



# TECHO — BLOC

INSPIRING ARTSCAPES

## CARE & MAINTENANCE

CUSTOMER GUIDE — 2020



# Contents

A message from our President > 5

## A standard of care > 6

General Maintenance	6
Cleaning Basics	7
Don't forget about the joints	7

## Managing stains > 8

Foliage and Organic Debris	8
Rust	8
Food and Beverage	8
Oil and Grease	8

## What you need to know > 10

Efflorescence and White Deposit	10
Colors	10
Sealing	11
Winter Care	11



# A message from our President

Thank you for choosing Techo-Bloc.

As a new Techo-Bloc product owner, we want to ensure that you are setup and well educated on how to care for and maintain your investment so that you can fully enjoy the benefits of Techo-Bloc products. Although concrete products are built for the outdoor elements and require minimal maintenance, your pavers, slabs, or walls still need some tender loving care from their owner.

To ensure that the beauty of the product lasts, and to avoid any unexpected issues, the secret is simple: take care of your products. Prepare them in the fall for winter and get them ready for summer in spring. I personally, have seasonal routines to keep them maintained all year long so that I can benefit from the longevity of my products for decades to come. To avoid organic staining, I sweep away the leaves from my pavement regularly. In areas that are prone to leaves falling, sweep more frequently and



perhaps consider sealing your pavers, this will help the product to be more stain resistant. In the winter, I make it a point not to over salt them as this can burn the product and isn't great for our environment. In the spring, I lightly wash my pavement to remove all the debris and dirt that built-up under the snow over the winter. In the summer, I keep my paving stones neat by simply brooming and rinsing off built-up dirt or food with a garden hose. A little effort goes a long way and will keep your products looking how they were destined to be.

We take pride in manufacturing the best products on the market. We want you to enjoy your investment to the very fullest.

Take a few minutes to read through this package. It will help you understand what to expect of concrete products, how to care for them, and what goes into maintaining the beauty and integrity of our products.

We hope you love your products as much as we love creating them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Ciccarello'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Charles Ciccarello,  
President and CEO

# A standard of care

The care of high-quality concrete products is similar to the care of any product left exposed to the elements 365 days and nights per year. Just the way you get your home and yards ready for winter and summer, the same applies to your paving stones. They too require cleaning and maintenance.

It is contrary to Techo-Bloc's SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) to be involved in the care of a mature pavement or retaining structure. Care, as mentioned above, is the responsibility of the owner.

To get the most from your investments, take care of them and they'll take care of you.

## General Maintenance ---

The general maintenance of your hardscape products is minimal, but significant. Certain environmental circumstances may involve some additional care and maintenance but being consistent with the little up-keeps avoids more elaborate maintenance in the future. Remember that concrete is porous. When the leaves begin to fall, sweep them off your pavers to avoid organic stains. When you see dirt on your patio, take a few minutes to hose it off and keep it clean.

Very mild cleaning using various household products such as detergents, water and product specific chemicals is sometimes necessary (like cleaning patio furniture, a vehicle's chrome, plastic, or paint, etc.) to enhance their presence and charm. Sealers of all types are available for additional protection from acid rain, stains and nature's worst. For questions on industry-specific cleaners and sealers, see your local hardscape dealer/distributor, contact your contractor, or contact us directly.

Not a DIYer? Contact a local professional. There are many companies that specialize in the maintenance of segmental concrete pavements and retaining walls that can be referred by your local distributor.



## Cleaning Basics

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### › HOW OFTEN

Clean your paved area when you see that it is necessary. Again, sweep leaves off your pavement regularly to avoid staining. Hose down your pavers to remove any dirt or debris that have stuck on. When the snow melts, a thorough, overall spring-cleaning and a light product shampoo or dishwashing soap works best to get your pavers ready to enjoy all summer long.

### › WHAT TO USE

Depending on the case, different cleaners are sold for different purposes. For maximum results, be sure to use the right professional or properly diluted household products.

If you choose to use an industry cleaner, be sure to read and follow the labels carefully. We recommend Alliance Gator or Flexlock hardscape cleaning products.

### › WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid wire brushes and strong acids like sulfuric and muriatic as this can do serious damage to a concrete paver. Acids should be limited to professional use only.

