

Cleaning and Maintenance of Artistic Skylight Systems

SECTION 1: MAINTENANCE

Your new Artistic Skylight product is engineered to be virtually trouble free. A good routine of maintenance will help maintain the aesthetic quality and functional integrity found in every Artistic unit. Along with occasional cleaning, regularly check all sealant, gasketing, and flashing for possible failure, or erosion and check retainer screws for loosening that may introduce water infiltration. Artistic skylights are designed to function without the use of large quantities of wet sealants and/or caulking material. Some systems do, however, require the use of a sealant in specific areas. Acrylic glazed units can be sealed with urethane based sealants only – no silicone. Should the need arise; contact our Service Department at the factory prior to applying any sealants. Factory Maintenance checks should include inspecting and if necessary, clearing all weep holes. Tighten any screws or fasteners (with hand tools only) that are intended to hold glazing frames in place and clear any collected debris that may have accumulated across the exterior of the top or head of skylights. If your unit includes exterior gutter systems, they should be kept free of all debris. It is a good idea to periodically check all glazing for scratches or abrasions. If at any time a fracture is discovered in a glazing line, replace it immediately.

SECTION 2: CLEANING & REPAIR OF GLAZING MATERIALS

A. CLEANING

Use a thoroughly diluted mild soap or detergent and water. Apply with a soft cloth applying only light pressure. Rinse with clean water and dry by blotting with a damp cloth or chamois. **CAUTION:** Abrasives will scratch the surface of acrylic! Never use instruments such as a putty knife or razor blade to remove spots from glazing. Never use solvents such as ammonia or ammonia based cleaners, glass window cleaning fluid, gasoline, acetone, carbon tetrachloride, lacquer thinner, or alcohol since they attack the acrylic surface. Do not clean acrylic in direct sunlight. Aliphatic naphtha (no aromatic content) or kerosene may be used to remove grease, oil and roofing cements from acrylic products. Paint can often be removed from acrylic by applying a paste consisting of wallpaper paste and a 10-20% solution of caustic soda or trisodium phosphate and water, followed by a thorough rinsing with warm water. **CAUTION:** Caustic soda and trisodium phosphate attack the skin very quickly. Extreme care should be exercised when working with these materials.

B. MINOR REPAIRS, SCRATCH REMOVAL:

Fine scratches can be removed by hand polishing. Apply a plastic scratch remover or a compound such as Simonize cleaner to a soft flannel pad and rub. When the scratches have disappeared, remove all residue and polish. For deeper scratches, first sand lightly, with a 400-grit "wet or dry" sandpaper, using plenty of water and rinsing the sandpaper frequently. Follow by buffing with a clean muslin wheel and a good polishing compound. For the highest gloss, use a clean-up wheel made of soft cotton or flannel sections, and on which no compound is used. An electric drill with a buffing wheel also is ideal.

****EXCLUSIONS:** Polycarbonate material is to be excluded from all suggested cleaning methods. Due to its relatively soft surface that mars easily with wiping action, cleaning of any sort may result in additional abrasions to surface. Please note that minor surface hazing/scuffing may occur during manufacturing processes and should not be attempted to be removed.

SECTION 3: CLEANING OF ALUMINUM

Mild hand soap and warm water may be safely applied to any of the aluminum finishes. Avoid indiscriminate use of steel wool, strong acids, and abrasive cleaners. When used properly, industrial cleaners may be used safely and are highly effective. Test the cleaning solution to be used on an unobtrusive section of the finish. Use the same concentration and technique that will be used for the entire job. Let the cleaner remain in place for the same time. Allow it to dry and inspect for stains. Test lacquered and painted finishes for softening and possible dissolution. Avoid exposing glazing materials to solvents, brushes, steam, and abrasives when using any aluminum cleaning procedures. Avoid using cleaners in extreme heat or cold. For best results, outdoor cleaning should be done on mild cloudy days or in the shade. Water-based cleaners should be thoroughly rinsed with water, after which this part of the area should be allowed to dry or be wiped dry. Cleaners containing wax, oil or silicones are removed with a dry cloth. Be sure to remove all traces of cleaner from cracks and corners.

MILD SOAPS AND NON-ETCHING CLEANERS that can be applied with bare hands may be used for cleaning aluminum finishes. Detergents too strong for the hands, such as some automatic dishwasher detergents, should be spot tested first. Some of these can bleach paint and discolor non-finished and anodized aluminum. Non-etching cleaners remove soil without attacking the metal or its finish. Some mixtures may irritate the skin on contact. Rubber gloves or a long-handled fiber brush should be used. After cleaning, the aluminum should be thoroughly washed with clear water and dried. **SOLVENT CLEANERS** are more effective on stains and soils than cleaners in the first group. Solvent and emulsion cleaners may be used without difficulty on bare, anodized, conversion coated and porcelainized aluminum. When used on painted (and lacquered) finishes, solvent and emulsion cleaners can remove many of the paints and clear organic coatings (lacquers) used with aluminum. Both mild cleaners and the solvent-emulsion cleaners will remove dirt and some stains. They will not, however, restore the appearance of aluminum that has weathered nor remove heavy grime encrustation. For these conditions a more aggressive cleaner is required. **ABRASIVE CLEANERS** will restore weathered aluminum and remove most stains and grime. These cleaners are manufactured and sold under various generic descriptions including polish, cleaner, cleaner-polish, wax-cleaner, wax polish, metal brightener, scouring powder and the like. Their effectiveness on various soiled and darkened aluminum depends on their formulation and vigor of application. Abrasive cleaners contain abrasives to which water, oil, wax, silicones, soap and an acid or alkalis may be added, either in singles or in combination. The abrasives remove the dirt and surface oxidation; the soaps, acids and/or alkalis clean. Traces of wax, oil, or silicones remain behind after the compound has been applied and removed. They provide luster and a moderate amount of protection. Abrasive cleaners containing fine grit or polishing agents may be used with care on all aluminum finishes. Care is necessary because even the finest polishing agent is an abrasive and prolonged rubbing may dull a bright specular finish in time. For the ultimate in specular finishes, the metal must be buffed. Household cleaners often contain coarse abrasives. They should never be used on any surface other than porcelain without caution. Cleaners containing moderately coarse grit may be used freely on porcelain finishes only. All other finishes require considerable caution. Moderate abrasives can dull a bright finish in a relatively short time. Cleaners in this group are often used to remove heavy soils and oxides prior to final cleaning and polishing with a fine grit cleaner. When this is done the abrasive cleaner must be thoroughly removed before the fine polish is applied, otherwise, a few grit particles that remain on the surface will produce noticeable scratches.

Special note: These procedures are suggestions only. Since actual procedure and use is beyond our control, these suggestions should not be interpreted as having any guarantee of results. Artistic Skylight Domes Ltd. reserves the right to alter any of this information without prior notice, and will take no responsibility for unsatisfactory results from improper use of applicable products.