



New Rules-Architectural CMU

for final cleandown of newly constructed CMU buildings

"Dollar for dollar, nothing has more impact on the public's perception of a newly constructed masonry building than its final cleandown."

— David W. Boyer



1. Know your surface.

Compared to other masonry, cleaning architectural CMU is decidedly different. The goal is not only to wash away excess mortar and job site soiling — but also to remove any excess colored cement paste that obscures the block's natural texture and aggregate color. You want to reveal a more color-uniform, still weather-resistant surface. In fact, when cleaning integrally colored CMU the color intensity you want is that of a split cross-section of the CMU itself. Allowed to remain on the block face, that excess colored cement paste weathers and streaks. It also contributes to what many block producers call "secondary efflorescence." Removing the paste reveals the blocks' intended appearance and produces a more attractive and maintenance-free façade.

2. Use the right Sure Klean® cleaner.

For split-faced, ribbed and smooth architectural block, use Sure Klean® Custom Masonry Cleaner. For ground-faced block, use Sure Klean® Burnished Custom Masonry Cleaner. On buildings where ground-faced block is a component, protect it when cleaning adjacent surfaces, then clean separately. NEVER USE RAW ACID ON ANY BLOCK.

3. Always test.

Even when you know the surface, and you have the right cleaner — test the cleaner on a small, out-of-the-way section of the wall. Testing will help you determine the most efficient dwell times and dilution rates. More importantly, you'll avoid costly unpleasant surprises.

4. Use the mildest dilution that gives effective results.

The higher the dilution with fresh water, the safer your architectural CMU will be. It's particularly important on smooth and ground-faced block walls. How do you know what the effective dilution rate is? See rule #3.

5. Clean early.

Don't let mortar cure too long — particularly high-strength mortar. The longer unwanted mortar smears cure, the harder they are to remove. It's a big problem on sensitive surfaces. When your walls consist of smooth and/or ground-faced block, the optimal time to clean is 7 - 14 days after the mortar joints are tooled. For rough-textured block, the window is 7 - 21 days.

6. Basics still apply. Follow them.

- **Use lots of water** to pre-wet the CMU before applying the cleaner. If you don't pre-wet, you're more likely to cause staining and excessive erosion of the block surface and the mortar joints. Some staining can be corrected — for a price. Damage the mortar joints, however, and you've reduced the weather resistance of the entire wall. That kind of damage is irreversible. Use lots more water to rinse the spent cleaner and dissolved soiling from the surface. 6 - 8 gallons per minute is ideal.
- **400 - 1,000 psi is the safest**, effective pressure for rinsing dissolved soiling and spent cleaner from the cleaned CMU. Higher psi risks wand marks and eroded mortar joints.
- **Follow all safety information** on the product label. It's there to protect YOU!
- **Never go it alone.** Questions or problems? Call your distributor, masonry cleaner manufacturer, or the manufacturer's local field rep. Your success is their success.

7. Protect what you clean.

When the cleaned masonry is dry, apply a penetrating, breathable water-repellent. By keeping water out of the CMU and masonry joints, you break the destructive freeze/thaw and wet/dry cycles that can crack and spall masonry walls. You'll also help prevent other water-related problems like efflorescence. For most colored architectural block, use Sure Klean® Custom Masonry Sealer or Sure Klean® Weather Seal Blok-Guard® & Graffiti Control II.

Why do we need new rules?

Because long gone are the days when cleaning masonry meant red clay brick and gray mortar only. Long gone are the days of "one size fits all" final cleandown of new masonry.

Today's masonry includes countless styles of clay brick; concrete brick; and manufactured, cast and natural stone. Trying to remove the excess mortar after construction without regard for each substrate's unique characteristics can mean disaster — color loss, etched mortar joints, wand marks and burned masonry.

The good news is that by following a few simple guidelines, you can bring home great results every time on any masonry surface — brick, block, manufactured stone — or any combination of these and other masonry units.

Some of those guidelines like "always test" are timeless. Others, like "clean early," have been around but are increasingly important. Still others, such as "know your surface", are new rules for masons brought up in the traditions of "masonry equals brick or block." Today — more than ever before — people must understand that different building materials demand a different approach to cleaning.

PROSOCO
SINCE 1939

800-255-4255 • www.prosoco.com