



Care & Maintenance Guide  
Module: AM-001

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Dec-Tec is a watertight, walkable PVC membrane roof/deck system.

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## 1.0 CARE & MAINTENANCE

If you're reading this, you have likely purchased Dec-Tec™ for your outdoor living space and are wondering how to best protect your investment.

Maintenance on conventional wood and concrete decks can be both time consuming and expensive because there is usually more than just a surface cleaning required.

By choosing Dec-Tec™, you can avoid the cost and time normally associated with annual deck maintenance as Dec-Tec™ vinyl membrane surfaces take only minutes to inspect and clean. A well cared for and maintained waterproof vinyl decking surface will protect the underlying structure and living space for years to come.

Dec-Tec™ PVC membranes have provided reliable waterproof protection for over 30 years and are specifically designed to protect the integrity of both the building envelope as well the deck. Dec-Tec™ is an approved, pedestrian traffic, roof grade membrane that is professionally installed for warranted waterproof protection.

To keep your deck looking and performing the same as the day it was installed and to protect your warranty coverage, Dec-Tec™ recommends homeowners follow a simple routine of performing annual inspections and seasonal cleanings.



## 1.1 ANNUAL INSPECTION

### **Early spring is a great time to inspect your vinyl decking.**

Spring has finally sprung! You can feel it in the air and see it on the thermostat. The weather is improving, and the air is turning from cold to warm. It is time to shake off the winter blues and get active again.

This is the time people want to be outdoors to entertain and relax, so now is the perfect time to make sure your porches, patios, decks, and yards are ready to enjoy.

Before you do anything else, it is important to do a thorough visual inspection to make sure there is no damage after the winter season.

- ✓ Check the entire structure including the underside of the deck (if possible) for rot, mildew, and for nails or fasteners that may have popped up.
- ✓ Check railings that can get loose over time.
- ✓ Pay special attention in climates where heavy snow loads accumulate as it can lead to potential structural issues that may need to be addressed.

Over time, wood, or concrete structures to which the vinyl membrane is applied can shrink, shift, or crack which can influence the function and performance of the decking system. Routine inspections are designed to proactively uncover any such concerns before they present a problem.

### **Areas of Concern? Call a Dec-Tec Professional.**

The focus of the inspection is to ensure the system is still fully waterproof to avoid any unexpected water infiltration. Whether you have a small balcony, average sized deck, or an expansive rooftop terrace, significant and costly repairs due to leaks and water intrusion can be avoided through routine inspection.

During your deck inspection, if you should notice any structural issues, water damage, or suspect there may even be a potential for leaking, you will be best served by contacting a Dec-Tec™ Professional to further assess the situation.

It is the homeowner's responsibility to routinely inspect the Dec-Tec™ system. Dec-Tec™ has prepared the following checklist to assist you.

### **Inspection Checklist:**

- ✓ Where possible check the entire deck structure, including the framing and substrate and the underside of the deck looking for signs of damage, decay, rot, mildew, insect or rodent infestation, water intrusion, loose fasteners etc.
- ✓ Check for any implications or concerns due to shifting, settling, shrinking, or cracking of the decks underlying structure that may affect the function and performance of the decking system.
- ✓ Check railing systems to make sure fasteners that connect it to the deck system have not loosened. If you are considering upgrading your existing railing system, give strong consideration to choosing aluminum over wood as maintenance can be significantly reduced by avoiding the wood option.

- ✓ Inspect the operation of vent openings to prevent rodent intrusion.
- ✓ Check the stability and condition of stairs, deck support posts and ledger boards (where the deck attaches to the house).
- ✓ Inspect gutters or eaves trough that may have pulled away from the building or for gutter seams that may have separated.
- ✓ Check exterior water outlets, bibs, and faucets in proximity to the deck for cracks or leaks and repair as needed.
- ✓ Check the deck slope as the building or the deck structure may settle, shrink, or shift over time creating the potential for issues. The deck should have positive slope (recommended 2% slope) away from the building to avoid pooling water.
- ✓ Inspect drains and scuppers for any damage and test them to ensure they are functioning properly.
- ✓ Inspect the overall deck surface looking for any signs of physical damage to the vinyl membrane (burns, rips, tears, cuts, scuffing, etc.).
- ✓ Inspect the condition of all thermally heat welded seams.
- ✓ Check flashings, particularly where the deck and the house meet and along the deck perimeter to ensure everything is secure without any signs of damage or deterioration.
- ✓ Closely inspect all areas where caulking or sealants were applied to ensure they are still in place and have not deteriorated. Pay particular attention to doorways, entryways, termination points, railing system attachments and posts. Re-caulk or seal where missing or worn away.

