

## **Cleaning mortar made with Spectrum gray, white and colored cements.**

AHI has been producing Spectrum cements since 1989. <https://www.ahi-supply.com/product-category/masonry-products/spectrum-cement-other-bagged-products/>

We have been producing the Texclean family of masonry cleaners since 1986. <https://www.ahi-supply.com/product-category/masonry-products/tex-clean-masonry-cleaners-sealers/>

AHI is not just a cement manufacturer, and we are not just a cleaner/chemical manufacturer, we have produced both product lines for a very long time.

Doing so has given us a unique perspective that other cement and cleaner manufacturers do not have.

Over this period of time, we have witnessed countless projects that were completed with:

- *our Spectrum gray, white and colored cements as well as our masonry cleaners.*

The lessons learned from these projects tell us what works well with cleaning and what does not work well.

### **a. Here are some key cleaning points:**

1. The mason determines the dilution rate (masonry cleaner to water ratio) on the jobsite. Although we provide the recommended dilution rates here: <https://www.ahi-supply.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Tex-Clean-Product-Guide-3.pdf>
2. With our Textral and Texclean masonry cleaners, the maximum dilution rate is 10 parts water to 1 part cleaner (less acidic). The minimum dilution rate is 5 parts water to one part cleaner. (more acidic)
3. Cleaning masonry is typically performed with acid-based masonry cleaners like ours and some other cleaner brands. Acid based masonry cleaners can wash some color out of the mortar and wash some color out of the brick, stone, and block masonry. If a mason has washed color out of a wall, one way to put color back into the wall is with masonry staining.
4. You should wait at least 7 days after the laying of masonry, before you clean it. Seven days is enough time for the masonry to be sufficiently cured for cleaning. Cleaning mortar before it has sufficiently cured, can cause color to be washed out of the mortar and masonry.
5. We recommend cleaning masonry with the maximum dilution rate (less acidic) whenever possible to avoid washing too much color out of the mortar and masonry. (see notes below on the max 10 to 1 dilution example using a 5-gallon pail)

### **b. What do we recommend and what do we see that works well?**

6. Textral masonry cleaner is the product we recommend for cleaning **mortar made with Spectrum colored cements**. Max dilution (10 to 1) and perform the cleaning at least 7 days after laying the masonry. Doing so does not remove the color out of the wall and it does not burn the mortar.
7. We also recommend Textral **for cleaning easily damaged or easily burned surfaces like Natural stone or concrete block or concrete brick**.
8. Texclean and Texclean plus masonry cleaner works well with cleaning gray mortar used to install clay brick. Max dilution (10 to 1 when possible) and perform the cleaning at least 7 days after laying the masonry.
9. Do not over wash the masonry!

### **c. What have we seen at times that did not work well?**

10. Aggressively washing mortar made with gray, white or colored cements with **lower dilution rates** than is needed (lower dilution rates like **5 water to 1 cleaner or 4 to 1, 3 to 1, 2 to 1 etcetera**) Too little water with the cleaner can etch the mortar, expose the sand aggregate and leave the mortar surface sandy and will rub off when you rub your finger on it. Also exposed sand aggregate is a different color than the mortar is supposed to be. We have seen mortar made with Spectrum black & some Spectrum brown cements, (that were cleaned with low dilution cleaner rates-**5 water to 1 cleaner or 4 to 1, 3 to 1, 2 to 1 etcetera**) that dried a lighter color of black or brown than was desired.
11. Using the wrong cleaner for mortar made with colored masonry. Example we have seen some colored mortars, when aggressive cleaned with Texclean, Texclean plus, and some other brands of widely used masonry cleaning products, can change mortar color to a color that is not desired. (*Spectrum Tan cement is just one of the cements we have seen that use of the wrong cleaner caused it to change to an orange color that is not desired*)

## Cleaner measurements using a 5-gallon pail.

If we put one part of cleaner in this pail to the 3/4 of an inch level from the bottom and then we put 10 parts of water on top of that, it will be to the 8-inch level and that gets you to the maximum cleaner dilution of cleaner, which is one part masonry cleaner to 10 parts of water.

