

# Cleaning Your Steelcase Products

The cleaning guidelines for Steelcase products\* that are in the Surface Materials Reference Manual align with the guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Below is a summary and for more detailed instructions, [see the condensed version of the Surface Materials Reference Manual](#).

A few points specific to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

- According to the CDC, transmission of COVID-19 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus [has not been documented](#). Transmission of COVID-19 apparently occurs through respiratory droplets.
- The CDC has advised that the most effective method for preventing the spread of viruses and germs is to follow hand-washing protocols.

## HARD SURFACES

A few reminders:

- Before using cleaning products and processes, check first to ensure they comply with your company's EHS (environmental health and safety) requirements.
- To avoid risks of fire or shock, always disconnect electrical power when cleaning products that use or provide electricity.
- Be careful not to allow liquids to enter any openings in electrical products.
- For more detailed cleaning instructions, refer to the [condensed version of the Surface Materials Reference Manual](#).

### Acrylic

Clean with mild soap or detergent and water.

### Glass

Use standard disinfecting cleaning products. See [suggested list](#) from the EPA.

### Markerboard Writing Surfaces

Clean with 91% Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) using a microfiber cloth.

### Laminate Tops, Painted and Plated Metals, and Plastics

Use one of the following commercial cleaning products, which Steelcase tests have shown to be compatible with our products when used in accordance with manufacturer instructions:

- Clorox Healthcare Bleach Germicidal Cleaner
- Professional Lysol® Disinfectant Spray
- OXIVIR® TB
- Virex II 256
- All-purpose hard-surface cleaner (examples in North America include Formula 409, Fantastik or Mr. Clean)

### Metal

Clean with a non-abrasive cleaner.

### Wood

Use a cleaner or flax soap formulated especially for use on wood surfaces.

### Wood Veneer

When used in accordance with manufacturer instructions:

- Virex II 256
- Clorox Healthcare Bleach Germicidal Cleaner

Important note: Wipe the surface in the direction of the wood grain and wipe dry after cleaning.

## SOFT SURFACES – STEELCASE STANDARD MATERIALS

A few reminders:

- Before using cleaning products and processes, check first to ensure they comply with your company's EHS (environmental health and safety) requirements.
- To avoid risks of fire or shock, always disconnect electrical power when cleaning products that use or provide electricity.
- Be careful not to allow liquids to enter any openings in electrical products.
- For more detailed cleaning instructions, refer to the [condensed version of the Surface Materials Reference Manual](#).

**Leather Upholstery**

Use lukewarm water and mild, non-detergent soap. Work into a thin lather with a soft cloth, rinse with clean water and buff to restore luster (note that there is a risk of a reaction with the solvent-free chemicals used in the leather-tanning process).

**Polyurethane Upholstery**

Disinfect using a 10:1 water/bleach solution. Thoroughly rinse all cleaning solution residue with water and let air dry.

**Seating Upholstery**

Cleaning guidelines vary depending on fabric. For guidance on cleaning your seating upholstery, refer to its cleaning code in the [condensed version of the Surface Materials Reference Manual](#). If you're not sure which materials are on your products, ask your Steelcase dealer.

**Vertical Surface Fabrics**

Cleaning guidelines vary depending on fabric. For guidance on cleaning the fabric of your vertical surfaces, refer to its cleaning code in the [condensed version of the Surface Materials Reference Manual](#). If you're not sure which materials are on your products, ask your Steelcase dealer.

**Vinyl Upholstery**

Wipe affected area with a soft cloth or soft bristle brush using a non-abrasive cleaner such as Formula 409 or Fantastik. Rinse with fresh water and wipe dry with a clean cloth.

**SOFT SURFACES – DESIGNTEX**

For guidelines specific to Designtex fabrics, refer to [instructions on their website](#).

**SOFT SURFACES – CUSTOMERS OWN MATERIALS (COM)**

For custom materials, contact the material manufacturer for cleaning guidelines.

*\* These guidelines apply only to products manufactured by Steelcase. For guidance on cleaning other products, refer to those products' manufacturers.*

# Care of Surface Materials

## Sustainable Cleaning Solutions

A variety of companies and groups assert that their cleaning products are better for humans and the environment than others. Steelcase has not evaluated all of these claims, but believes that Green Seal ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)) is one good source for identifying sustainable cleaning solutions. Green Seal is an independent nonprofit organization with experience in certifying products and services that are sustainable. When searching the site, use GS-37 as the life cycle-based sustainability standard.

## Vertical Surface Fabrics and Seating Upholstery

Remove as much soil or staining material as possible by carefully vacuuming, brushing, or scraping with a dull instrument.

**Cleaning codes** apply only to the outer part of your fabric. Do not over-wet the fabric! If you do, you may damage the upholstery's filling materials.

Special finishes or laminations, such as a protective coating (e.g., C-1™) or a flame-retardant treatment, may modify a fabric's cleaning code due to the adhesive type used in lamination (e.g., "WS" code may change to "S" or "W" code).

