

Headstone Restoration and Cleaning

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PLEASE NOTE: The use of improper cleaning materials and practices can cause serious and irreparable damage to the stone. The enclosed suggestions are from Monument dealers and Cleaning Agents. Their opinions sometimes vary and the City of Weyburn takes no responsibility nor personally guarantees any will work on your stone. Proceed with caution when cleaning your headstone. When in doubt, consult a professional.

TIPS FOR CLEANING YOUR STONE:

- #1) Evaluate the general condition of the monument. It is not recommended to attempt to clean if the surface exhibits any cracks, flaking, scaling or eroding granular services.
- #2) Determine the type of soiling to remove. This could include carbonaceous or soil, urban grime, dirt, organic algae, fungi, mosses, metallic stains, oils, or efflorescence (salts).
- #3) Initiate cleaning with the least aggressive method; gentle clean water rinsing. If washing alone is not sufficient, carefully proceed with the use of a selected material to facilitate cleaning.
- #4) Test the selected cleaning method on an inconspicuous area on the monument before proceeding.
- #5) Pre-wet monument with water before application of chemical cleaning solution. Chemical cleaners can damage the polish on polished stones.
- #6) Clean from the bottom to the top to avoid streak staining on the stone. Periodically rinse off. Rinse thoroughly with water when done to remove all residue of the cleaning agent. Do not allow cleaning solutions to dry on monument.
- #7) Do not assume that a cleaning procedure that is effective on one monument will be effective on others.

TOOLS REQUIRED:

Gloves (a must when using chemicals)
Soft natural bristle brushes
Nylon brushes
Tooth brushes
Q-tips
Sponges
Wooden & Plastic spatulas

CLEANING MATERIALS:

SOAPS

Ivory or any household detergents (both liquids and powders) are **not** recommended for cleaning. They are rendered insoluble by calcium ions present in masonry and hard water. They also produce free alkali and fatty acid salts in the stone.

DO USE: Zylol, Lgepal, Triton X-100, Tergitol (they are electrically neutral cleaning agents that do not contain or contribute to the formation of soluble salts.) Available from conservation, janitorial and photographic suppliers. *A suggested solution is one ounce to 5 gallons of water.*

COMET: After having said the above, one of the cleaning suppliers recommended comet for general cleaning and moss removal. This supplier does not use any chemical based cleaners.

ACIDS

Acetic Acid (vinegar) is less aggressive than other acids and is recommended for the removal of general soiling.

Oxalic Acid is effective on light-coloured granite for the removal of rust stains in a solution of one pound to one gallon of water. It is available in Hardware stores.

Sodium Hypochlorite (Clorox) is recommended for the removal of biological growth. Beware it can cause the formation and deposition of soluble salts in stone.

Calcium Hypochlorite (Chlorine) is effective for the removal of biological growth in a solution of one ounce to one gallon of hot water. It is available from Swimming Pool Suppliers.

Ammonia is particularly effective as a cleaning agent, for light coloured stones that have biological growth.

Algaecide is effective in the removal of stubborn black algae.

Hydrochloric or Muriatic Acid is especially useful in removing moss. Use in a solution of one ounce to one gallon of hot water. Extreme caution when mixing, mix very slowly. Paint on, then spray off with water. Repeat if necessary. Available at any hardware store or drug store. Beware, may result in causing rust staining and soluble salt deposits in stone.

T.S.P. (Tri-sodium phosphate) is a commercial cleaner. Available in hardware stores. Instructions on container.

PREVENTION:

- Yearly general cleaning of stone.
- Once the stone has been cleaned, it was suggested to put a silicone water proofing on top to seal it. Available at auto or hardware store.
- Said by some to be a myth, other swear by it, to wrap a 20 gauge of copper wire around the base of the stone to keep moss from growing in the future.
- Consult professional cleaning agents.

Compiled by Barbara A. Manson, Parks Supervisor
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