

CLEANING CLEAR PVC

Caring for Clear Roofs & Walling



Clear PVC used in tops and sidewalls for event tents can make for a showstopping look - but it can also be challenging for your business to maintain. If you want to use clear PVC in your rental tents, you'll need to handle it with care to extend its life expectancy and reduce wear and tear.

Structural Quality In general, clear PVC has less structural integrity than the typical tent fabric because there is no internal scrim cloth to hold it together. By its very nature it is more susceptible to scratching, cracking, shrinking, and marking. A clear panels longevity will rely on **your** cleaning and storage process, but it will not have the same lifespan as white PVC roofs. Sidewalls will have a longer life expectancy but are more variant on weather conditions.

Fabric Integrity To make clear PVC available for use in public assembly marquees it must have chemicals in it to make it fire resistant, when manufacturing clear with this specification the following occurs:

1. **Product put away wet or damp will tend to fog up, and after drying out, may return to clear. If continually stored in damp conditions this may not clear up when dried and the wall will need to be replaced. Ensure all PVC is stored completely dry.**
2. **Folding clear on the same line continually may cause it to crack as its flexibility deteriorates with each exposure. For the best result roll walls.**
3. **Shrinkage of product happens with each exposure or with long storage times. NB All clear vinyl presently available will shrink with time. Most manufacturers specification is from 2%-5% but it can vary greatly depending on conditions.** After a period of time and a number of uses, tops will tend to be more difficult to pull through keder systems and may not reach all the way to the edge of the frame - keder feeders from Baytex will help protect your roofs on installation. NB A sidewall that fits well in its early life may not fit in later life.

Manufacturing Baytex has developed a system of using clear panels in roofs and sidewall, with a small amount of typical PVC around the edges for reinforcement. This has proven to increase the longevity of each panel and help reduce shrinkage.

Maintenance of the Product (see our 'General Cleaning of PVC' document) Like any other PVC product, it needs to be washed to keep dirt and other contaminants from damaging the PVC. It should be washed with Baytex's Sliktop, Plexus or VuPlex Plastic Cleaners, safe for PVC Polymer fabric. Rinsing and hanging the panels to dry is the best method of drying. Drying with microfibre cloths is recommended as they won't scratch the clears.

Storage of Panels Folded and rolled is the most appropriate for roofs. Rolled is the best way to store clear sidewalls. However if clarity is important it should be hung in a cool dry warehouse until the next use.

Weather The clear roofs are recommended to be removed in high winds (see engineering for your marquee) and are not snow loading rated so must be removed. An internal heat source stopping the snow settling may mean you can control this.

Tip to Beat the Heat Baytex sell an outer hood cover to throw over the roof during set up. You can also purchase Baytex Mesh Liners which help regulate the sun but they don't obstruct the outside view. For more information and photos contact Baytex.

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CLEANING GENERAL

Cleaning PVC Fabric

Our experience and observations over the last 50 years have shown that three cleaning methods will handle the washing of most tent products. As you proceed, you will need to decide which method best suits your workspace and climate conditions.

Cleaning:

Like any other PVC Polymer it needs to be washed to keep dirt and other contaminants from damaging the PVC. It should be washed with a "vinyl safe" cleaner such as Baytex Sliktop: phosphate free, non-toxic and biodegradable by microbial action. This will provide an excellent cleaning performance while protecting valuable PVC surfaces.

NOTE: DO NOT use any harsh chemical product as this will break down the surface of the PVC.

WASHING

Lay tent sections flat (preferably on a ground sheet) ensuring there are no sharp objects underneath, and rinse thoroughly to loosen dirt and debris.

Pre-spot stubborn stains by spot cleaning with Sliktop.

Apply agitated foamed Sliktop to PVC and scrub with soft bristled broom. Pay close attention to areas under valance and flaps that hold dirt, which promotes growth of mould and mildew.

Wash with clean water to remove all soapy residue.

NOTE: Good agitation with a broom works better than the spray on/wipe off method because the water and cleaning product stays set on the tent longer, giving the wetting agents a chance to lift more dirt.