**W** – Clean only with water-based shampoo or foam upholstery cleaner. (Water-based cleaning agents are often sold as upholstery shampoo. They are usually sold as foams, concentrated liquids, and dry compounds. Do not over wet. Do not use dry cleaning solvents. Pile fabric may require brushing to restore its appearance. Remove cushion covers to launder.

**S** – Clean only with dry cleaning solvent. Do not saturate. Do not use water. Remove cushion covers to launder.

**WS** – Clean with a mild detergent shampoo, foam, or dry cleaning solvents. Do not saturate with liquids. Pile fabric may require brushing to restore its appearance. Remove cushion covers to launder.

**X** – Do not clean with either water or solvent-based cleaner. Use only vacuuming or light brushing.

## Cleaning Code W

Follow these directions for removing water-borne, non-greasy soil or stains (such as coffee, milk, soft drinks, fruit juices, washable ink, etc.):

**1** Gently apply a water-based cleaner, that is specifically made for cleaning fabric, to the soiled area using a clean cloth or sponge, such as an upholstery shampoo.

**2** Work the cleaner into a lather or foam, if possible, to minimize soaking the fabric. Using light brushing motions, work from the outside of the soiled area toward the center to prevent rings.

**3** Allow fabric to dry completely, then vacuum thoroughly.

## Cleaning Code S

Follow these directions for removing oil-borne soil or stains (such as salad dressing, grease, lipstick, ball-point ink, etc.):

**1** Gently apply a dry-cleaning fluid to the soiled area using a dampened, clean cloth or soft-bristle brush.

**2** Using quick, light, rubbing or brushing strokes, work from the outside of the soiled area toward the center to prevent rings. Avoid soaking the fabric.

**3** Gently blot with a clean, absorbent cloth to soak up and remove dampened soil.

**4** Allow fabric to dry completely, then vacuum thoroughly.

## Large Areas

When large fabric areas must be cleaned, such as complete panels, it is recommended that you employ a professional cleaning firm that uses a dry-foam upholstery shampoo and an immediate wet pick-up vacuum system, that does not exceed 170F. **Do not steam clean** or use other methods that soak or heat the fabric.

Regular and proper maintenance of your upholstery fabric permits less frequent cleaning.

Maintenance is routine, on-going care which reduces soil buildup on a fabric's surface. Maintenance also includes treating spots and stains promptly.

Vacuum regularly with a proper upholstery attachment to remove air-borne dust and lint thoroughly.

Clean periodically to remove accumulated grime and retain the fabric's original appearance as much as possible.

Clean protective arm covers and head rests so they do not look different from the rest of your upholstery.

Promptly treat spots and stains. (An International Fabricare study confirmed the detrimental effects of allowing stains to age, when they could have been successfully removed, if treated immediately. After one week, 20% of stains could not be removed. After 3 weeks, 50% of stains could not be removed. If stain has oxidized, or totally hardened, it forms an insoluble product that cannot be removed).

Turn and rotate loose cushions to equalize wear and soiling.

## Vertical Surface Vinyl

Remove as much soil or staining material as possible by carefully vacuuming, brushing, or scraping with a dull instrument.

Use lukewarm water and mild soap to remove most soil and stains. Work up a thin lather on a clean, damp piece of cheese cloth and rub it gently over the soiled area. Wipe off the soap with a fresh piece of cheese cloth. Finish by wiping with a soft, dry cloth.

Never use furniture polishes, oils, solvents, varnishes, abrasive cleaners, or ammonia water on leather.

Never use furniture polishes, oils, solvents, varnishes, abrasive cleaners, or ammonia water on vinyl. Naphtha or mineral spirits may be used with caution (they are flammable) to remove chewing gum, grease, or other greasy soils and stains that cannot be removed with soap and water.

**Fire Code Seating on Molded Foam**

Because of the heat application used to adhere the fabric to the foam substrate, do not use steam in cleaning the Fire Code Seating (FCS) fabric. This heat could melt the adhesive and loosen the fabric.

Use a dry-shampoo application that has a wet pick-up. A wet pick-up minimizes moisture in the foam that may cause future mildew or breakdown in the foam.

**Leather Upholstery**

Dusting with a clean, dry cloth is the recommended routine cleaning method for an aniline-dyed, full-grain leather. For spots and spills, wipe excess liquid immediately and let air dry. If necessary, use lukewarm water and mild non-detergent soap, work into a thin lather with a soft cloth, rinse with clean water, and buff to restore luster.

The use of any other product could cause reactions with the solvent-free chemicals used in the tanning process.

Part of leather's unique appeal is the sophisticated aging process that occurs over time. Soft, comfort wrinkles can appear upon use and are considered common. Comfort wrinkles are a normal characteristic of leather and are part of the natural qualities and softness that leather provides.

Leather has naturally occurring markings from the everyday activities of an animal's life and as a result, some of these markings can show on an upholstered chair. These markings are what give each chair unique character and premium quality.

**Vinyl Upholstery**

Remove as much soil or staining material as possible by carefully vacuuming, brushing, or scraping with a dull instrument.

