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EFFLORESCENCE IN MANUFACTURED STONE VENEER

Efflorescence is fairly common in typical brick construction but not as common in manufactured stone veneer. Efflorescence is caused when water soluble salts in the natural raw materials used to manufacture brick or stone veneer are carried to the surface of the masonry resulting in a white powdery residue. These salts can only be transported by water. Their appearance can be the result of large amounts or continual amounts of water washing over or behind the masonry surface. This can be caused by faulty building detailing or poor construction techniques. Another trigger area is the interior vapor barrier. If not properly installed, water vapor from the interior will escape from the building into the masonry or stone veneer, condense and then transform into liquid water. It will then collect the water soluble salts, carry them to the surface and create the residue.

The amount of salts in the masonry will dictate the amount of efflorescence. Many times it's a relatively small amount that comes out over time and is washed away by rain water and is not a problem or even noticed. When it is noticeable, it can be washed off with clean water and a bristle brush or a very, very light power wash. Test this first to ensure no damage is done to the stone color.

With stubborn stains, a solution of 1 part household vinegar to 5 parts water can be applied. Use a bristle brush and rinse thoroughly with fresh water. Very stubborn efflorescence may take several applications over time before all minerals have left the masonry.