CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDE

This Care & Maintenance Guide has been put together to ensure long term satisfaction and longevity for the material of choice. These recommendations are based on information provided by The Marble Institute of America. If you have any questions or concerns about your material, contact your representative at EA-Stone Group. Always remember that this is natural stone and nature has provided this stone with each piece having it's own characteristics, nothing is ever guaranteed to look alike. Variations will occur from piece to piece, slab to slab, and block to block.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STONE

It is important to first understand your stone and why it is unique from others. This will help you identify the proper cleaners and sealers based on the stone's composition, siliceous stone or calcareous stone. Siliceous stone is composed primarily of silicates, such as quartz, feldspar, mica, etc. Types of siliceous stones are granite, slate, sandstone, and quartzite. These stones are generally resistant to most acid cleaners, although acidic cleaners are still not recommended. Calcareous stone is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, a chemical compound commonly found in natural stone, shells, and pearls. Types of calcareous stones are limestone, travertine, onyx, and marble. These stones will react to acidic foods such as lemons or tomatoes. This reaction can result in dulling of the surface and a change in the texture, also known as "acid etching".

Whenever a spill occurs, immediately blot the spill with a paper towel. Don't wipe the area, contain the spill and blot. Once the spill is removed, flush the area with clean water and mild detergent. Rinse and repeat several times then dry the area thoroughly with a dry cloth. Do not use products with lemon, vinegar or other acids on marble, travertine, and limestone. Never use scouring powders or creams, these products contain abrasives and will scratch the surface.

STAIN IDENTIFICATION

Identifying the type of stain is the key to removing it safely. Stains can either be oil based, organic, metallic, biological, ink based, paint based, or acid based. Staining refers to the residual effect of a spill that cannot be removed with dishwashing detergent. Identifying the source of the stain is the key to removing it safely. If you don't know what caused it, then ask yourself the following questions to help identify the source from which the stain came from: Where is the stain located? Is it near a plant, a food service area, an area of open cosmetics? What color is it? What shape is it? What happens in the area where the stain was identified? Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning the area with an appropriate cleaning product or household chemical. Deep-seated stains may require using a poultice to remove the stain.

Oil Based (grease, tar, cooking oil, milk, cosmetics)

An oil-based stain will darken the stone. Generally oil must be chemically dissolved so the source of the stain can be flushed or rinsed away. Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleanser with one of the following: household detergent, mineral spirits, or acetone.

ORGANIC (coffee, tea, fruit, tobacco, paper, food, urine, leaves, bark, bird droppings)

May cause a pinkish-brown stain and may disappear after the source of the stain has been removed. Outdoors, with the sources removed, normal sun and rain action will generally bleach out the stains. Indoors, clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide (hair bleaching strength) and a few drops of ammonia.

METAL (iron, rust, copper, bronze)

Iron or rust stains are orange to brown in color and follow the shape of the staining object such as nails, bolts, screws, cans, flower pots, metal furniture. Copper and bronze stains appear as green or muddy-brown and result from the action of moisture on nearby or embedded bronze, copper or brass items. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. Deep seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove and the stone may be permanently stained.

BIOLOGICAL (algae, mildew, lichens, moss, fungi)

Clean with diluted (1/2 cup in a gallon of water) ammonia, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide. Never mix ammonia and bleach, this creates a toxic and lethal gas!

INK (magic marker, pen, ink)

Clean with bleach or hydrogen peroxide (light colored stone only) or lacquer thinner oe acetone (dark stones only).

PAINT

Small amounts can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razor blade. Heavy paint coverage should be removed only with a commercial “heavy liquid” paint stripper available from hardware stores and paint centers. These strippers normally contain caustic soda or lye. Do not use acids or flame tools to strip paint from stone. Paint strippers can etch the surface of the stone, re-polishing may be necessary.

Follow the manufacturer’s directions for use of these products, taking care to flush the area thoroughly with clean water. Protect yourself with rubber gloves and eye protection, and work in a well-ventilated area. Use only wood or plastic scrapers for removing the sludge and curdled paint. Normally, latex and acrylic paints will not cause staining. Oil-based paints, linseed oil, putty, caulks and sealants may cause oily stains. Refer to the section on oil-based stains.

WATER SPOTS AND RINGS (surface accumulation of hard water)

Buff with dry (0000 grit) steel wool.

