



## TECH TIP: TENT CLEANING TECHNIQUES

**T**ent cleaning is somewhat common sense, as are many of the other types of cleaning that occur daily. The ideas outlined below represent some of the more frequent suggestions and recommendations from various members of the tent cleaning community. These methods apply to vinyl tent fabric only.

Tent cleaning is usually performed by spreading the tent on a concrete pad or parking lot. Care must be taken to avoid rocks and all sharp objects that may punch holes or damage the fabric while the tent is being walked on during the cleaning process. We recommend The SHIPP TENT CLEANER for cleaning our double block-out fabric. This is normally diluted 1 to 10 for very dirty tents, and 1 to 20 for light films. The traditional methods of cleaning tents are:

- 1. Sponge, mop, or brush cleaning**
- 2. Rotary buffer**
- 3. Pressure washer**

The SHIPP TENT CLEANER should be applied liberally, flooding the surface area. Let it stand for at least one (1) minute before beginning to clean. TENT CLEANER contains surfactants that will penetrate the surface film during that time. Large tents should be cleaned in sections to prevent the cleaner from drying on the surface of the tent. On hot summer days, spritzing the surface with a garden hose will keep the surface wet and prevent the drying cleaner from staking or blotching the cleaning job.

Sponge, mop, or brush cleaning is the least aggressive on vinyl fabric. On newer tents where the vinyl is smooth, the films are easily cleaned with using this method. As the vinyl fabric ages, it becomes microscopically pitted and scratched. It tends to "hold" the dirt to the fabric, thus more aggressive cleaning may be desired.

Sometimes it may be necessary to use a rotary buffer to clean older tents. Be sure to use a small buffer with a 12" to 15" base. If a floor pad is used, use a white pad, or at the most, a red pad. Black or stripping pads are too aggressive and may damage the tent fabric.

If you use a pressure washer in the cleaning process, a lower PSI of 1000 to 1500 is desired. One of the dangers from higher pressure is blowing water into the scrim that may become unsightly mildew later. The pressure washer is used effectively for whitening the stitching, however for best results, pre-saturate with the tent cleaner and let it soak. Your most experienced person should be the one using the pressure washer on your tents so that damage does not occur during this process.

Clorox is never recommended for use cleaning. When mixed with other chemicals it may cause invisible, odorless, and deadly fumes. Clorox or chlorine can also rot stitching. Natural fibers are particularly sensitive to chlorine rotting.

Generally, care should be taken to test clean an inconspicuous small area.