



The Sustainable Alternative

Care & Maintenance

Preamble

A great feature of wood composite products is that you can have a great performing deck without the need for staining, oiling or painting etc, and the deck will continue to last without rotting, cracking or splinters. However, wood plastic composite products being wood-based and will only look their best if given some degree of care. The amount of care/attention required on your deck will most likely be directly proportional to the local environment of the deck, an area surrounded by heavy foliage or prone to lots of dust will of course require more attention than a very open area without trees etc....

General Cleaning

A simple sweep of the deck area will generally prevent build-up of dirt and grime (or even leaves) that could lead to unwanted marks, stains and mould. Gaps between the boards should also be cleared of debris should this occur. As with timber, the longer your deck is dirty, the more work it will take to get it clean again.

In all circumstances you must follow instructions as stated on packaging; a wash with something like "sugar soap" or "Sard Wonder soap" liquid solution will generally remove most dirt and grime. We have found that Deck Protect Composite Clean or SoSafe ESR pH Boosted are good products for general cleaning.

For oil-based stains such as BBQ fat or sunscreen lotion, a dilution of degreaser such as "Kenco" works very well - again, follow the directions on the pack. Please note Kenco will lighten the pigment colour of the decking boards - follow instructions as stated on packaging exactly.

BBQ's: A good practice is to have a "splat mat" or "drop board" under the BBQ to catch fat spills rather than have them fall on to the deck. Deck Protect Composite Sealer can also be applied to those areas which are subject to fat and oil staining marks.

Pot Plants: It is advisable that they do not sit directly on the deck boards; raise them as you may get stain marks from overflow. You can keep the area clean by using warm soapy water. Occasionally you may need to move the pots around to minimise shadow marks.

Fading / Colour Softening

When deciding which side of the ModWood decking boards to use you should refer to "Brushed vs Smooth - Pro's and Con's"

ModWood will undergo some colour change when exposed to the elements and this will primarily happen during the first couple of months. For older decks Deck Protect Composite Refresh has a range of colour stains which can be applied to rejuvenate colour intensity at a later stage should it be desired; e.g. property sale.

Water Marks

Water stain marks can show on ModWood boards. We have seen two types of water stains; both of which will generally disappear with exposure to a reasonable soaking of rain and general weathering; they can be cleaned fairly quickly with water-diluted Deck Protect Composite Clean:

- Water stains from wood tannins will occur in the early life of your deck as the natural tannins come out of the wood fibres at the surface of the ModWood. This will happen in the early weeks of your deck, and will depend on how exposed to the elements your deck is before the weathering process is complete.
- Water stains from water pooling or dripping can happen on ModWood just like it can with many other materials/surfaces such as timber flooring, glass, laminated tables etc. The visibility of the stain will be governed by factors such as how dirty the deck is and how quickly the water dries from the water pooling, clean as mentioned above.

A wash with Deck Protect Composite Clean often assists in eliminating such marks and for those areas where water stain marks are an ongoing issue it should be possible to apply the Deck Protect Composite Sealer to minimise the effect of water stain marks.

Scratches

The initially darker side (smooth), due to excess lubricants on the surface of the product; will show scuffs and scratches more easily when new. By lightly rubbing on a decking oil with a clean rag the marks will be less noticeable e.g. Sceney's Natural decking oil. Exposure to the weather will see the board revert to its natural colour; thus hiding scuff and scratch marks.

The "brushed" lighter side provides a more textured "timber-like" look and does not easily show scuffs and scratches. This face must be installed when the deck is either partially shaded or under 100% shade. The brushed finish can be wire-brushed or lightly sanded with coarse sandpaper to remove scratches. The area you brush will quickly fade out and hide your repair.

Installations where the deck boards are fully exposed then either the smooth or brushed face can be used.

Treating Scuffs and Scratches

ModWood can show scuffs and scratches, especially when new, and especially on the "smooth surface". By rubbing on light decking oil with a clean rag the marks will be less noticeable. Exposure to the weather will see the board revert to its natural colour, thus hiding scuff and scratch marks.

