



As with any flooring surface, periodic cleaning is recommended. It is also easy to do following these simple steps:

General Cleaning:

1. Sweep off your deck surface, or blow off debris with a leaf blower. Keeping the deck surface dry prior to cleaning will allow the deck cleaner to work more efficiently.
2. Keep gaps between boards open and free of debris for proper drainage and airflow.
3. Utilize a general purpose deck cleaner with a pump up sprayer. Examples are Olympic or Severe Weather Deck cleaner.
4. Spray and saturate the deck surface following manufacturer's directions; let stand 15-20 minutes then rinse off.
5. For stubborn stains, additional cleaning and light brushing or scrubbing may be required.

Mold & Mildew

Mold and mildew exist in all environments both inside and outside, from shower curtains to exterior siding to deck surfaces. In order to grow, mold and mildew require a food source, air, water and warm temperatures. These organisms primarily feed on dead or decaying organic matter.

In some environments, especially where high humidity exists, a decking system may host a "flower pot" effect whereby, dirt, dust, tree and leaf debris, pollen, potting soil, etc., can accumulate on the deck surface and create a growing medium for mold and mildew. Therefore, periodic removal of surface debris can help minimize mold and/or mildew growth. Keep gaps between boards open and free of debris for proper drainage and airflow. Allowing proper drainage and avoiding standing water will help prevent mold and mildew growth.

In most cases, the house siding, fencing and cement adjacent to the deck also support mold and mildew growth. There are several simple and easy cleaning methods for addressing these external environmental conditions. However, it is important to follow cleaning procedures for maximum effectiveness.

Note: When using bleach in a cleaning solution please read the label and follow all safety precautions. Test a small section of your deck using the cleaning solution prior to cleaning the whole deck.

Test instructions: The Clorox® Bleach Color-Safe Test

Want to see if colored decking is bleach safe?*** Try this simple test!

1. Mix 2 teaspoons of bleach with ¼ cup water.
2. Dab 1 drop of solution on a hidden part of your deck.
3. Be sure to test all colors and any decorative trim or ribbing.
4. Wait 1 minute, then blot dry with paper towel.

If there is no color change, the decking can be safely washed with Clorox®

Outdoor Bleach. If there is a color change, dilute solution with water and retest.***

PROPER CLEANING PROCEDURES

1. **Do not rinse off or wet your deck;** sweep it off and keep it dry.

It is best to have a dry deck for 2 days prior to cleaning, for maximum effectiveness of the cleaning compound

2. Tools and cleaning supplies required:

- a. 2 gallon pump up sprayer
- b. Plastic measuring cup
- c. Garden hose
- d. Scrub brush
- e. Rubber gloves (optional)
- f. Liquid dishwashing detergent (with surfactant).
Ingredients will be listed on the back of the label or on the back of the bottle. Examples: Dawn®, Ajax®, Joy® and Palmolive®.
- g. Clorox® Outdoor Bleach

Dirty Deck Surface

For general cleaning, a solution of 1 quart bleach with 1/3 cup liquid dishwashing detergent to 4 quarts water is recommended.

Prior to application when using bleach, test a small section. If the deck is near flowers or shrubbery, care should be exercised not to saturate plants with cleaning solution. Wetting them down with water or covering prior to cleaning may be required.

Safety Overview

Before using any cleaning or laundry product, always read the label. The label is more than just a resource for usage, it is your guide for safe and effective use.

The following safety considerations are crucial to Clorox® Bleach and other cleaning products:

Never store cleaning products around children.

Make sure all products are locked in a secure area, even those products with child-resistant closures. While this type of closure can reduce the ability of a child to open a product, it does not make the product childproof.

Always re-close caps tightly after use, especially products such as Clorox® Bleach that have child-resistant closures. The cap must be tight in order to be child-resistant.

When using products around children, make sure the container is out of their reach. Ensure that the product stays under the adult's control at all times. Also, do not allow children access to the treated area while it's drying.

Because of the potential sensitivity of children to the strong odors of bleach and other cleaning products, conduct major cleaning (floors etc.) when children are not present. Then, ventilate the area and allow surfaces to completely dry before allowing access to children. Spot cleaning should be conducted in accordance with label directions.

Always read and follow precautions and usage directions before using products. Store products out of the reach of children.

Mixing Directions:

1. Add 1 quart Clorox® Outdoor Bleach, with 1/3 cup liquid dishwashing detergent, to 1 gallon of water*.
3. Sweep off surface dirt and debris from deck surface (dry).
2. Mix and stir and pour in sprayer, pump up.
4. Apply cleaning solution, and thoroughly saturate deck surface, allowing detergent to foam deck surface.

A dishwashing detergent solution like Dawn® Ultra provides added surfactants which foam to lift dirt and debris from the surface.

CAUTION: DO NOT COMBINE A DETERGENT CONTAINING PHOSPHATES WITH BLEACH AS THIS COULD CAUSE TOXIC FUMES.

Ingredients will be listed on the back of the label or on the back of the bottle. Applying to a dry deck surface in conjunction with the proper proportion of Clorox® Outdoor Bleach, also allows the cleaning action and germicidal power of the bleach to penetrate the surface and kill the mold and mildew while working in conjunction with the surfactant to provide some residual resistance on the deck over time.

