

Acid-washing brickwork

These acid-washing instructions apply to the Danish market. For use in countries other than Denmark, any country-specific conditions and requirements must be checked before commencing any acid washing.

No acid washing – build clean!

Experience shows that acid-washing brickwork can cause various types of damage. All efforts should be taken to ensure that building is performed clean enough not to need acid washing.

Mortar residues are not always an eyesore on fair-faced brickwork and will often wash off with time. Recent years have seen the construction of a number of large-scale brickwork buildings around Denmark, and no acid washing has been undertaken here. Mortar residues etc. are regarded as an important part of the brickwork's appearance here, and as a symbol of the fact that, at its loveliest, masonry is literally a handicraft.

With acid washing, various forms of damage can arise, such as greyish mortar bloom on the bricks as a result of premature acid washing, degradation of the joint surfaces and changes in the colour of bricks and joints etc.

See also "Når afsyring af murværk går galt" [When acid-washing brickwork goes wrong], Technological Institute, Denmark, Brickwork and Building Components [in Danish only].

Acid washing - if it turns out to be necessary anyway

Prior to acid washing, scour the brickwork with a scouring pad to remove loose mortar residues; any stubborn caked-on mortar can be chiselled off with a wooden stick. It is important to clean horizontal surfaces too, e.g. where there are recessed or raked joints, so as not to smear "fresh" mortar residues onto the brick surfaces during acid washing.

A finishing float with foam rubber backing is considered to be the tool best suited to acid washing; alternatively, use an acid-proof masonry broom.

Pre- and post-watering must NOT be done when acid washing.

The acid must be supplied to site ready-mixed.

Acid washing should be done at the most favourable time, using as little acid as possible. The right time for acid washing depends partly on the mortar's binder content, the absorbency of the bricks, the weather and so on. Acid washing is normally done 5-24 hours after laying the brickwork.

Hydrochloric acid must not be used indoors.

The acid must be replaced at regular intervals, as used/contaminated acid can cause discolouration.

Acid washing must be done from the top down, and acid washing should only be done once.

See also "Instructions for acid-washing external masonry", published by MURO or www.mur-tag.dk

Acid-washing instructions for

D31·D32·D33
D34·D35·D36
D37·D38·D39A
D42·D43·D48

Wash the wall with 30% hydrochloric acid diluted with water at a ratio of 1:20 (or thinner).

Acid-washing instructions for

D23·D39B·D46
D47·D49·D51
D54·D55·D58
D70·D71·D72
D73·D76·D78
D81·D91·D92
D96·D97·D98
D99

Clean the wall with 32% acetic acid diluted with water at a ratio of 1:10 (or thinner).

Source reference:
Murerhåndbogen, 2013
[Mason's Manual] [in Danish only].
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