

FHC Cleaning and Preventative Maintenance Tips for Brass

CLEANING

Routine regular maintenance prevents dirt and grime deposits from building up on Brass Alloys. If left neglected, chemicals in the air will discolor and tarnish any decorative metal finish. To promote the aesthetic longevity of FHC Door Rails, Patch Fittings, and Hardware a regimented cleaning program should be put in place.

Brass is an alloy of copper/zinc, and it tends to oxidize (tarnish) quickly when exposed to air. The biggest challenge to the maintenance of brass, is the removal and inhibition of tarnish. Once tarnish is removed, a chemical barrier should be created between the bare metal and the air to inhibit the process from re-occurring.

TARNISHED BRASS

Unlacquered brass tarnishes when exposed to air. A weekly wiping with a little liquid ammonia on a soft cloth will help keep unlacquered brass shiny. Use a conventional cleaner/polish such as Brasso[®] (available in grocery or hardware stores) to coat the raw metal with a thin film of oil to help inhibit future tarnishing. The polish should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended instructions for safety and use. **CAUTION:** Wrong to assume, "the more polish, the more protection". More polish creates a smudging problem since fingerprints "dissolve" the solvency of the metal polish. Additionally, too much polish may discolor the surface. Only a trace amount creating a thin film should be applied. **NOTE:** Never use circular motions when polishing. Always rub in the same direction as the grain texture.



HINT: Brass will look brighter and require less polishing if rubbed with a cloth moistened with Olive Oil after each polishing. Olive oil retards tarnish.

Lacquered or coated brass should be cleaned periodically by wiping with a mild soap and filtered water solution, then rinsed with clean water and dried with a clean microfiber cloth. Note: No Brass cleaners/polish, oil, ammonia, or abrasive cleaners should ever be used on lacquered/coated brass alloys.

Lacquered brass finishes once scratched or nicked, are immediately susceptible to oxidation. Oxidation will start to appear as black spots. Repair requires the stripping of the lacquer from the entire part, then the lacquer must be re-applied.

On antique brass, test the cleaning product to be sure of obtaining the desired effect. Some methods not only clean tarnish but also remove the coloring of age that is desirable on some items.

Satin polished brass alloy finishes should be cleaned by rubbing with an abrasive pad (Scotch-Brite Hand Pads by 3M). The finish should always be rubbed in the same direction as the grain texture.