

## Protecting Granite Surfaces

Granite is one of the hardest and most moisture-resistant of building stones. Its naturally high density resists absorption of staining materials. In most situations, granite surfaces are best left untreated with impregnating or sealing agents. Polished surfaces are most resistant to stain, followed by honed, diamond 8, thermal and diamond 10.

**Impregnators:** If a granite surface is expected to be in frequent contact with staining agents, its stain resistance can be strengthened with a silicon based impregnator. This should not alter the surface texture or color of the granite. However, it is recommended that any impregnator be pre-tested with a given granite color and finish prior to general application.

**Sealers:** They may also be used to increase stain resistance, but they bring their own set of maintenance problems. Sealers can alter the surface texture and finish, particularly Thermal-finished stone. Sealers can also build up on the surface, creating a layer that is less durable than the granite. Sealers are not recommended in exterior applications, because they can trap moisture within the top layer of stone which may lead to surface cracks during freeze/thaw cycles. It is strongly recommended that any sealer be pre-tested on the stone in a variety of conditions prior to its general application.

## Regular Maintenance of Granite Surfaces

The regular maintenance recommended for granite surfaces is a simple cleaning with neutral detergent or stone soap and water. High-traffic areas subjected to tracking of outside dirt and grime may require a more intensive cleaner.

## General Guide for Cleaning Granite

- Remove any loose debris.
- Blot spills, wiping the area will spread the spill
- Clean the surface with mild dishwashing detergent and warm water. Rinse thoroughly with clean water, and dry with a soft cloth.
- Remove the spill immediately, the longer the spill remains on the stone the deeper it penetrates and more permanent it becomes.
- If the stain persists, call your stone care professional, installer, or restoration specialist for problems that appear too difficult to treat.

## Identify your stain:

Stains in granite will generally be caused by one of three (3) major category sources: metallic materials, oils and greases and organic materials. As a general rule, begin maintenance with simple methods and progress to more aggressive treatments as necessary.

**Metal:** Iron or rust stains may turn orange to brown. Copper and bronze stains may turn green or muddy-brown. Deep rusty stains are difficult to remove and may be permanent.

- **Oil-based:** grease, tar, cooking oil, milk and cosmetics.
- **Organic/ Biological materials:** coffee, fruit, tobacco, paper, food, leaves, bird droppings, algae, mildew, moss, and fungi.

## Stain Removal Guide

**Caution: DO NOT MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA, IT CREATES A TOXIC AND LETHAL GAS!**

It is recommended that any cleaning be done on a small portion of the stone to be sure the method will work for the stain you are trying to remove.

Some stains may need a poultice. A poultice is an absorbent material applied to a surface to draw out a stain. Improper selection of chemicals and poultice can make a stain worse or even permanent.

**Adhesives/Glues:** Such as tape residue, band-aids, stickers, etc. Peel or use razor blade to remove any remaining adhesive. Remove the sticky residue with acetone on a clean rag.

**Beer:** Clean the stain thoroughly with water and a mild soap. Allow the mixture to soak into the stone for several minutes. Lightly agitate, then remove all excess water and soap with a dry towel. Rinse area with clean water. If the stain remains, try a stronger chemical such as ammonia and water.

**Bleach:** Flood area with clean water. If the stone has become lighter, there is little that can be done and the stone may need to be refinished or replaced.

**Blood:** Clean the area with cold water and a mild soap. Prepare a solution of 50% ammonia and water. Apply solution and allow to sit for several minutes. Scrub the area gently and rinse with clean cold water.

**Chocolate:** Clean area with cold water and mild soap. If stain remains, clean with ammonia and water. Let solutions stand for several minutes. Remove solution and rinse with cold water.

**Coffee/Tea:** Pour 35% hydrogen peroxide directly on the stain with a few drops of ammonia. Leave the solution on until it stops bubbling. **DO NOT USE AMMONIA ONLY.**

**Efflorescence:** This is a white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone. If it's a new installation, dust-mop or vacuum the powder. Repeat several times as the stone dries out. Do not use water or cleaners to remove the powder. Remove with a dry cloth or buff with #0000 steel wool. If efflorescent returns, repeat dry buff. If efflorescent is still present, dehumidifiers or turning air conditioners to about 72 degrees Fahrenheit may help.

**Fire, Smoke Damage and Burns:** If there is a yellow nicotine stain, apply a poultice with 35% hydrogen peroxide. Older stones may require a thorough cleaning to restore original appearance. Commercially available "smoke removers" may save time and effort in cleaning.

