

## BEST PRACTICES & GENERAL MAINTENANCE FOR NATURAL STONE PANEL PRODUCTS

### **CLEANING**

Use a solution of soap or detergent and water with a bristle brush to remove dust, dirt, and grime. Do not attempt to clean using a wire brush, power washing, sandblasting, or acid-containing products may damage the stone. Contact Realstone Systems for further questions.

DO NOT USE ACID. NEUTRAL CLEANERS ONLY.

### **SALT & DE-ICING CHEMICALS**

Do not use de-icing chemicals on areas adjacent to any Realstone veneer applications. Do not allow snow to be piled up against the stone surface.

### **SEALERS**

It is not required to apply sealers to Realstone. However, it may be appropriate to seal stone to prevent staining in areas that are exposed to oil, smoke, soot, dirt, grease, chemicals, and constant exposure to water. It is recommended that breathable or impregnating sealers are used. It is important to note that some sealers may enhance or change the color of the stone. For information regarding actual performance or application of sealers, contact the manufacturer of the sealer directly.

### **INSTALLATION PREPARATION**

Remove stone from packaging and lay material out prior to installation. Stone is a natural material so it is important to pay attention to any variances in color, grain, and finish. You need a clean surface free of any dust, dirt, or other particles prior to adhering the stone to the substrate. Wipe the back of the stone with a damp cloth. For best results install panels in a randomly staggered pattern.

### **EFFLORESCENCE**

This is actually a trace mineral found in some clays and cement products. It is basically a water soluble salt and is formed when moisture has been drawn out of the stone and has dried on the surface leaving a residue. Efflorescence is water soluble and removes easily. After the stone wall has completely dried, clean it with water alone or soap or baking soda and water using a bristle brush. Rinse thoroughly. Usually the efflorescence will not return after the initial cleaning unless the stone is receiving a lot of moisture. If the problem persists, you may consider applying a weather sealer to the wall. For information regarding actual performance or application of sealers, contact the manufacturer of the sealer directly.

### **CONTROLLING MOISTURE FROM BEHIND STONE**

It is important to always comply with local building and construction guidelines. Where moisture can exist behind stone it is important to use a system that solves this problem by effectively draining and venting moisture.

### **CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO WATER**

Realstone will not deteriorate from exposure to fresh water. When Realstone is used below water level, in which the water is chlorinated, treated with chemicals or dirty it may cause discoloration. Natural stone materials are subject to potential damage from adverse freeze thaw conditions. Water should be drained below Realstone prior to freezing conditions. Pressure and abrasion from constant fast flowing water may cause some surface deterioration. The surface of Realstone may be affected by exposure to extensive salt-water conditions. Realstone should not be considered a waterproof material. Some Realstone Systems products are made of slate. Slate has an ability to split into thin layers along the plane of cleavage due to flattened or elongated minerals along the plane of cleavage. Cleft planes provide permeability for water penetration which can result in minor flaking.

Moisture may cause our Charcoal products to rust and effloresce.

### **CONTROL AND EXPANSION JOINTS**

Always comply with your architect or project engineer recommendation for expansion joints and follow the Tile Council of America guidelines, TCNA EJ171.