It is strongly recommended that all furniture on a ModWood deck has protective feet e.g. rubber stoppers applied to the legs to help prevent scuffing or scratching of the deck surface. Please note, ModWood is a finished product-take care! See our web site for further details.

Important- the brushed surface does not easily show scuffs and scratches. This side must be installed facing up if the area is 100% or has partially shade/cover. The smooth face can be installed where the deck is fully exposed to the weather.

The brushed surface can be wire brushed. The area that you brush will quickly fade out and hide your repair.

Silver Gum Weathering

During the weathering process Silver Gum may show some discolouration & this initial colour shift is a result of the wood fibres undergoing natural bleaching by the sun's ultra violet rays. This is quite normal and occurs with all of our colours, however it is more noticeable with the lighter colours. Once the boards have completed the weathering process, typically 2 - 3 months after installation; the colour will revert to its final silver/ grey colour.

Brushed vs Smooth finish – Pro's and Con's

Brushed (lighter coloured face)

Pro's

- **Must** be used for decks fully or partially under roof/cover **
- A more durable finish; suitable under roof/cover & fully exposed areas.
- A more uniform appeal when under cover
- Does not show scratches as easily
- Better non-slip feel in wet areas (e.g. around pools)
- Heavy scratches may be sanded or wire-brushed out
- Can more easily take oil based paint or decking stain
- A more “timber-like” surface feel
- Less colour shift/fade over time - apart from embossing lines fading
- Surface temperature of brushed feels cooler than the smooth

Con's

- Susceptible to “fatty” stains due to the exposed wood fibre
- Will pick up dirt/stains/mould more easily due to wood fibres exposed and these can usually be cleaned

Installed Area	Face	
	Brushed Up	Smooth Up
Fully Exposed	✓	✓
Sheltered <small>i.e. partially / fully under roofline</small>	✓	✗

Smooth (darker coloured face)

Pro's

- A more solid colour
- More “plastic” at the surface gives better resistance to dirt and grime (stays cleaner)

Con's

- For fully exposed deck areas only **
- Less uniform appeal if installed under roof/cover
- Smoother surface may feel a bit more plastic
- Surface temperature will get hotter; especially when new
- Smoother surface not quite as good for grip (88mm board)
- Cannot simply give a wire-brushing “touch-up” for scratches
- Will show a higher degree of fade over the first few months
- Needs to be well weathered before paint or stain will adhere properly

** For areas partially under roof/cover, the brushed / lighter side must face up.

** For fully exposed areas; either face can be used.....

Surface Coatings

Most people do not use any coatings on ModWood, however it can be painted or stained at a later date should this be desired. Deck Protect Composite Refresh is a rejuvenating stain and it is available in the ModWood colours.

In all circumstances you must follow instructions as stated on the packaging.

Anti-Slip Coating

For those areas where anti-slip/improved grip is critical Deck Protect Composite Traction is a product that can be applied. It is P4 compliant (AS/NZS 4586-2013) and a grit additive for P5 requirements is also available. *Refer to the packaging for directions and usages.*

Graffiti Paint Removal

Trials have shown that it is possible to remove graffiti paint with application of Deck Protect Composite Strip. *Refer to the packaging for directions and usages.*

Chalk Lines

It is best to avoid coloured chinks that are used in construction as most coloured chinks are permanent! Best alternative is white chalk (Irwin Strait-Line Dust Off) or baby powder:

- Test on a small off-cut if unsure to confirm that you can clean chalk off successfully.
- Contact the chalk manufacturer before use should you require further information.....

Mould

Mould colonies can develop on any outdoor area; this is generally due to air-borne spores landing in an environment that promotes mould growth. A slower-working, long-term and environmentally friendly solution is applying a product such as "Wet and Forget" – this works well but takes several months to take full effect.

A "quick fix" for this natural occurrence is the use of Deck Protect Composite Clean or SoSafe ESR pH Boosted NOTE: *In all circumstances, Refer to the packaging for directions and usages.....*



External links:

<http://deckprotect.com.au>
<http://sosafe.com.au>
<https://wetandforget.com.au>
<http://www.sceneys.com.au/decking-oil.php>
<http://www.irwin.com/tools>

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