

OTTAWA CONSTRUCTION CLEANING

Cleaning Products & Equipment

Product selection for post-construction cleaning, VOC considerations, surface-safe cleaners, WHMIS compliance, and choosing the right equipment for each job.

3 Expert Answers from Clean IQ

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Can I use rubbing alcohol to clean adhesive residue off new window frames after construction?

Rubbing alcohol can be effective for removing adhesive residue from new window frames, but you need to test it carefully first and use the right concentration to avoid damaging the frame material. Most new window frames in Ottawa construction are vinyl, aluminum, or wood, and each material responds differently to alcohol-based cleaning.

For vinyl window frames, which are most common in Ottawa residential construction, use 70% isopropyl alcohol rather than 99% concentration. The higher water content in 70% alcohol makes it less aggressive while still dissolving most construction adhesives, tape residue, and protective film glue. Apply the alcohol to a clean microfiber cloth first, then gently rub the residue in circular motions. Never pour alcohol directly onto the frame, as it can seep into seals and weatherstripping.

Test the alcohol on an inconspicuous area first — many new window frames have protective coatings or finishes that can be damaged by solvents. On aluminum frames, alcohol is generally safe but can leave water spots if not dried immediately. Wood frames require extra caution because alcohol can penetrate the grain and affect stain or finish, especially if the wood is unsealed or freshly painted.

Safer Alternatives for Stubborn Residue

If rubbing alcohol doesn't work or you're concerned about frame damage, try these Ottawa-tested alternatives. **Goo Gone or similar citrus-based adhesive removers are gentler on new surfaces** while still being effective against construction tape and protective film residue. Heat from a hair dryer can soften stubborn adhesive, making it easier to remove with plastic scrapers without chemicals. For really tough residue, professional window cleaners in Ottawa often use specialized glass-safe solvents that won't damage frames or seals.

Ottawa's extreme temperature swings mean new window frames are especially vulnerable during their first year. Winter installation creates thermal stress that can make frames more brittle, while summer heat can make adhesives bond more aggressively. **Always clean adhesive residue within 30 days of construction completion** — the longer it sits, especially through Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles, the harder it becomes to remove without damaging the frame.

When cleaning multiple windows after construction, work in sections and dry each area immediately to prevent streaking. Ottawa's winter humidity levels below 20% cause alcohol to evaporate extremely quickly, which can leave residue if you're not fast enough. Summer humidity above 70% has the opposite effect, requiring more drying time and potentially causing water spots on frames.

For extensive adhesive residue across multiple windows or if you're uncomfortable testing solvents on expensive new frames, professional post-construction cleaning contractors have the right products and experience to handle this safely. You can browse cleaning specialists familiar with Ottawa construction through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com.

Q2

What product removes dried paint from new door hinges and hardware after construction?

Solvent-based paint removers specifically designed for metal hardware are your best option for removing dried paint from new door hinges without damaging the underlying finish. Look for products containing acetone, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), or specially formulated paint strippers that are safe for metal surfaces.

For new construction hardware in Ottawa, you're likely dealing with either brushed nickel, oil-rubbed bronze, stainless steel, or painted finishes on the hinges themselves. The removal method depends on both the paint type and the hinge finish. **Citrus-based paint strippers** work well for latex paint and are less aggressive than chemical strippers, making them safer for finished hardware. These products use d-limonene (orange oil extract) to soften paint without harsh chemicals that could damage protective coatings on new hardware.

Acetone or denatured alcohol on a soft cloth can remove fresh latex paint spots effectively, but test on a hidden area first. For oil-based paint or primer that has fully cured, you'll need a stronger approach. Commercial paint removers like Goof Off or Krud Kutter are formulated specifically for removing paint from surfaces without damaging the substrate. Apply the product, let it sit for the recommended time (usually 5-10 minutes), then gently scrape with a plastic scraper or old credit card.

In Ottawa's dry winter conditions, paint often cures harder and bonds more aggressively to metal surfaces because of the low humidity during heating season. This means removal products may need longer contact time than the label suggests. **Never use steel wool or abrasive pads on new hardware** - they'll scratch the finish permanently. Instead, use plastic scrapers, wooden sticks, or brass brushes which are softer than most hardware finishes.

