

METROBRICK® | Royal Thin Brick® Cleaning & Maintenance



To follow is a basic cleaning and maintenance guide for both METROBRICK® Thin Brick and Royal Thin Brick®.

NOTE: The following is to be used as a guide only. Always follow cleaning manufacturers' directions and recommendations for the use of their products.

Mortar/Grout

in field applied applications, you can use either ceramic tile grout rated for thin brick applications or Type S mortar to fill the joints between the bricks. This paper will use the term mortar for consistency's sake.

For repairs, use the same product – grout or mortar - used in construction if possible. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for these products.

Applying Sealant/Brick Enhancer

METROBRICK and Royal Thin Brick products do not require sealing for most exterior applications as the bricks are less than 5% absorption. You may, however, consider sealing the mortar as it is more porous.

If you seal both the brick and the mortar, be sure that the surface is clean of any dirt, stains, or other contaminants before sealing.

Use a penetrating sealer, siloxane sealer, or brick enhancer to seal the wall. A brick enhancer will create a darker/richer brick appearance. Always read the product manufacturer's instructions thoroughly before sealing your project.

METROBRICK has a siloxane sealer – METRO GUARD - applied as part of a wax surface coating to the bricks for specific applications. If you require your bricks waxed, you can add METRO GUARD as part of the process.

Before Cleaning

Some cleaning solutions may cause a reaction with minerals in certain bricks, which can lead to staining or worsen existing stains.

Test a small area of the wall with the cleaner you are using at the proper strength. Use the exact cleaning procedure you will use to clean the entire wall. Rinse and let dry thoroughly to see if there are any adverse effects on the bricks.

Some chemicals may be harmful to plants and pets – use caution and read instructions carefully when cleaning an exterior surface with a cleaning product and rinsing with a hose or power washer.

General Cleaning

It is best to clean the brick on a cool, cloudy day to prevent detergent from drying on the bricks.

For general cleaning light dirt and stains off the brick, use a PH neutral to mild cleaner. Follow instructions for diluting the cleaner. Wet the wall down with water before scrubbing with the cleaning solution.

Use a stiff nylon bristle scrub brush to clean the wall, do not use a metal brush. Clean a section of the wall at a time – no more extensive than you can rinse before drying.

Most cleaners will work best if you let the cleaner work for 3- 5 minutes before rinsing. Rinse well with clean water and let dry.

Efflorescence

Efflorescence - Salt/mineral deposits left on the brick face by evaporated water.

Because METROBRICK and Royal Thin Brick are less than 5% absorption, the problem of efflorescence is unlikely. If efflorescence does appear, it has likely made its way through the mortar.

Efflorescence can sometimes be swept off with a dry brush.

You can also spray a solution of vinegar and water on the brick and scrub it with a nylon brush.

Mix equal parts of water and white vinegar in a spray bottle. Spray the solution onto the surface and let it sit for 5 minutes. Then, spray the bricks with the mixture again and use a stiff brush to scrub the efflorescence. Scrub in small, circular motions before rinsing the surface with fresh water.

Vinegar is acidic, test a small area first and thoroughly rinse off any treated area.

Pressure Washing Thin Brick

You can use a pressure washer and a neutral cleaner to clean away any stubborn stains and dirt that might occur on your METROBRICK or Royal Thin Brick wall over time.

Be careful not to use too high a water pressure. Also, make sure you stay 6" to 8" away from the surface. You may unintentionally wash away mortar between the joints. Test a small area before beginning on the entire wall.

Wet the brick before cleaning. Use a detergent nozzle or your pressure washer's detergent setting to apply a neutral or mild PH cleaner. Allow the cleaner to soak for 3- 5 minutes. Rinse thoroughly with clean water using a **45° (white) or 60° (black) spray tip**.

After cleaning, use a garden hose to saturate plants, shrubs, and grass to wash away any residue.

Using Acids and Other Harsh Chemicals for Tough Stains

There may be a time when the brick has deeply embedded stains that will not come off with a neutral cleaner. In cases like this, you may want to use something stronger.

Do not use any product containing hydrofluoric acid as it could negatively affect the bricks and the mortar. Do not use any unbuffered acid to clean METROBRICK and ROYAL Thin Brick.

There are products containing buffered acids that can be used with caution to clean heavy stains off brick.

Follow all product manufacturer's instructions for use and use only products recommended for cleaning brick.

Take precautions for surrounding vegetation. Wear Personal protective

equipment, including gloves, goggles and breathing apparatus. As always, test a small area first.

Rinse the bricks first, apply diluted product per manufacturers recommendations, scrub with a nylon brush and rinse thoroughly with clean water

Cleaning with caustic cleaners should not be done using a pressure washer.

Algae, Mold, and Mildew

You can use oxygenated bleach products to remove algae, mold and mildew growth that may occur.

Oxygenated bleach is generally safe to use but follow all manufacturer's instructions and precautions and use proper PPE. Follow cleaning instructions for general cleaning. Rinse bricks thoroughly.

Repairs

Proper installation of METROBRICK and Royal Thin Brick should result in little need for repair. If you find you do need to replace a cracked brick or fix an area of mortar, repairs should be straightforward.

The advantage of thin brick over a full brick wall is that the bricks are attached to a substrate - a veneer. If you need to make any repairs, it is isolated to the affected area - there is no effect on the stability of the surrounding brick.

For repairing thin brick and mortar, chisel out the affected area, make sure the section is free of any residue, replace the thin brick(s) and repoint or bag the mortar joints.

If the mortar is missing, you can tuckpoint in these areas with new mortar. Patching over cracked mortar is not recommended. The new mortar likely won't bond to the mortar underneath.

Any repair to mortar will likely result in a shade variation between the new and old mortar.