Leadlight Delight
Stained Glass to Die For!

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MAINTENANCE OF LEADLIGHT PANELS

Newly manufactured panels, if well finished, should not require any immediate cleaning. However, over time, panels will become dirty, particularly the surface of the panel that is exposed to weather.

Grit and dirt adheres more easily to rough surfaces. Much of the glass used in leadlights will be rough/textured on one side and smoother on the other. If the panel has been installed correctly the smoother side of the glass will be on the side of the panel exposed to weather, thus reducing the need for cleaning.

New lead used to manufacture leadlight panels tends to be silver-grey and shiny. Also the solder used to join the lead will be silver and shiny. While the colour of lead and solder gradually becomes darker grey over time, due to natural oxidisation, most leadlighters apply black lead polish, rendering a glossy black finish to the lead and solder.

While the polish will, over time, dry and harden, on a newly created panel, it can be easily removed and therefore care should be taken not to use household window cleaners for at least 6 – 12 months. If dust and grime needs to be removed from the panel in this period, cleaning with a new bristle shoe brush will generally be effective.

Even after the lead polish has hardened, it is recommended that initially a shoe brush be used for cleaning – this method not only removes most naturally occurring dust and grime, but also has the benefit of re-buffing the lead, restoring the original gloss.

For stubborn and heavy grime, after the lead polish has hardened, a sponge and warm water can be used, avoiding as much as possible, contact with the lead. Avoid using strong solvent-based window cleaners as they are likely to remove the lead polish covering soldered joints, exposing the shiny solder.

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