## 1.2 SEASONAL CLEANING

Just as cleaning the interior of your home is necessary after a long winter, it is also important that you get your outdoor living spaces ready for the various seasons. To look its best, it's suggested that your Dec-Tec™ vinyl deck should be cleaned at least twice per year. You may want to increase the frequency of cleanings if the area you live in experiences higher exposure to airborne pollutants or acidic rain.

With the majority of Dec-Tec™ vinyl deck installations being outdoors, they experience the typical wear and tear of simply being outside. Since it is a flat surface, it will invariably get dirty over time from exposure to airborne particles, falling leaves, foot traffic, soils from planters, and general day to day usage.

The approach to cleaning is somewhat dependent on the type of soiling or dirt. Dec-Tec™ recommends taking a simple approach for seasonal spring and fall cleanings and offers alternative suggestions when a more aggressive tact is needed to contend with stubborn stains.

Here are some simple recommendations for cleaning of your vinyl deck:



## Spring Cleaning:

With your spring inspection complete and issues tended to, you will likely be anxious to clean and prepare your deck for the warm weather ahead.

Chances are, if you cleaned your deck the previous fall that you will only need to give it a gentle scrub each spring. If you have used rock salt or other ice melting chemicals throughout the winter months, you will certainly need to give your deck a thorough cleaning before the sun has a chance to 'bake' any of those chemicals into the surface.

Spring cleaning should take place prior to putting out your mats, patio furniture, planters, and decorations.

Here are a few simple tips for cleaning your Dec-Tec™ vinyl surface:

1. Use a soft-bristled push broom or leaf blower to remove loose dirt and debris.



2. Use a garden hose or bucket of clean water to wet down the entire deck surface to soften any dried debris. This step will work even better if you use warm water.
3. Use a gentle bristle brush scrubbing in a circular motion to loosen dirt from the surface. You will not need any soap or cleaner to clean a vinyl membrane, just some water and a gentle bristle brush!
4. Finally, rinse off the entire deck area with a garden hose and allow to dry. Be sure to rinse off all cleaning residue thoroughly as sunshine can cause a reaction with cleaning agents.
5. Assess the effectiveness of the cleaning. The above steps will generally remove most forms of dirt. If there is still dirt in the texture of the membrane, you may need to repeat steps 1-4.

**Note:** You can utilize a light duty pressure washer to assist with the above, just make sure to exercise caution. Refer to section 1.3 Pressure Washing for further detail.

**DISCLAIMER:** Dec-Tec™ will NOT be held responsible for any damages caused from cleaning Dec-Tec™ membranes with any cleaning solution other than clean fresh water.

### Cleaning Products (Optional):

Dec-Tec™ recommends using a mild, eco-friendly cleaning agent and to always follow the manufacturers' recommendations for use. If you want to use a cleaner, your best option is to use a cleaning product that states it is safe for use on vinyl.

Here are a few popular examples:

- Dawn Liquid Dish Soap (diluted)
- Scotts Outdoor Oxi-Cleaner
- Tide Detergent (diluted)
- Simple Green Oxy Solve Deck and Fence Cleaner



### Fall Winterizing:

For some fall is a time to put away the outdoor furniture, clean out the planters, and get ready to watch the snow pile up on the deck until the spring thaw. For others it is a time to enjoy the deck in other ways, with outdoor heaters, fire pits, and holiday décor. Either way, it is important to prepare your deck for your winter activity.

Here are a few simple tips for winterizing your Dec-Tec™ vinyl surface:

#### Clear:

Begin your winter preparation by clearing off your deck or patio. Clearing the surface of deck will also reduce the chance of discoloration and degradation and will set you up nicely for an easy spring inspection and cleaning.

- ✓ Stow away patio furniture. Some outdoor furniture such as synthetic wicker and aluminum furniture can stay, but clean it well, stack it, and cover it off to one side. Steel furniture or accessories can rust and stain the surface of the deck, so it is best to store them elsewhere. If you need to leave them on the deck, try elevating them on small blocks or disks.