For stubborn paint on hinge pins and tight spaces, **soak the hardware in paint remover** by removing the hinges entirely if possible. Place them in a container with enough stripper to cover the painted areas, let sit for 15-20 minutes, then scrub with an old toothbrush. This method works particularly well for multiple hinges with heavy paint buildup.

Heat guns should be avoided on new hardware because the high temperature can damage protective coatings, change the metal's temper, or even melt plastic components in modern hinges. Chemical strippers work more reliably and safely for this application.

After removing the paint, clean all residue with mineral spirits or the cleaner recommended by the stripper manufacturer. Many paint removers leave a film that will interfere with the hardware's operation or appearance if not fully removed. **Lubricate hinge pins with a light machine oil** after cleaning to ensure smooth operation.

For extensive paint removal on multiple pieces of hardware, or if you're dealing with lead-based paint in heritage renovations common in Ottawa neighborhoods like Centretown or Sandy Hill, hiring a professional cleaning service makes sense. They have the proper equipment, ventilation, and disposal methods to handle the job safely. You can browse cleaning contractors experienced with post-construction hardware restoration through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com.

Q3

Can I use a pressure washer with soap to clean new cultured stone on my Ottawa home?

Yes, you can use a pressure washer with soap on new cultured stone, but you must use the correct pressure settings and soap formulation to avoid permanent damage. Cultured stone is more delicate than natural stone and requires careful cleaning techniques, especially when it's newly installed.

For cultured stone cleaning in Ottawa, keep your pressure washer between **1,200 and 1,500 PSI maximum**. Higher pressures can chip the surface coating or drive water behind the stone panels, causing moisture problems that are particularly problematic during Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles. Use a **25-degree or 40-degree spray tip** rather than a narrow 15-degree or 0-degree tip, which concentrates too much force in a small area. Hold the wand at least 18 inches from the surface and work at a 45-degree angle rather than spraying directly perpendicular to the stone.

Soap selection is critical for cultured stone. Use only pH-neutral cleaners specifically designed for manufactured stone products. Avoid acidic cleaners, bleach-based products, or standard concrete cleaners, which can etch the surface coating and cause permanent discoloration. Many cultured stone manufacturers void their warranty if improper cleaning products are used. Eco-friendly stone cleaners work well and won't harm surrounding landscaping when the runoff flows into your yard.

Timing and Technique for Ottawa Conditions

Ottawa's extreme temperature swings make timing important for pressure washing cultured stone. **Never pressure wash when temperatures are below 5 degrees Celsius** or when freezing is expected within 24 hours, as trapped moisture can freeze and crack the stone. Spring and fall are ideal seasons, but avoid washing during Ottawa's humid summer afternoons when soap can dry too quickly and leave streaks.

Start by **rinsing the entire surface with plain water** to remove loose dirt and debris. Apply soap using the pressure washer's detergent injection system or a separate foam cannon, working from bottom to top to prevent streaking. Let the soap dwell for 5 to 10 minutes but don't allow it to dry completely. Rinse thoroughly from top to bottom, overlapping your spray pattern by about 50 percent to ensure complete soap removal.

Test your pressure and technique on an inconspicuous area first — perhaps behind a downspout or in a corner that's not highly visible. New cultured stone sometimes has a protective coating that can be damaged if you're too aggressive. If you notice any surface changes, reduce pressure immediately and consider switching to hand washing with a soft brush.

For post-construction cleaning specifically, cultured stone often has mortar residue, paint overspray, or construction adhesive that requires specialized removal techniques beyond basic pressure washing. **Professional cleaning contractors have experience with these specific contaminants** and access to products that safely remove them without damaging the stone's finish.

If your cultured stone installation is part of a larger construction or renovation project, consider having it professionally cleaned as part of your overall post-construction cleanup. Professional cleaners understand the proper products and techniques for different cultured stone manufacturers and can ensure warranty compliance. You can explore cleaning contractors experienced with exterior stone work through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Construction Cleaning. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any post-construction cleaning or renovation cleanup project. Information is current as of May 24, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawaconstructioncleaning.com for the latest answers.