

6. Using Metallic-Coated Steel Sheet

GalvInfoNote

6.4

Successfully Maintaining Structures Clad With Prepainted Metallic-Coated Steel Sheet

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Introduction

This GalvInfoNote offers advice on the maintenance of buildings and enclosures clad with prepainted metallic-coated steel sheet so as to help maximize service life. The prevention of unintended and accelerated corrosion of the surface of prepainted sheet is the focus of this article. As building design and construction practices are extremely important in achieving this goal, *GalvInfoNotes 4.2 and 6.2* should also be reviewed.

Maintenance

Simple maintenance of the panels on the building involves washing with water from time to time. This is not usually necessary for installations where the panels experience rainfall such as a roof. But, in protected exposure areas, such as the soffit and wall sections beneath eaves, washing every six months is beneficial to remove corrosive salts and debris from the surface of the panels.

Care with washing is needed.

- Do not use strong cleansers as these may damage the paint.
- Do not use scouring powders, as these assuredly will damage the paint surface.
- One cup of a mild non-abrasive detergent (one that contains less than 0.5% phosphate) dissolved into five gallons of water is a common cleaning agent.
- If mildew or other fungal growth is present, a recommended cleanser is one gallon of household bleach in five gallons of water along with one cup of mild soap to aid wetting.
- Never use a hard bristle brush; use only a very soft bristle brush or a soft cloth
- After cleaning, wash the surface thoroughly with clean water.

It is recommended that any cleaning be done by first "test cleaning" a small surface area in a location that is not boldly exposed to be certain that satisfactory results are achieved.

Also, for roofing applications, the removal of loose debris such as leaves, dirt or building effluent (dust or other residues around roof vents), etc., is important. Even if these residues do not contain corrosive chemicals, they prevent the quick drying that is vital for a long-life roof.

Another thing to be careful about – don't use a metal bladed shovel to remove snow from roofs. This can cause severe scratching of the paint.

Prepainted metallic-coated steel sheet for buildings is designed to provide many years of problem free service. Eventually, however, all paint coatings will change in appearance, perhaps to a degree that requires repainting. Recommendations for repainting weathered coil-coated building panels are given in *GalvInfoNote 4.3*.

Summary

Prepainted metallic-coated steel sheet has been successfully used for decades in various climates for building cladding (roofs and walls). With proper selection of the paint system, careful design of the building, and regular maintenance, long and trouble-free service is achieved.

References:

- 1) "Stelcolour Prefinished Sheet Steel for Building Construction", Technical Bulletin 23/December 1983, published by Stelco Inc.

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