

Care and Cleaning

Some of the most frequently asked questions about Sunbrella fabrics concern care and cleaning. The good news is that Sunbrella is designed to be easy to maintain. By following a few simple care and cleaning steps, the fabric will maintain its good looks for many years.

Important Background

Sunbrella fabrics are made from 100 percent solution-dyed acrylic yarns. Solution-dyeing is the process of adding color to acrylic fibers during manufacturing while they are in a liquid state. This characteristic of Sunbrella fabrics is the key to locking in color, easy cleaning and long life.

Because Sunbrella fabrics are woven, they are also highly breathable, which is why they dry quickly with only air exposure. It's also important to know that Sunbrella fabrics are treated with a fluorocarbon finish, which enhances water repellency. This finish requires replenishment after vigorous cleaning.

Sunbrella fabrics will not support the growth of mildew, but dirt on the fabric can lead to mildew growth, which makes regular cleanings important. No set timetable exists for when fabric should be cleaned, and the local environment has a great deal to do with determining cleaning frequency. Cleaning is required less frequently in a dry environment than in a humid one with heavy foliage.

Sunbrella awning and marine fabrics carry a five-year limited warranty and Sunbrella furniture fabrics are warranted for three years. With proper care and cleaning, you can expect excellent service from Sunbrella fabrics far beyond warranty periods.

Cleaning

One of the best ways to keep Sunbrella fabrics looking good and to delay the need for deep or vigorous cleanings is to hose fabrics off on a monthly basis with clear water. This practice will help prevent dirt from becoming deeply imbedded in the fabric and eliminate the need for more frequent vigorous cleanings. In most environments, a thorough cleaning will be needed every two to three years.

When it's time for a thorough cleaning, Sunbrella fabrics can be cleaned while still on an awning frame or a boat or, size permitting, they can be removed for cleaning in a washing machine.

When cleaning Sunbrella fabrics, it is important to observe the following:

- Always use a natural soap (like dishwashing liquid). Never detergent.
- Water should be cold to lukewarm. Never more than 100 degrees.
- Air dry only. Never apply heat to Sunbrella fabrics.

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If you are cleaning Sunbrella while still on a frame or on a boat, follow these simple steps:

- Brush off loose dirt.
- Hose down.
- Prepare a cleaning mixture of water and mild, natural soap (no detergents).
- Use a soft bristle brush to clean.
- Allow soap to soak in.
- Rinse thoroughly.
- Air dry.

If stubborn stains persist, you can use a diluted chlorine bleach/soap mixture for spot cleaning of mildew, roof run-off and other similar stains (see the [Stain Chart](#) at end of this document for more specific recommendations).

Prepare a special cleaning mixture:

- Four ounces (half cup) of chlorine bleach.
- Two ounces (one-fourth cup) of natural soap.
- One gallon of water.
- Clean with soft bristle brush.
- Allow mixture to soak for up to 20 minutes.
- Rinse thoroughly.
- Air dry.
- Repeat if necessary.

Remember to protect the area around your Sunbrella if using a bleach solution. Carpet or other fabrics that are not Sunbrella may have an adverse reaction to the bleach.

If an awning or boat cover is suitable in size for a washing machine, these steps should be followed:

- Use only natural soaps. No detergent.
- Wash and rinse in cold water.
- Air dry. Never put Sunbrella fabrics in your dryer.

Re-treating the Fabric

As part of the finishing process, Sunbrella fabrics are treated with a fluorocarbon finish, which enhances water repellency. This finish is designed to last for several years, but must be replenished after a thorough cleaning. Based on test results, Glen Raven recommends 303 High Tech Fabric Guard™ as the preferred re-treatment product for Sunbrella fabrics. Fabrics should be retreated after thorough cleaning or after five years of use. Check with your local Sunbrella dealer or distributor for more information.

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Applying 303 High Tech Fabric Guard™

303 should be applied to Sunbrella fabrics after each thorough cleaning, which typically removes the original fluorocarbon finish and reduces the fabric's water repellancy. After cleaning the fabric, allow it to air dry completely and then apply 303 in a thin, even coat. After allowing the first coat of 303 to air dry, apply a second thin, even coating of 303. Two light coatings are more effective in restoring fabric water resistance than a single heavy coating. A 15-ounce bottle provides coverage of up to 50 square feet of lightweight fabric.

Professional Cleaners

You may have access to professional cleaning firms that service awnings. In evaluating the services of a professional firm, you should inquire about a firm's experience in working with Sunbrella fabrics and knowledge of cleaning and retreatment requirements.

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Stain Chart

Below are our recommended cleaning methods for Sunbrella for some of the most common and toughest stains.

STAIN	Recommended Cleaning Solutions
BEER	liquid detergent, white vinegar
BERRY	liquid detergent / ammonia (3-6% water)
BLOOD (DRIED)	detergent / ammonia (3-6% water)
BUTTER	volatile solvent (acetone)
CHARCOAL, PENCIL MARKS	vacuum, then liquid detergent
CATSUP OR MUSTARD	liquid detergent
CHEWING GUM	volatile solvent (acetone)
CHOCOLATE	liquid detergent, ammonia water
COFFEE	detergent, white vinegar, volatile solvent (acetone)
COLA	liquid detergent
CRAYON	paint, oil or grease remover
EGG (RAW)	liquid detergent
GRAPE JUICE	liquid detergent
GRAVY	liquid detergent
GREASE (CAR)	volatile solvent (acetone)
INK (PERMANENT, INDIA, BALLPOINT)	paint remover, volatile solvent (acetone), detergent
IRON RUST	oxalic or citrus acids, water
LIPSTICK	paint, oil or grease remover
MASCARA	paint remover, volatile solvent (acetone), detergent, water
MILDEW	1/2 cup of bleach and 1/4 cup natural soap per gallon of water
MILK	liquid detergent
NAIL POLISH	volatile solvent (acetone)
OIL	volatile solvent (acetone)
ORANGE DRINK	liquid detergent, water
PAINT (LATEX) WET	liquid detergent, water

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STAIN	Recommended Cleaning Solutions
PAINT (LATEX) DRIED	paint, oil or grease remover
PAINT (OIL OR LACQUER)	paint, oil or grease remover
SHOE POLISH (LIQUID)	volatile solvent (acetone)
SHOE POLISH (WAX)	apply heated iron over towel, volatile solvent (acetone)
SUNTAN LOTION	Pine Power® or pine oil detergent
TEA	liquid detergent
TOMATO JUICE	liquid detergent
TREE SAP	turpentine, liquid detergent
URINE	liquid detergent, white vinegar
VOMIT	detergent, water, white vinegar
WATER COLOR	liquid detergent, water, white vinegar
WAX (CANDLE)	apply heated iron over towel, volatile solvent (acetone)
WINE	liquid detergent / ammonia (3-6% water), white vinegar