not recommend the use of hard, mineral rich ground waters (e.g. bore water) in the maintenance of COLORSTEEL® or ZINCALUME® products.
2. Ensure maintenance is undertaken in accordance with local government water restriction guidelines.
3. Care should be taken when washing water catchment surfaces (e.g. roof) to avoid soap/detergent runoff being washed into water tanks.
4. It is recommended that the chosen cleaning method be tested on a small inconspicuous section of the building to ensure that no damage to the steel sheeting occurs (e.g. surface dulling or discolouration).
5. Never use abrasive or solvent type cleaners (e.g. turpentine, petrol, kerosene, paint thinners, sugar soap) on exterior BlueScope coated steel products.

Additional Maintenance

The long-term performance of COLORSTEEL® and ZINCALUME® products can at times be impacted by the durability of the accessories which are in contact with the product. For example, rapid deterioration of the fasteners used to fix COLORSTEEL® or ZINCALUME® roofing or walling can result in sacrificial corrosion of the product in the areas immediately adjacent to the fasteners. It is therefore good practice to:

- Ensure that fasteners used to fix COLORSTEEL® and ZINCALUME® steel roofing or walling are suitable for that location.
- Include regular inspection of fasteners into the maintenance routine. Consideration should be given to replacing any fasteners showing evidence of red rusting.

nzsteel.co.nz
0800 100 523

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