FIRE AND SMOKE DAMAGE

Older stones and smoke or fire stained fireplaces may require a thorough cleaning to restore their original appearance. Commercially available “smoke removers” may save time and effort.

ETCH MARKS (caused by acids left on the surface of the stone)

Some materials will etch the finish but not leave a stain. Others will both etch and stain. This may result in needing the surface re-polished.

EFFLORESCENCE (white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone)

It is caused by the deposition of mineral salts carried by water from below the surface of the stone. When the water evaporates, it leaves the powdery substance. If the installation is new, dust mop or vacuum the powder. You may need to do this several times as the stone dries out. Do not use water to remove the powder, it will only temporarily disappear.

SCRATCHES AND NICKS

Slight surface scratches may be buffed with dry 0000steel wool. Deeper scratches and nicks in the surface of the stone should be repaired and re-polished.

MAKING AND USING A POULTICE

A poultice is a liquid cleaner or chemical mixed with an absorbent material to form a paste about the consistency of peanut butter. The poultice is spread over the stained area to a thickness of about 1/4" to 1/2" with a wood or plastic spatula, covered with plastic wrap and left in place for 24 to 48 hours. The liquid cleaner or chemical will draw out the stain into the absorbent material. Poultice procedures may need to be repeated to thoroughly remove a stain.

POULTICE MATERIALS

Poultice materials include talc, kaolin, fuller's earth, whiting, powdered chalk, diatomaceous earth or white molding plaster. Approximately one pound of prepared poultice material will cover one square foot. Do not use whiting or iron-type clays such as fuller's earth with acid chemicals. The reaction will cancel the effect of the poultice. A chemical poultice can be prepared by soaking white cotton balls, white paper towels or gauze pads. Never mix ammonia and bleach, this creates a toxic and legal gas.

OIL-BASED STAINS

Poultice with baking soda and water or one of the powdered poultice materials and mineral spirits.

ORGANIC STAINS

Poultice with one of the powdered poultice materials and 12% hydrogen peroxide solution (hair bleaching strength) or use acetone.

IRON STAINS

Poultice with diatomaceous earth and a commercially rated rust remover. Note that rust stains are particularly difficult to remove.

COPPER STAINS

Poultice with one of the powdered poultice materials and ammonia. Note that copper stains are particularly difficult to remove.

BIOLOGICAL STAINS

Poultice with diluted ammonia, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide.

APPLYING THE POULTICE:

1. Prepare the poultice. If using powder, mix the cleaning agent or chemical to a thick paste, the consistency of peanut butter. If using paper, soak in the chemical and let drain. Don't let the liquid drip.
2. Wet the stained area with distilled water.
3. Apply the poultice to the stained area about 1/4" to 1/2" thick and extend the poultice beyond the stained area by about 1". Use a wood or plastic scraper to spread the poultice evenly.

4. Cover the poultice with plastic and tape the edges to seal it.
5. Allow the poultice to dry thoroughly, usually about 24 to 48 hours. The drying process is what pulls the stain out of the stone and into the poultice material. After about 24 hours, remove the plastic and allow the poultice to dry.
6. Remove the poultice from the stain. Rinse with distilled water and buff dry with a soft cloth. Use the wood or plastic scraper if necessary.
7. Repeat the poultice application if the stain is not removed. It may take up to five applications for difficult stains.
8. If the surface is etched by the chemical, buff and re-polish as necessary.

HELPFUL EASY CARE TIPS

- Use coasters under all glasses, particularly those containing alcohol or citrus juices.
- Use trivets under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that might scratch the surface.
- Clean the surfaces with stone soap or mild detergent and warm water.
- Thoroughly rinse and dry surfaces after washing.
- Blot any spills with a paper towel immediately. Do not wipe the area. Flush with clean water and mild detergent and rinse several times. Dry with a soft cloth. Repeat as necessary.
- In the bath and shower areas, soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use. To remove soap scum, use a non-acidic soap scum remover or a solution of ammonia and water (about 1/2 cup ammonia to a gallon of water) Excessive use may dull the surface of some types of stones.
- Do not place heat directly to the stone surface.
- Never use vinegar, lemon juice or cleaners containing acids on marble, onyx, limestone, or travertine surfaces.
- Never mix ammonia and bleach, this creates a toxic and lethal gas.
- Never use scouring powders or creams as they often contain abrasives that may scratch the surface.

EA STONE GROUP