### › ABOUT PRESSURE WASHERS

The improper use of a pressure washer may permanently etch the surface of your paving stones, steps or retaining walls. Pressure washers producing more than 2,500 psi should be used by professionals only for the cleaning of your paved surface. If using a machine producing less than 2,500 psi, the use of a wide fan tip ( 25° or wider) is highly recommended. Narrower tips may cause irreversible damage. Consider the use of cleaners and detergents in conjunction with a pressure washer to obtain the best results. Often, cleaning solutions are effective for stain removal and general maintenance with very little water pressure required.



Damage caused by the improper use of a pressure washer is not covered by Techo-Bloc's warranty.

## Don't forget about the joints

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The joints between paving stones are the most vulnerable areas, especially after a new installation. Damp, shaded areas between stones, are prone to moss and weed growth. We highly recommend that paving stone joints be filled with polymeric sand (or aggregates for permeable installations) to avoid this scenario from happening.

Moss in your joints? Try using 5 parts water to 1-part chlorine bleach to remove the moss. Apply the mixture with a watering can or siphon sprayer, lightly scrub with a nylon brush and rinse well. To resolve the problem permanently, consider professional advice to correct the moisture that encourages the growth of moss. Commercial products do exist that can help remove moss, mold and mildew such as Alliance Gator M3 Cleaner. This product also inhibits new growth.

When using a garden hose to clean the joints of a paved area, direct the hose diagonally at the surface on a 30-degree angle. Never parallel to the joints as the strength of the water stream may be too harsh and may dislocate the polymeric sand.



# Managing stains

How to avoid them, how to remove them.

## Foliage and Organic Debris

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Naturally, you cannot control the leaves that find their way on your beautiful patio, but you can make sure they don't stay there. We recommend that you sweep away dead leaves regularly in the fall. Concrete is a porous material that can potentially absorb pigments from leaves, petals and buds from trees/shrubs. Leaf stains can be tougher to remove if they stay on the pavers beneath the snow through the winter. If you live in an area that is prone to more foliage, consider sealing your paved area. Sealing can make the product more stain resistant and easier to keep clean. (See page 11 for more information regarding sealers.)

Depending on the type of product you have, our remedies vary. See below our recommendations on how to remove organic stains.

**Wet-Cast products:** Mix 1 lbs of pool shock with 4 gallons of water, add a few drops of dish soap. Put mixture in a pump sprayer and spray affected areas. Scrub with a nylon brush and rinse off.

**Dry-Cast products:** Mix 4 parts bleach with 6 parts water, add a few drops of dish soap. Apply mixture on affected area, scrub with a nylon brush and rinse off.

## Rust

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Some fertilizers contain iron that can leave stains on the surface of your patio. After spreading lawn or plant fertilizer, be sure to sweep the surface of your pavement to prevent rust spots.

Rust stains from steel, fertilizer or high iron content water can be removed using professional products such as Gator Rust Remover®.

## Food and Beverage

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Food or beverages (like wine) spilled on the pavement should be removed quickly and the area should be rinsed with warm water right away. Liquid dish soap or laundry detergent will remove most food and beverage stains on pavers. Mix a solution of the soap or detergent with warm water and gently brush stain away with a cloth or a soft-bristled brush that you have dipped into the mixture.

## Oil and Grease

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Light oil and grease stains can generally be removed with an application of liquid dish soap. Directly apply the soap to the affected area and let sit for 20-30 minutes, scrub with a nylon brush and rinse with hot water. Re-apply and repeat until stain is removed. If it is a fresh stain, lightly rub the area with a clean rag or paper towel.

If an area is heavily soiled, a professional product such as Gator Oil and Grease Removal® may be used. Please refer to product instructions.



# What you need to know

## Efflorescence and White Deposit

Efflorescence is a whitish residue that sometimes appears on the surface of concrete products. Occasionally, the salts from the cement and aggregates that are embedded in the product are dislodged by absorbed water and transported to the surface where the water will evaporate, and the salts will be left behind. It is normal and common in concrete and other masonry products that contain cement. Typically, efflorescence will stop developing in approximately 90 days but could take 18 to 24 months after the manufacturing process.

Efflorescence is, in simpler terms, salt evaporating from the raw material and aggregates that were used to make the concrete paving stones. The evaporating salt that does surface will dissipate naturally and will weather off with time as exposure to the elements wash it away. The concrete is experiencing a natural process which is not harmful to Techo-Bloc pavers or walls nor is it a product defect.

