

Caring for Acrylic Sheet

Washing

Wash ALFAPLAS® sheet with a solution of mild soap or detergent and lukewarm water. Use a clean soft cloth, applying only light pressure. Rinse with clean water and dry by blotting with a damp cloth or chamois.

Grease, oil or tar may be removed with a good grade of hexane, aliphatic naphtha, or kerosene. These solvents may be obtained at a paint or hardware store and should be used in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

DO NOT USE: window cleaning sprays, kitchen scouring compounds or solvents such as acetone, gasoline, benzene, alcohol, carbon tetrachloride, or lacquer thinner. These can scratch and damage the sheet's surface and / or weaken the sheet causing small surface cracks called, "crazing".

It is not recommended to use abrasive cleaners on the sheet surface. CAUTION: Some abrasive cleaners may attack the uncoated side or edge of the sheet.

Dusting

Dust with a soft, damp cloth or chamois. Dry or gritty cloths may cause surface scratches and create a static electric charge on the surface (see the section on neutralizing static electricity).

Polishing

Protect ALFAPLAS® sheet and maintain its surface gloss by occasional polishing with a good plastic cleaner and polish. Apply a thin, even coat with a soft clean cloth and polish lightly with cotton flannel. Then wipe with a damp cloth to help eliminate electrostatic charges that can attract dust particles.

Neutralizing Static Electricity

A static charge can develop on acrylic sheet during handling and processing. This is not unique to acrylic sheet, but is common to many materials, particularly plastics.

When the paper or film masking is stripped off the acrylic sheet, a static charge is created on the sheet surface.

Static electricity attracts dust, chips, etc. floating in the air or on nearby work surfaces and holds these contaminants tightly to the surface. A compressed air gun will remove some of this surface dirt, but much of it continues to cling to the sheet. Because the sheet must be dirt-free before bending, painting, or thermoforming operations, a separate step is required.

To temporarily eliminate the electrical charge on all plastic surfaces, ionizing air guns can be used. These guns provide a stream of charged particles. They effectively neutralize static charges that hold dirt to the surface. By using ionized air to clean acrylic sheet after the masking has been removed, the sheet can be directly heated, painted, or otherwise processed. Because additional cleaning is eliminated, considerable man-hours will be saved making the economic advantages obvious. The appearance of painted and / or silk-screened sheet is greatly improved by the elimination of static charges.

Several anti-static cleaners for plastics are also available which will reduce static electricity and dust attraction. Wiping with a soft damp cloth or chamois is all that is necessary to keep acrylic sheet dust-free between applications of these cleaners.

Removing Scratches

Fine scratches can be removed by hand polishing. Apply a plastic scratch remover to a soft flannel pad and rub. When the scratches have disappeared, remove all residue and polish. For deeper scratches, first sand lightly with a 400-grit "wet or dry" sandpaper, using plenty of water and very important rinsing the sandpaper frequently. Follow by buffing with a clean muslin wheel and a good polishing compound. For the highest gloss, use a clean-up wheel made of soft cotton or flannel sections and on which no compound is used. An electric drill with a buffing wheel is ideal.

Cleaning Adhesive Residue or Haze Left by The Masking

Adhesive residue or haze left on the sheet by the masking can be difficult to remove. It usually occurs when the latex adhesive on the masking gets old or is exposed to moisture or high temperatures. The residue or haze may be removed using kerosene or aliphatic naphtha (VM&P naphtha) followed by a thorough rinse with water. Also, commercial plastic cleaners are often very effective.