

REMOVING STAINS

Specifically formulated tent cleaners, like our Tent Wash 101, are effective at washing away dirt and grime from tent vinyl, but they do not always remove stubborn stains tents can pick up when in use or in storage. However, there are several options for removing most stains from tent fabrics.

Mystery Stains.

Even purple berry bird droppings, among a variety of mystery stains can be removed with the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser. The eraser dissolves as you use it and can be somewhat tedious when cleaning large areas, but this product is a marvel. The Magic Eraser can be found in grocery stores; they work great on resin chairs as well.



Rust, Leaf, Hard Water and Mineral Stains.

CLR (Calcium Lime Rust remover) is an acid, but safe for vinyl. It dissolves any mineral deposits that are left on the surface. If your clear wall or windows have hard water residue, a weak dilution of CLR can remove those deposits as well.



Mildew Stains.

When a tent has bad mildew stains, a chlorine cleaner must be used. However, household liquid bleach, or sodium hypochlorite, is extremely corrosive. A more stable, stronger and safer chlorine solution is X-14 mildew remover. This solution does a better job of “killing” the roots or spores of the mildew. Always apply any chlorine to a dry fabric for better mildew removal. Only use chlorine when the tent has mildew stains. Chlorine does not whiten tent fabric like it does a cotton t-shirt. Extended or frequent use of bleach on vinyl fabric will rob the plasticizer and make the fabric stiff. Extended use of chlorine cleaners can also dry rot the polyester stitching on the seams with the help of ultraviolet sunlight.



Black Aluminum Stains.

Black stains from aluminum poles are eye sores. Liquid silver polish and tarnish remover removes the aluminum dust and does not have any harmful effects on the vinyl. Water-based silver tarnish polish is safest to use.



Duct Tape, Tar, Paint, Grease and Oil Stains.

These stains can be removed with a pure organic citrus solvent, like our Spotter 86. Do not use mineral spirits, Goof-Off or paint removers because these products, which are made from petroleum, will permanently yellow and pucker vinyl. If you have a yellow stain on your tent, it is more than likely that a petroleum-based product was used. If you are not sure, read the ingredients on the label; if it contains petroleum, do not use it.



Crepe Paper or Confetti Stains.

The dyes from colored paper can bleed deep into the vinyl and seem impossible to remove. Tent rental companies in sunny states like Arizona and Nevada have found that the ultraviolet light from the sun can bleach out the dye stains if you put the tents up in the sun for a few days. Infrared heating lamps used at meat carving stations will also work well to remove these stains. Just set the lamp the normal distance from the surface and let it sit for 20 minutes. The infrared light has also removed old set-in yellow mildew stains and leaf stains. This is a new remedy, so be careful not to let the vinyl overheat.



*Thanks to our friend Chuck Shipp for these tips.