Use lukewarm water and mild soap to remove most soil and stains. Work up a thin lather on a clean, damp piece of cheese cloth and rub it gently over the soiled area. Wipe off the soap with a fresh piece of cheese cloth. Finish by wiping with a soft, dry cloth.

Never use furniture polishes, oils, solvents, varnishes, abrasive cleaners, or ammonia water on vinyl. Naphtha or mineral spirits may be used with caution (they are flammable) to remove chewing gum, grease, or other greasy soils and stains that cannot be removed with soap and water.

**Acrylic**

Dust with a soft, damp cloth or chamois.

Clean only with mild soap, detergent and water, or Pledge. **Do not** use window-cleaning fluids, scouring compounds, gritty cloths, leaded or ethyl gasolines, or strong solvents such as alcohol, acetone, carbon tetrachloride, etc.

To remove tar, grease, paint, etc., use naphtha or kerosene. Rinse well and dry with a soft, damp cloth or chamois. Polish acrylic by applying a thin, even coating of automobile paste wax with a soft cloth. Do not use a cleaner-wax combination.

Remove minor surface scratches by waxing. Remove deeper scratches by sanding lightly with 400-grit, "wet or dry" sandpaper and buffing with a clean, muslin wheel dressed with a good grade of fine-grit buffing compound. A 1/4" electric drill with a 4" buffing wheel has sufficient RPMs. Buff lightly with a clean cotton flannel or jersey cloth.

Avoid aromatic solvents and abrasives.

Acrylic is combustible, so observe fire and safety procedures appropriate for compatible forms of wood. Do not expose to excessive heat or flame.

**Markerboard Writing Surfaces**

Use dry erase markers only.

Remove dry-erase markings with a markerboard eraser or soft cloth as often as possible. Change erasers, as they become dirty. Dirty erasers will leave ink residue on the surface.

For daily cleaning, or as needed, use a dry erase cleaner, or a non-abrasive household cleaner, such as glass cleaner. This may be done with a soft cloth or sponge. Dry the surface with a soft cloth prior to writing. All markings should be removed weekly.

**Caution:**

- Do not use permanent markers on markerboard surfaces. In the event a permanent marker is used, removal of markings may be attempted by using dry erase cleaner, or by writing over the marking with a dry erase marker and erasing with a markerboard eraser or soft cloth.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners or solvent type cleaning solutions, such as Ketones (Acetone, MEK, etc.) lacquer thinner, nail polish remover, etc. because they may remove the finish from the markerboard surface.

### Worksurfaces and Finishes

#### For all laminate tops, painted and plated metals, and plastics

Wiping with a damp cloth will remove general soiling and water-borne stains. If needed, use a hard-surface, all purpose cleaner such as Formula 409, Fantastic, Top Job, Mr. Clean, etc. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for general purpose cleaning. To prevent staining, ink should be removed as soon as possible. Do not use paint thinners, naphtha, or solvent-based fluids.

To fill scratches in woodgrain laminate tops, use an oak, walnut, or mahogany putty stick which can be purchased at paint supply and hardware stores.

Clean metal finishes with a non-abrasive cleaner. Apply the cleaner sparingly, making sure that it does not come into contact with any wood surface. Wipe the hardware dry with a clean, soft cloth.

#### Protecting Wood Surfaces

Use desk pads and coasters to help protect the finish against dents, scratches, moisture and hot and cold liquids. Do not use desk pads that have plastic backing. Use felt or leather pads on the bottoms of office equipment and accessories.

Periodically move desk accessories and other objects kept on the worksurface to ensure even aging.

Lift objects when you move them, instead of pulling or pushing them across the surface, to avoid scratching the surface. Avoid leaving vinyl binders on worksurface for long periods.

If you use a protective glass top, insert felt pads between the glass and the worksurface, to create an air space and allow the wood to breathe.

Keep your furniture away from direct sunlight. Avoid extreme temperatures and humidity. Maintain temperatures between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity levels between 30 and 50 percent.

### Cleaning Wood Surfaces

Keep a supply of soft, clean, absorbent cloths handy for wiping up spills and regular dusting.

To dust, wipe with a slightly damp, soft cloth, using another soft cloth to dry. Always wipe the surface in the direction of the woodgrain.

Use a quality cleaner or flax soap formulated especially for use on wood surfaces. Do not use oils or ammonia. Dilute the cleaner as directed by the manufacturer. Dampen but do not saturate a soft cloth with the diluted cleaning solution. Wipe the surface in the direction of the woodgrain to remove dirt and fingerprints. Wipe the surface clean with a soft, dry cloth.

Quality spray wax may be applied sparingly twice a year. Excessive waxing may result in a wax build-up which feels sticky and attracts an unusual amount of dirt. For information about how to remove this wax, contact your facilities department or Steelcase dealer.

Wood is a "forgiving" material which can usually be repaired. If your worksurface is damaged, call your facilities department or Steelcase dealer.

### Maintenance Contract

Many Steelcase dealers offer maintenance contracts for your convenience. Contact your dealer for more information.