DRYING

- Use microfibre cloths (or soft rags) for wiping dry.
- Hang tent and tent parts near the ceiling for the fastest drying time. Pulleys attached at the ceiling with ropes through them will work well for pulling up the roofs. Tent section must hang until completely dry. Walls can be hung on racks to dry.

NOTE: Make sure all lace and areas underneath valances and rain flaps are totally dry before folding and storing.

STORAGE

Ensure you dry the PVC completely and never store your PVC in a damp state. Failure to do so will result in mildew forming causing irreversible damage. The internal scrim gives the PVC structure, will be embedded with mould and mildew and it will be unable to be removed. Often the PVC reacts initially by going a light pink or yellow.

Make sure when folded or rolled away it is free of debris or leaves which can stain.

- Store in bags (or clears can be rolled) in a cool, dry place until next use. For long term storage ie over winter, we recommend opening the bags or removing PVC from time to time to aerate the PVC.

NOTE: Because tent sections are so large, this is the time to inspect for damage repair or patch if possible, finally, tag the piece noting condition or work needed. This saves a lot of time later.

Cleaning Tools:

Sliktop Cleaner
Spray bottle (optional)
Microfibre Cloths
Rags
Soft broom and bucket

For Clear Roofs:

Plexus or Vuplex Plastic Cleaners for additional polishing



Sliktop Spot Clean (prior to regular clean) or for **Heavy Clean**:

- Use 20:1 Sliktop solution to remove small areas of dirt or marks (cleaning with Sliktop may reduce but will not remove embedded marks or stains)
- Finish off with regular clean
- Always be sure to thoroughly rinse off detergent residue

Sliktop Regular Clean

- Lay out fabric on a clean well drained surface
- Wash thoroughly with 50:1 Sliktop solution using a floor mop or soft broom
- Avoid harsh scrubbing or pressure spraying
- Rinse off with fresh water
- Hang to dry
- Fold and store only when thoroughly dry using a microfibre cloth

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cont. Cleaning PVC Fabric

DON'T:

- Drag vinyl roofs or walls on any surface. PVC abrades easily but it may not be noticeable. If PVC parts need to be skidded or moved, roll it onto a drop cloth or old piece of carpet then slide as necessary
- Use household and bath cleaners most will harm PVC and shorten its life.
- Use petrol-chemical solvents to remove stains, most solvents attack PVC.
- Use abrasives or stiff bristle brushes.
- Hang tents where wind can flap or beat the fabric, this can cause "wind wipe" marks, or cracking.

Worst Case Scenario (Wet Climates)

- Wet but Dirty: store in the coolest place possible, but don't let it freeze.
- Wet but Clean: store in a cool place until room is ready for drying.
- Dry but Dirty: keep dry until ready for washing.

Worst Case Scenario (Dry Climates)

- Dirty with Heavy Dust: fold and handle carefully, not to abrade fabric. Keep dry.
- Clean but Wet: Be sure not to let set in sun with water on PVC.
- Dry and Clean: Get to cool storage area, out of sun immediately.

Potential Damage to PVC:

Food or sugared items (cola, cake, fruit juices), party poppers, dyes, bird droppings, leaves with high tannins eg gum, pine, willow etc will set stains into the scrim of the PVC tent that cannot be removed. Wash as soon as possible, even if it is on overtime schedule. Before washing, apply Sliktop Spot Clean to the stains.

Cost Saving Tips:

- When storing tents, make every effort to keep the humidity as low as possible inside the warehouse. If you wash in the same room as storage, use fans to circulate air and a dehumidifier to remove moisture.
- If a lift truck/pallet jack system is used for storing and handling tents, cover all wood pallets with old astro-turf. Wood pallets with their rough surface can potentially cause damage.
- Store as low in the room as practical; heat builds near the roof.
- "Plastisol Migration", the disease of the PVC tent, generally happens sometime in its lifespan. Good care, proper washing and regular use is the best deterrent to this disease starting in your tents. Signs that the fabric is deteriorating are: sticky surface even after washing, crackling sound when unfolding after a long period of time, top surface discoloured or an oxidized look and can smell bad.

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