**Fatty Oils/ Grease:** Remove excess grease and apply a degreaser and let sit for several minutes. Remove excess degreaser and rinse with clean water.

**Furniture Polish:** Clean with acetone and clean rag. Allow acetone to sit on stain for several minutes. Blot remaining solvent with clean rag.

**Grass:** Clean stained area with denatured alcohol and clean rag.

**Gum:** Freeze the gum using an aerosol freeze. Once the gum is frozen, chip with a scraper or putty knife. If any gum still remains, apply a solvent cleaner such as a dry spotter.

**Hard Water Stains:** If large deposits, scrape off excess deposits with a sharp razor blade. Apply a solution of weak phosphoric acid and agitate. Add acid as needed. Re-finish the stone if necessary.

**Heel Marks:** Clean with acetone and clean rag. On textured stone try using a scrub pad with acetone.

**Ice cream-Non Chocolate:** Clean area with cold water and mild soap

**Iodine:** Blot any wet iodine with a clean rag. Clean with denatured alcohol and clean rag.

**Ink/Toner:** (Primatene marker, pen.) Clean with hydrogen peroxide, lacquer thinner or acetone, clean cloth until no ink is transferred to the cloth.

**Light Fruit Juice:** To remove the stain, clean with cold water and a mild soap.

**Lipstick:** Scrape excess lipstick with razor blade. Clean with acetone and a clean rag.

**Lotion:** Remove excess lotion. Apply degreaser and water. Let set for several minutes. Agitate and rinse good with clean cold water

**Make-up:** Remove excess makeup by blotting with a clean rag. Clean area with de-natured alcohol and a clean cloth

**Mildew:** Clean area with mild soap. Rinse area with clean water and dry well.

**Milk:** Clean area with mild soap.

**Mortar:** Clean with water and a scrub brush. Repeat as necessary. Agitate until mortar is removed. Re-hone and re-polish surface.

**Nail Polish:** Immediately blot with clean cloth. Apply acetone and blot. Continue until stain is gone.

**Oil:** (motor oil/hydraulic fluid) Blot excess oil with clean cloth. Apply a degreaser and let sit for several minutes. Remove excess degreaser and rinse with clean water.

**Paint-Oil Based:** Immediately blot paint from surface with a clean cloth. Apply mineral spirits liberally to the spill and blot. Blot until the stain is removed. Apply a poultice of methylene chloride or paint remover. Dried paint can be removed in small amounts with a lacquer thinner or scraped carefully with a razor blade. Do not use acids or flame tools to strip paint from stone. Paint strippers can etch the surface, and re-finishing may be necessary. Use only wood or plastic scrapers for removing the sludge and paint.

**Paint-Water Based:** Blot a fresh spill immediately with a clean cloth. Clean area with water and a mild soap.

**Rust:** Apply a solution of "Iron-Out" and water. Mix and lightly agitate with a soft bristle brush. Rinse with clean water.

**Scratches and Nicks:** Buff with dry #0000 steel wool. Deeper scratches and nicks should be repaired and re-finished by a professional.

**Shoe Polish:** If dry, scrape excess with a razor. Clean the area with acetone and a clean cloth.

**Smoke/Soot:** Wipe excess soot with a clean cloth. Clean with dish soap in warm water and rinse well. Use stiff bristle brush for textured stone. Clean with a solution of degreaser and warm water.

**Soap Film:** If film is thick, scrape with a razor blade. Wet the surface to avoid scratching. For heavy build up clean with acetone and scrub pad. You can also try commercial soap film removers, but, be careful that they do not contain acids. To minimize soap film buildup, use a squeegee after each use.

**Soft Drink:** If fresh, blot with clean cloth. Clean area with good soap and warm water. Rinse well.

**Tar/Asphalt:** Scrape excess tar with razor blade. Clean remaining tar with acetone and a cloth. If stain remains, poultice with mineral spirits

**Tobacco:** Clean with mild soap and cold water.

**Water Rings/ Spots:** Try buffing rings or spot with dry #0000 steel wool. If spot remains, re-finishing may be necessary.

**Wax Coating:** If coating is water based, strip with a wax stripper. Rinse thoroughly with water.

**Wines:** Clean area with acetone and clean cloth. If stain remains, poultice with 20-50% hydrogen peroxide and poultice powder.

**Wood Stains and Varnishes:** Clean area with acetone and clean cloth. Continue until no stain is visible on the rag.