

Key-Link Fencing & Railing

Caring for Stainless Steel Cable Railing in a Coastal Setting



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Introduction

Stainless steel cable and aluminum railing are beautiful and timeless. And when you have a gorgeous coastal view, of course you want the least obtrusive railing! It's easy to see why more and more homes on or near the coast are being outfitted with stylish cable railing.

Saltwater is corrosive and presents some special challenges for stainless steel and aluminum, however. The purpose of this whitepaper is to explain how to handle these challenges and keep your cable looking as good as the day it was installed.

Preventative Maintenance

Stainless steel is a corrosion-resistant material because of the protective chromium oxide film on its surface. Regular maintenance is required to keep its luster and durability. This maintenance should be done at least quarterly but can be done as often as weekly to prevent the small rust discolorations that can arise. Try to complete this maintenance on a sunny or rain-free day, preferably after several rain-free days, so your railing is as dry as possible.

- 1) Gently shake the cable to remove any lurking moisture droplets.
- 2) Use a microfiber cloth to apply a thin coating of Boeshield T-9 Waterproof Rust & Corrosion Protection to both the cable and post fittings. (We recommend microfiber because it removes dirt particles at the same time it's applying the rust protection).

T-9 Waterproof Rust & Corrosion Protection has an oily texture. Because moisture can settle in the tiny spaces between cable strands, it's important to use this or a similar product to fill in those gaps. As we all know from middle school science class, oil and water don't mix! By filling in the miniscule spaces with oil, you are preventing salt water, rain, or condensation from making a home in your cable.

One important note while doing this maintenance: **DO NOT USE ANY ABRASIVE CLEANERS OR CLOTHS.** Abrasives will remove the protective film that exists on your cable and, depending on how hard you scrub, could damage the powder coating on your posts and railing.

Cleaning Your Cable Rail, Posts, and Fittings

While coastal railing may not encounter actual ocean water, the humidity and salt in the air is enough to act as a corrosive. Without preventative maintenance, you are likely to see slight rusting or staining on your cable. Fortunately, these small rust spots and discolorations are easy to remove and they are not damaging to the strength or safety of your railing.

To remove the small rust discolorations: clean the cable with a rust and stain remover. Our warranty department has had great success with Boeshield's Rust Free® Rust and Stain Remover. Do not use mineral acids or bleaches. Once clean, apply a thin coating of Boeshield T-9® Waterproof Rust & Corrosion Protection as described in the Preventative Maintenance section listed above.



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Approved Cleaners:

The following cleaners have been approved by Key-Link Fencing & Railing:

- 409®
- Spraynine®
- Simple Green®
- Fantastik®
- Windex®

Do not clean your aluminum railing with solvents such as thinners or solutions containing chlorinated hydrocarbons, esters, or ketenes.

Do not use sandpaper, steel wool, or ScotchBrite® pads to polish cable or cable fittings, as anything abrasive will take the shine off the metal and damage the protective coatings. Microfiber cloths or non-abrasive sponges work well in combination with cleaners listed above.

If you notice a white residue or white deposits on the cable or posts, simply wipe the residue off with a water-damp cloth or in conjunction with an approved cleaner. The residue will build on top of itself over time and is visually unappealing, but our team has found it extremely easy to remove.

In general, the best method of maintaining the appearance of your aluminum is to occasionally wash it using a solution of warm water and a non-abrasive, pH neutral detergent solution. The surface should be thoroughly rinsed after cleaning to remove all residues. If a pressure washer is used, be sure not to exceed 400 PSI.

This general cleaning in conjunction with the preventative maintenance on your cable will keep your railing looking beautiful for years. It also ensures compliance with our warranty requirements.

We hope you continue to enjoy your scenic coastal views and Key-Link cable railing!



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