- ✓ Clean and remove flowerpots and planters. Pots and planters are prone to leaving circular stains if left in one place for extended periods. Moving planters intermittently during the season and removing them in the fall will help prevent isolated soil stains and make the cleaning process easier.
- ✓ Remove outdoor fountains, decorative accessories, and other paraphernalia. Items sitting unmoved on an exterior surface for a long period of time are a magnet for moisture. Removing them will help them last longer.
- ✓ Pack up and store the grill, summer toys, watering cans, chemicals, and plant foods that you will not be using to a shed or elsewhere, if possible.
- ✓ Remove any floor coverings such as area rugs and door mats from the deck surface.
- ✓ Remove any piles of firewood, stone, or other debris from around the deck to avoid rodent, insect, termite, or spider infestation.
- ✓ Prune trees, hedges, shrubs, and other vegetation to a minimum of 12 inches away from the deck to avoid insect infestation and hard-to-clean sap.
- ✓ Certain tree saps can be very difficult to remove and organic debris like leaves and pine needles left to sit for extended periods can stain as they decompose.

## **Clean:**

While it is easy to take this off the to-do list until spring, a gentle scrub now can make your spring clean a lot easier. Simply follow the same procedures used during the spring cleaning.

1. Use a soft-bristled push broom or leaf blower to remove loose dirt and debris. Defer cleaning if possible until most leaves have fallen from the trees. Be sure to remove any organic matter from the surface of the deck before it starts to decompose. The tannic acids found in decomposing organic matter can lead to stains on your vinyl deck that can be difficult to remove or cause permanent discoloration.
2. Use a garden hose or bucket of clean water to wet down the entire deck surface to soften any dried debris. This step will work even better if you use warm water.
3. Use a stiff bristle brush scrubbing in a circular motion to loosen dirt from the surface.
4. Finally, rinse off the entire deck area with a garden hose and allow to dry. Be sure to rinse off all cleaning residue thoroughly as sunshine can cause a reaction with cleaning agents.
5. Assess the effectiveness of the cleaning. The above steps will generally remove most forms of dirt. If there is still dirt in the embossment (texture) of the membrane, you may need to repeat steps 1-4.



### 1.3 PRESSURE WASHING

Pressure washing equipment can be used to assist with cleaning but can severely damage vinyl deck membrane if not used with caution. Any damage to Dec-Tec™ vinyl deck membranes caused during washing operations is not covered under warranty. The building owner assumes all risk for damage to the vinyl deck membrane during the cleaning process. Again, use extreme caution in performing the work.

If a pressure washer is used, please keep the following considerations in mind:

- ✓ Do not exceed a max PSI of 1500.
- ✓ Maintain a minimum distance of 12" between nozzle and the vinyl membrane.
- ✓ Use a wide tip nozzle. Do not use any pressure washer tip with less than a 30° arc. Tips with a concentration angle smaller than 30° can cause damage.
- ✓ Do not use a rotating tip apparatus.
- ✓ Use extreme caution when spraying near thermally heat welded seams, railing posts, caulking's, sealants, flashings, and house trims.
- ✓ Thermally heat welded seams are typically installed shingle fashion with the slope of the deck towards the outside perimeters. Do not power wash or scrub against the seam, instead go over the top or parallel to it.

### 1.4 WINTER CONSIDERATIONS

What do you do when a winter storm hits, and snow piles up on your deck? Snow and ice can make your deck treacherous, and many homeowners would suggest it is best to remove them. Unfortunately, improper snow removal can cause serious damage. Here are some things you should know about snow and ice removal before the weather turns cold and stormy.

#### **Do you really need to remove that snow?**

you may have heard before that snow and ice should be removed from your deck to prevent damage from moisture and avoid a collapse caused by excessive weight. In truth, you have a high-quality waterproof surface that will adequately prepare it for snow—and if your deck is structurally sound, it should be able to handle a lot of weight, so you shouldn't worry unless you get an overabundance of snow. Typically, that isn't a problem, but there are exceptions.

Of course, you can slip on any amount of snow and ice, so if you suspect your deck is too dangerous to walk on after a storm, you may want to keep off it entirely.

If you winterize your deck before the worst weather comes, your deck should stay in good condition throughout the winter. Others might suggest it is a good idea to still remove the ice and snow. Snow can be a safety risk if there is any foot traffic on your deck, and there's no reason not to do something about it, you just need to do it carefully.



### Snow and ice removal tips:

What are the dos and don'ts when it comes to dealing with snow and ice on your deck? Here are a few tips that we think are the most important. Keep in mind that every deck is constructed differently, so proper methods may vary based on the specifics of your deck.

