

EFFLORESCENCE IN CONCRETE PAVERS

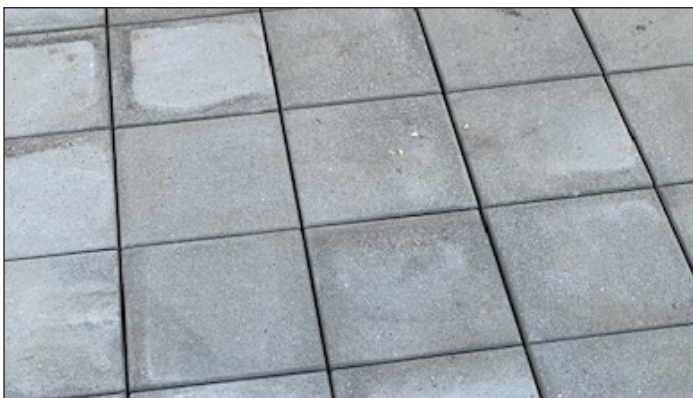
WHAT IS IT?

Efflorescence is a condition which appears as a white stain on concrete. It is a common occurrence in new concrete, created by sodium and sulfate compounds of several hydroxides, minerals, chlorides and nitrates which deposit on the surface and pores of concrete. It is the result of moisture evaporation and is most common on darker colored concrete and fabricated surfaces.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Efflorescence is caused by water - rain, humidity or ground water - that penetrates the paver and dissolves latent salt. Sun draws the salt in solutions to the surface and as moisture evaporates it is deposited on the surface.

There is no reason to be concerned that your pavers are damaged or defective. The concrete pavers are experiencing a natural process that occurs in all cement-based products. The condition will usually correct itself with time and exposure to the elements.



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HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

All concrete products contain cement which produces lime or water soluble calcium oxide. Lime can also be in the bedding of sand, aggregate base materials or soil. Although concrete pavers are solid, strong and very dense, they contain millions of microscopic capillaries that run from the interior to the surface. Moisture from rain, sprinkler systems, underground sources, poor site drainage or dew enters these microscopic capillaries. Calcium oxide inside the paver reacts with the water in the capillaries and forms calcium hydroxide. This rises to the surface, reacts with the carbon dioxide in the air and forms a white haze of calcium carbonate. When moisture on the surface evaporates, the white haze of efflorescence becomes visible.



CAN IT BE REMOVED?

Efflorescence in no way affects the structural integrity of concrete products and typically stops occurring after 18 to 24 months from production, depending on climate. Efflorescence may be cleaned with commercially available cleaners formulated for concrete pavers and should be performed immediately after efflorescence first appears.

Most cleaners contain acid and detergent, so be sure to follow all label directions and environmental regulations. Careless or improper cleaning can result in injury, damage and discoloration to the surface of the concrete pavers. Always conduct a test in a small, inconspicuous area before applying any cleaner to the entire area of concrete pavers. After cleaning, the pavers should be completely dry and free from efflorescence prior to applying any sealers.

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HOW TO CLEAN PAVERS

1. Dilute the cleaning solution with water per manufacturers recommendation (4 parts water, 1 part cleaner) and put solution into a pump style sprayer. (Any pump style sprayer is sufficient and are available at most hardware/home improvement stores)
2. Wet the area to be cleaned with clean water. Work small sections at a time, approximately 50-100 sq. ft. It is very important to keep the solution from drying on the surface, working small sections will help this.
3. Apply the cleaner via pump sprayer with a consistent even coat to the area to be cleaned, covering the entire surface. Upon contact with the efflorescence on the surface of the paver the solution will begin to foam.
4. Allow product to work for approximately 2 minutes. Agitate area with a poly bristle brush for best results.
5. Rinse the area via pressure washer with the low-pressure tip (white tip) while keeping the tip about 12" away from the surface to prevent "wash lines" on the surface.
6. After the initial rinse, rinse again working the washer west to east, then north to south or vice versa. This step is just further prevention for wash lines while ensuring the cleaner is completely rinsed from the surface.
7. Allow the surface to dry.
8. Once the surface is dry, if some efflorescence is still present, repeat steps 2-7 on those areas.
9. If some cleaner has dried on the surface, it can be removed with the same cleaning process as described above.



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