### TESTING FOR EFFLORESCENCE

A good way to test for efflorescence is to wet the surface. If the white residue disappears but reappears when dry, it is water soluble efflorescence. If the deposit is still visible when wet, it may be a different type of mineral deposit like lime or calcium. Those types of mineral deposits (although not detrimental to the product) should be cleaned by professional cleaners.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Although Techo-Bloc does not recommend cleaning efflorescence less than 1 year after installation, there are interventions you can choose to exercise to expedite removal of the exposed surface salt.

Please note that improper use of efflorescence cleaners can risk damaging the product. This is not a prescribed method advised by Techo-Bloc and it may void your product warranty.

Efflorescence may be cleaned with commercially available cleaners formulated specifically for concrete pavers. Most cleaners contain acid and detergents, 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. If you do not feel comfortable to clean this yourself there are professional contractors you can hire to clean your products. Refer to your hardscape installer or dealer for referrals.

Recommended efflorescence cleaners: Gator Efflorescence Cleaner® or FlexLock Efflorescence Cleaner®. Concrete product manufacturers are unable to warrant against the presence of efflorescence.

## Colors

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TONES & COLORS?

The Stonedge™ Collection products are manufactured using a wet cast manufacturing process to closely resemble the sculpted attributes of natural stone. Natural ingredients are present within the recipe to allow for a range in tones, veining and textures from one stone to another. For an authentic look, each color option is therefore, composed of a variety of darker and lighter tones.

## Sealing

Sealing pavers, slabs and walls can help improve the beauty of your products much like waxing a car. Doing so can also make the product more stain-resistant and easier to keep clean. However, the quality of Techo-Bloc products is not compromised if they are not sealed.

Depending on your environment, it may be a good idea to consider sealing your paved area. Sealing will not avoid stains but will make it a lot easier to clean them off. Think of it as a protective barrier. The stain sits on top of sealer instead of penetrating into the concrete. For example, if you're in an area where there are many trees, more leaves will fall onto the paved area resulting in possibly more organic stains forming over the seasons.

If you're planning on adding a grilling area, counter tops or walls for a grill island to your project, then that area would be prone to food and grease stains. There are many different types of sealers on the market, however, there are two categories of sealers.

### HERE'S A BREAKDOWN:

Penetrating Sealers	Film Forming Sealers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Should be used in areas that are prone to stains</li> <li>&gt; Generally last 5-10 years</li> <li>&gt; Penetrates deeper into the product</li> <li>&gt; Better, long term choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; More for aesthetic appearance               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May enhance product color</li> <li>- Gives a wet look</li> <li>- Deepens or darkens color</li> </ul> </li> <li>&gt; Generally, lasts 3-5 years</li> <li>&gt; Does not penetrate into the product as much</li> </ul>

We recommend looking into Alliance and Flexlock sealers.

Please consult your sealer manufacturer to find out how soon you should seal your pavers after they've been installed.

Please note that using the wrong sealer stripper can prematurely age the product.

## Winter Care

Just like ready-mix concrete and asphalt pavements, Techo-Bloc pavers can be plowed and shoveled. In fact, the edges and joints around the pavers assist in melting snow and ice. Using de-icing salts or other agents (sodium chloride, calcium chloride or magnesium chloride) to melt snow and ice will not harm Techo-Bloc paving stones. De-icing salts should be applied sparingly on areas that have snow or ice only (never directly on the product as this can damage the stones over time). Do not use products that contain a blend of chemicals.

When using a contractor for snow removal, it is recommended to verify that their equipment uses Teflon blades to avoid scratching the pavers. For permeable pavements, it is not recommended to use traction aid grit (for slip/skid resistance) as they can scratch the surface of the stones. Stonedge™ Collection products can also be plowed however; the use of de-icing salt is not recommended.

When preparing your outdoor paved area for the winter season (including the closing of your pool), keeping your products equally exposed to the elements is important. For example, a pool cover installed over a portion of the pool deck (i.e. pool coping and first few feet of paved surface) for months at a time will affect the product's exposure to light, the elements, dirt and debris. This may result in a difference in appearance over time.

Uniform exposure to the elements will keep your project looking great for years to come.

### Need more assistance? Have more questions?

We have a team dedicated to ensuring your satisfaction.

To submit an after-sales support form, please visit: [www.techo-bloc.com/client-support](http://www.techo-bloc.com/client-support)

For all other inquiries, please call 1.877.832.4625.

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