- ✓ **Do not use a metal shovel.** You might scratch your deck if you are not careful. Use a shovel that has a plastic blade. If you do happen to use a metal shovel because that's your only option, then try to leave a thin layer of snow on top of the surface rather than letting your metal shovel come in direct contact with the deck. Always inspect your shovel for any sharp or jagged edges prior to use.
- ✓ **Shovel parallel to thermally heat welded seams.** Shoveling across seams rather than parallel to them increases the risk that your shovel will catch an edge and damage the surface.
- ✓ **Use a broom for light snow.** If snow is fluffy and less than four inches deep, it is easy to brush it away with a simple broom rather than risking scratching your deck with a shovel.
- ✓ **Do not try to shatter ice on your deck.** As tempting as it is to eliminate it, this can damage the deck, especially if you are banging on it with a metal shovel.
- ✓ **Use the right ice melt product for your deck type.** Check what products are safe for your material. Do not use any product with a colorant added as this may stain your deck. It is safe to use de-icing agents such as rock salt, just make sure you rinse it off once the snow is gone.

- ✓ **Do not put sand on a vinyl deck.** Some people recommend sand as an alternative to chemical ice melts for preventing slippage, but like any abrasive substance, sand can scratch the vinyl and accelerate the wearing away of inks, thus diminishing the aesthetic appearance.
- ✓ **Push snow rather than lifting.** This tip applies to shoveling anywhere not just on your deck. It is easy to strain your back while trying to lift snow off a deck.
- ✓ **Remove icicles that hang over your deck.** Icicles that form on your roof may fall onto your deck—and because they are sharp, they can damage the surface.
- ✓ Exercise extra caution when ice is present and hold onto the railing when walking on your deck.



## 1.5 STAIN REMOVAL

It might result from your annual inspection or get noticed during one of the seasonal cleanings, or perhaps it might just happen out of the blue, either way, it is almost inevitable that at some point you will be faced with the challenge of removing a stubborn stain from your deck surface.

### **Accidents happen - Be prepared to tackle tough stains!**

Oops' you spilled something and while attempting to wipe it off it has left you with a stain. There are a few tips we can suggest for you on how to remove them.

Your Dec-Tec™ surface is quite durable and can withstand a good firm cleaning. Extreme care should still be exercised when attempting to remove stains. Avoid trying to scrape off stains using sharp or abrasive objects as it will likely lead to damaging the finish and if you are not careful, it can puncture the membrane and compromise the waterproofing function. **When at all possible, deal with spills immediately.**

## General recommendations:

- ✓ Prevention is the best protection against stains. Take precautions to avoid risky situations.
- ✓ When possible, deal with spills immediately.
- ✓ Do **not** attempt to clean stains, spilled adhesives, paint, or any blemish using Bleach, Acetone, Turpentine, Lacquer Thinner, Ketone, Acid, or multipurpose stain or paint removers as you may cause irreversible damage to the vinyl surface. Non-authorized cleaning methods may not show any immediate signs of discoloring but can cause permanent damage over time.
- ✓ Do **not** attempt to scrape off stains using sharp or abrasive objects.
- ✓ Cleaning solutions should be dabbed on, **not** rubbed.
- ✓ Only attempt to remove stains when the vinyl is cool to the touch and not in the direct sunlight or the peak heat of the day.
- ✓ **Only** use cleaning products that state they are safe for use on vinyl.
- ✓ Always use cleaners as directed by the manufacturer, and always follow any cleaning with a flush of clean water.
- ✓ Always test the cleaner you choose on an 'out of the way' place to ensure there will be no problems with the cleaning agent you have selected.
- ✓ Always be careful not to damage the surface.

**DISCLAIMER:** Dec-Tec™ will NOT be held responsible for any damages caused from cleaning Dec-Tec™ membranes with any cleaning solution other than clean fresh water.

Cleaning products and methods other than those listed in this document have NOT been tested by Dec-Tec™. Dec-Tec™ does NOT provide advice on any alternate cleaning solutions. Many household chemicals and cleaning products will leave a residue which can alter the performance and/or appearance of the product.

If damage occurs during or because of the cleaning process, it is the owner's responsibility to repair.

All household cleaners, bleach, abrasives, steel wool, lacquer solvents, waxes and cleaning products or powders may cause permanent damage or discoloration to the membrane and therefore are NOT recommended. Under no circumstances are Acids, Ketones, Turpentine, Solvents, Ammonias, or other unnamed chemicals to be used. The continual use and buildup of various cleaning products combined with long term exposure to heat and ultraviolet light can cause permanent discoloration to Dec-Tec™ vinyl membranes.

