CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE — METAL PROFILED SHEETS

Applies to Briarwood Leathergrain PVC Plastisol coated steel sheets — 32/1000, 34/1000, 13/3 and 20/1000

This is Briarwood's published Cleaning & Maintenance guidance: how often to inspect and clean a coated steel roof or wall, what to look for, how to clean it, and the record to keep.

Section 8 is the record form. Cutting and edge protection, storage and handling, and thermal movement each have their own note and are not repeated here.

1. Why this matters

Regular cleaning and maintenance are essential to preserve the long-term appearance and performance of metal roof and wall cladding systems.

Proper care helps maintain coating integrity, prevents premature corrosion, and keeps the coating sound.

Our roof and wall sheets are manufactured using high-quality pre-coated steel, designed to provide many years of durable service. However, as with all external building materials, periodic maintenance is required to remove dirt, debris, and environmental contaminants that can accumulate over time.

This note sets out what has to be done to keep the coating sound for the life of the building, and the record that shows it was done.

2. How often — every twelve months

Where the Sheets are covered by a Briarwood guarantee, they must be inspected and cleaned at intervals of no more than twelve months, and a record kept. That applies to every part of the building, exposed and sheltered alike. It is a condition of the guarantee, not a recommendation, and it does not depend on how dirty the building looks.

> **TWELVE MONTHS, EVERYWHERE ON THE BUILDING**
> Any earlier Briarwood cleaning guidance setting a longer interval than twelve months, or setting a longer interval for exposed areas than for sheltered ones, is withdrawn and must not be relied on. There is one interval and it is twelve months. An owner who inspects on a longer cycle has not met the condition, however good the building looks and however well the Sheets have performed.

Part of the building	Interval	Why
Sheltered and unwashed areas — under eaves, in soffits, behind downpipes and rainwater goods, and on sheltered elevations	12 months	Rain never reaches them, so deposits stay where they land. Clean more often wherever deposits show.
Fully exposed roof and wall	12 months	Rain washes these faces. It does not clean them, and twelve months is the condition anyway.
Anywhere with high salt or chemical deposition	6 months	Deposition and corrosion both run faster. Six months is good practice here; read it with the caution below.

Twelve months is the maximum interval, not a target, and nothing in that table extends it. Rainfall does not clean a roof: it washes the exposed faces and leaves the sheltered ones, which is why unwashed areas are where problems start — and why a building that looks clean from the ground is not evidence that it has been maintained.

> **COASTAL BUILDINGS NEED THE SHORTER INTERVAL**
> Salt does not wash off in rain the way soil does. A building within reach of sea spray or a tidal estuary needs the shorter interval for the sake of the coating, whatever the paperwork says about where it stands.

3. The twelve-month inspection

Eighteen items in five groups, in the order a walk round the building meets them, so an inspection that works through them misses nothing that matters. Record the condition found against each numbered item on the form in section 8.

The sheets

1. Perforation of the steel by corrosion, from either face. It is the first thing to look for and the first thing to photograph.
2. Blistering, lifting or flaking of the plastisol coating, or any area where the coating has come away from the steel. Colour change, fading and loss of gloss are a different thing — see section 7.
3. Every cut edge, drilled hole and mitre: bare steel, rust bleeding from the edge, or a treatment that has broken down. An untreated edge is where corrosion starts.
4. Impact damage, dents, scratches through to bare steel, and anything that has been dropped, leant or driven against the cladding.

The fixings

5. Missing fixings, and fixings that have backed out or are no longer bearing on the sheet.
6. Washers that are perished, split, squeezed out or no longer sealing. A fixing that has stopped sealing lets water into the hole, and the hole is a cut edge.
7. Rust staining running down from a fixing head. Note what the fixings are and who supplied them.
8. Side lap stitchers still in place and still at their installed centres, with none missing along a run.

Laps and junctions

9. End laps and side laps closed and sitting down, with no capillary gap opening and nothing packed into the lap.
10. Flashings, ridge, eaves, barge and corner details secure, not lifting, and still lapped the right way round.
11. Sealant and filler blocks intact where they were used. A failed sealant is the owner's to renew, and the water it has let in has already gone where it should not.

Drainage and contamination

12. Gutters, valleys and outlets clear and running. Standing water on a lap is how a roof that looked sound for a season begins to leak in the second.
13. Moss, lichen and algae, particularly on sheltered elevations and in valleys. Clean these off as section 4 sets out.
14. Swarf, drilling debris, offcuts and dropped fixings left lying on a sheet or in a gutter. Bare steel filings rust in the first dew and stain permanently, and what looks like coating failure very often is not.
15. Run-off from, or contact with, copper, lead or other dissimilar metals, or from timber treated with preservatives. Each corrodes the coating where it touches it or washes over it. Find it before it runs.
16. Splashes and run-off from wet or unset cement, mortar, lime, acid or other building chemicals. Wash these off while they are fresh; set mortar does not come off a coating cleanly.