Note: When using bleach in a cleaning solution please read the label and follow all safety precautions. Test a small section of your deck using the cleaning solution prior to cleaning the whole deck as bleach can lighten the color of your deck.

The length of time between cleanings will depend on several factors including:

1. Following recommended cleaning procedures.
2. A thorough and consistent cleaning process.
3. External environmental conditions including humidity, excessive rainfall and airborne contaminants.
4. Maintaining proper drainage and airflow in-between deck boards and around the deck surfaces.

Prevention and Cleaning

1. **Barbeque grease stains** - Hot grease droppings can stain any decking surface; use of a splatter guard underneath your grill to protect your deck is recommended. For grease stains, please remove quickly using a degreaser in conjunction with soap and water. Soak the stain and scrub with a soft bristle brush; White Lightning Degreaser® and Ultra Dawn® detergent will work well. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions.

2. **Avoid standing water** - Care should be taken to make sure your deck remains dry. Several simple steps should be taken and certain issues avoided:

a. Make sure deck boards are gapped correctly (1/4" between boards) so the deck can drain and ventilate properly. **Do not butt deck boards tight, side to side like wood.** Standing water on your deck surface will only encourage mold and mildew growth.

b. Avoid having gutters, downspouts or drains discharge directly on your deck.

c. Clean gaps between deck boards each spring removing all dirt, leaf and organic debris that has accumulated over the winter using a flat putty knife or tool which can be run down between the boards and unstop any buildup that may have occurred. In some cases a high pressure water nozzle may work.

d. Sweep or rinse off your deck surface periodically. This is easy and will remove and help minimize the buildup of potential airborne food sources such as leaf debris, pollen or dust which can encourage and support mold or mildew growth. Again, as with any flooring surface, periodic cleaning is recommended.

3. **Deal with and clean stains promptly.** Allowing stains to sit or bake in direct sunlight only makes them harder to clean.

4. If fertilizing potted plants on your deck or fertilizing your lawn, please be advised fertilizer can also stain your deck. If you over spray/spread, please rinse off quickly and do not leave on the deck.

5. **Rust stains from metal furniture, ornamental railings or metal fasteners** - Lower-quality steel fasteners or electroplated screws are not recommended and can stain your deck. On newly installed decks, run-off from metal objects such as lawn furniture or decorative iron railings can create some temporary staining. This can be removed using a deck cleaner containing phosphoric or oxalic acid. (Ingredients will be listed on the front label or on the label on the back of the bottle. *Using a deck cleaner containing phosphoric or oxalic acid may lighten your deck.*) Stains should be soaked, saturated, wet and scrubbed and allowed to stand with cleaner for 30 minutes before rinsing off (keep the stain wet with cleaning solution during the 30 minutes). Bad rust stains may require a second treatment.

Note: Over time, as the surface of the wood/deck surface weathers and shifts from an acidic to a more neutral ph, many such rust stains will dissolve and flake away. This normally will take 12-14 weeks of weathering to occur.

Note: When cleaning colored deck boards, care should be exercised not to discolor the surface by following the manufacturer's directions closely.

CAUTION: Do not mix any deck cleaner containing oxalic acid with chlorine bleach or other household cleaning products. Doing so can result in release of highly toxic gases. Mix using only plastic containers in well ventilated areas.

6. **Charcoal burns, cigarette burns** - Depending on the depth, the charred surface from such occurrences can be blended in by

washing, allowing it to dry and then lightly sanding the discolored area. Please note, this can alter the surface texture of the deck and in most cases will not totally go away.

7. **Pressure washing** - Periodic cleaning with cleaning solution and a pressure washer works well, however extreme pressures above 1300 PSI should be avoided and spray jets should be maintained 8-10" from the deck surface for best results. If using

bleach, care should be exercised to clean consistently and evenly so as to not streak your deck.

8. **Wine, juice stains** - On tough, hard-to-remove stains, cleaning with a detergent, in conjunction with 20 Mule Team® Borax or baking soda is recommended. Following manufacturer's directions of 1/3 cup detergent, with 1/3 cup cleaning agent in 1 gallon of warm water; mix, apply and scrub in. Allow to foam and saturate stain spot for 30 minutes. Some stains may require more than one application. Some tough stains may have to fade out over time, even with cleaning.

CAUTION: DO NOT MIX ANY DECK CLEANER CONTAINING OXALIC ACID WITH CHLORINE BLEACH OR OTHER HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS. DOING SO CAN RESULT IN RELEASE OF HIGHLY TOXIC GASES. MIX USING ONLY PLASTIC CONTAINERS IN WELL VENTILATED AREAS.

6. Rinse off with garden hose. Do not let any discolored cleaning solution dry on the deck.

For tough stains, a second application, and light scrubbing with a deck brush may be required.

5. Allow to stand 20-30 minutes while keeping wet and saturated.

Notice cleaning action and foaming of detergent.

*For heavy stains, dosage can be increased up to 6 cups Clorox® and ½ cup liquid dishwashing detergent to ½ gallon of water.