## 1.6 CARE & MAINTENANCE DO'S & DON'T'S CHECKLIST

- ✓ Regularly inspect your deck to ensure the waterproofing function is intact. If you notice any structural issues, water damage, or suspect there may even be a potential for unexpected water infiltration you will be best served by contacting a Dec-Tec™ Professional to further assess the situation.
- ✓ To look its best, your Dec-Tec™ vinyl deck should be cleaned with a light scrub at least twice per year.
- ✓ When possible, deal with spills and stains immediately. The longer the spilled material is left on the membrane, the greater the risk of permanently staining it.
- ✓ **Do not** attempt to clean stains, spilled adhesives, paint or any blemish using Bleach, Acetone, Turpentine, Lacquer Thinner, Ketone, Acid or multipurpose stain or paint removers as you may cause irreversible damage to the vinyl print. Non-authorized cleaning products and methods may not show any immediate signs of discoloring but can cause permanent damage over time.
- ✓ **Do not** use solvent-based or chemical care and maintenance products, refinishing products, or waxes on Dec-Tec™ membranes.
- ✓ Remove all debris and contaminants as soon as possible. Suntan lotions, permanent markers, and various organic matter such as decaying leaves and pine needles can contain dyes that could permanently stain Dec-Tec™ membranes.
- ✓ **Do not** attempt to scrape off stains using sharp or abrasive objects.
- ✓ Cleaning solutions must be dabbed, **not** rubbed on.
- ✓ **Do not** saturate the surface to clean it; damp mopping is preferred.
- ✓ Only attempt to remove stains when the vinyl is cool to the touch and not in the direct sunlight/peak heat of the day.
- ✓ Only use cleaning products that state they are safe for use on vinyl.
- ✓ Always use cleaners as directed by the manufacturer, and always follow any cleaning with a flush of clean water.
- ✓ Always test the cleaner you choose on an 'out of the way' area to ensure there will be no problems with the cleaning agent you have selected.
- ✓ Always be careful not to damage the surface pattern.
- ✓ **Do not** use floor polishers on the vinyl membrane.
- ✓ **Do not** drag heavy and/or sharp objects across the deck.
- ✓ **Do not** allow the vinyl to come in contact with asphalt, coal tar, heavy oils, roofing cements, or creosote as this will permanently stain the vinyl.
- ✓ **Do not** let flowerpots drip onto the deck where soil additives can leak out and cause membrane discoloration.
- ✓ Avoid the use of rubber or latex-backed mats and deck accessories as certain rubber compounds can permanently stain the vinyl.
- ✓ Dec-Tec™ does not recommend the use of mats, throw rugs or carpets placed on the vinyl decking. The material makeup of many of these items are not compatible with vinyl and contact with them can discolor the membrane which is not covered under warranty.
- ✓ Avoid metal edged snow shovels and sharp-edged metal furniture as they can puncture the vinyl and compromise the waterproofing performance. Inspect your shovel for any sharp edges prior to use.



- ✓ Metal furniture and planters without protection underneath can result in rust stains.
- ✓ Always shovel parallel to thermally heat welded seams. Shoveling across seams rather than parallel to them increases the risk that your shovel will catch an edge and damage the surface.
- ✓ Use a broom for light snow. If snow is fluffy and less than four inches deep, it is easy to brush it away with a simple broom rather than risking scratching your deck with a shovel.
- ✓ **Do not** try to shatter ice buildup on your deck. As tempting as it is to eliminate it, this can damage the deck.
- ✓ Use the right ice melt product for your deck type. **Do not** use any product with a colorant added as this may stain your deck. It is safe to use de-icing agents such as rock salt, just make sure you rinse it off once the snow is gone.
- ✓ **Do not** put sand on a vinyl deck. Some people recommend sand as an alternative to chemical ice melts for preventing slippage, but like any abrasive substance, sand can scratch the vinyl.
- ✓ Remove icicles that hang over your deck. Icicles that form on your roof may fall onto your deck and because they are sharp, they can damage the surface.
- ✓ Decaying organic matter such as decaying leaves, pine needles, and insects can contain dyes that can be especially difficult to clean or permanently stain.
- ✓ **Do not** extinguish cigarettes on your vinyl membrane.
- ✓ **Do not** walk on the Dec-Tec™ surface with cleats, spikes, or similar type shoes.