The building around the sheets

17. Anything fixed through or onto the sheets since installation — aerials, brackets, conduit, signage, solar rails, lean-to structures. Every one is a new hole or a new contact with the coating, and Briarwood should be told before it is made.
18. Changes of use inside the building that raise humidity, temperature or the ammonia load — livestock moved in, a store turned into a washing bay, a new process. The coating was chosen for the environment the Sheets were sold into, and a changed environment is a changed coating life.

DO NOT WALK ON THE SHEETS
Inspect from a safe working platform, a ladder, a crawl board or from below. A profiled sheet is not a walking surface: a boot on a crown dishes it, and a boot on a pan between purlins buckles it.

4. Cleaning procedure

1. Preparation

- Inspect the area and identify heavily soiled or corroded sections.
- Remove loose debris, leaves, or build-up using a soft brush or low-pressure air blower.
- Ensure safe access and fall protection are in place before starting.

2. Washing

- Use clean, fresh water with a mild neutral detergent (pH between 6 and 8).
- Apply using a soft sponge, soft-bristled brush, or low-pressure water jet (under 1,000 psi / 70 bar).
- Work from the top downward, rinsing thoroughly to prevent streaking.
- Avoid allowing dirty water to dry on the surface.

3. Rinsing

- Rinse immediately with clean water to remove detergent residues.
- Ensure gutters and drainage systems are clear so rinse water flows freely.

4. Stubborn deposits

- For areas affected by moss, lichen, or algae, use a mild, non-abrasive biocidal cleaner approved for painted metal surfaces.
- Do not use aggressive solvents, thinners, or abrasive cleaners.

5. Finishing, and the record

- Go back over the section 3 items now the surfaces are clean. Deposits hide most of what the inspection is looking for, and an inspection carried out through a layer of dirt has not been carried out.
- Make good any cut edge, drilled hole or mitre found bare or breaking down, in accordance with Briarwood's published Cutting & Edge Protection guidance.
- Complete the record in section 8 and keep it with the guarantee certificate.

ANTI-CONDENSATION FELT IS NOT WASHABLE
Anticon surfaces are not washable once installed. Avoid painting, pressure washing, or chemical treatment of the felt. Nothing in this section is to be applied to the felt face, and a felt that has been wetted, painted or treated cannot be put back. Where the inner face of an anticon-lined sheet needs attention, ask Briarwood before doing anything to it.

5. Important precautions

1. Do not use: abrasive pads, wire brushes, or high-pressure washing systems.
2. Do not use: strong alkaline or acid-based detergents, bleach, or solvents.
3. Do not walk directly on sheets without appropriate load-spreading equipment or roof access boards.
4. Avoid cleaning in direct sunlight or during very hot weather to prevent streaking or rapid drying.

6. Keeping the record

A record has to be kept, and until now nothing said what one was, so most buildings have none. Section 8 is the form: one sheet per inspection, completed on the day, filed with the guarantee certificate.

A record that is missing for the years before a defect appeared is the most common reason a guarantee claim fails.

A defect that shows in year fourteen was forming for several years before anybody saw it. The question at that point is whether the building was being inspected and cleaned throughout — and the only thing that can answer is a set of dated records running back to installation. An owner with them can show it. An owner without them is asking to be taken at their word.

What each record has to carry

- Date of the inspection
- Address of the premises
- Which areas were inspected
- Cleaning carried out
- Anything reported to Briarwood
- Certificate Number
- Who carried it out
- Condition found, item by item
- Remedial work carried out
- Photographs, with their references

- Keep every record for the life of the guarantee — up to thirty years — not for the life of the contractor's involvement.
- Photographs are worth more than the words next to them. Date them, reference them on the form, and keep them with it.
- Report anything that looks like perforation or loss of adhesion to Briarwood in writing straight away, and within 30 days of finding it. The twelve-month inspection is how it gets found.
- On a sale, hand the whole file to the new owner, Certificate Number included. They will need it to have the guarantee transferred to them.

7. What is normal weathering

Normal weathering is not a defect. Gradual colour change, fading, loss of gloss and differential shading between exposed and sheltered elevations are what a coated steel building does over the decades. Cleaning is not expected to reverse any of it, and a building that has weathered evenly has behaved correctly.

What cleaning and inspection do is keep perforation by corrosion and loss of adhesion — the two failures that matter — from starting where nobody is looking, and produce the evidence that they were not allowed to.

A roof that is inspected once a year rarely fails. A roof that is inspected once, when the leak appears, has already lost the evidence.

8. Inspection and cleaning record

Inspection	
Date of inspection	
Certificate Number	
Address of the premises	
Carried out by (name)	
Company and contact	
Areas inspected	
Reported to Briarwood	
Next inspection due (within 12 months)	
Signed	

Item	Condition found	Cleaning carried out	Remedial work	Photo

One sheet per inspection. Copy this page, complete it on the day, and file it with the guarantee certificate. Item numbers are the eighteen items in section 3; record every item you looked at, not only the ones that needed work. Continue on a second copy of this page where more lines are needed, and keep every sheet for the life of the guarantee.