

## Maintaining Your Stainless Steel Railing

### Stain –“less” Steel Materials

The attractive surface appearance of stainless steel products *cannot* be regarded as completely maintenance free. All grades and finishes of stainless steel may in fact stain or discolor in normal service if not properly maintained. To achieve maximum stain (corrosion) resistance the surface of the stainless steel must be kept clean and in some cases requires protection. The best treatment and protection possible is the process of electropolishing which we strongly advise to our customers in coastal areas.

If proper installation and cleaning procedures are used and cleaning schedules are carried out regularly, good performance and long life will be achieved.

### Why is Stainless Steel maintenance Necessary?

#### The Critical Factor

Working environments will always create aggressive conditions, and proper cleaning must always be done immediately after installation of an Atlantis Rail product, or any other Stainless Steel product handled in a working environment. Long exposure to working environments can increase the potential for corrosion and therefore require more frequent maintenance while work is being conducted in surrounding areas. The use of modern construction processes use more cleaners and potentially harmful materials so care must be taken to avoid contact with the Stainless Steel railings. Most solutions, when used in accordance with their makers' instructions are safe, but if used incorrectly (e.g. warm or concentrated) can cause discoloration and corrosion on the surface of stainless steels. Strong acid solutions (e.g. hydrochloric acid or "spirits of salts") are sometimes used to clean masonry and tiling of buildings but they should *never be permitted to come into contact with your stainless steel*. If this should happen the acid solution must be removed immediately by copious water flushing and cleaning with house hold detergent. Anything acid left on the Stainless Steel will cause harm.

After shop work is complete every Atlantis Rail project is thoroughly cleaned before being packaged. This thorough cleaning must be followed after installation and as long as work is taking place around the railing.

**Maintenance Step 1)** Initial Cleaning; Clean your railing thoroughly after initial installation with warm water and household soap (dish soap works well). Rinse thoroughly with fresh water. Follow with a protective cleaner and polish such a Flitz marine polish.

**Maintenance Step 2)** If additional work is taking in close proximity to the railing take care not to use any cleaners on work areas that may damage Stainless Steel and rinse railings with fresh water often to maintain a clean surface. If potentially damaging cleaners are splashed on railing you must completely repeat step one. Acids are very damaging to Stainless Steel Surfaces, with the exception of Citric Acid in the form of passivation fluid.

**Maintenance Step 3)** Continuous maintenance; Advice is often sought concerning the frequency of cleaning, and the answer is quite simply "clean the metal when it is dirty in order to restore its original appearance". As a rule of thumb it is always good to rinse with clean water whenever you are cleaning other adjacent surfaces such as a deck. Clean with a Polish as needed to maintain the desired luster, again we recommend a marine polish such as Flitz.